

## GLOSSARY

(words marked by a † in the text)

**drawing out:** causing (them) to speak freely

**face:** are confronted by

**take a back seat:** defer to someone else  
**skits:** short plays, especially performed by amateurs

**spoiled brat:** an ill-mannered annoying child

**runs into:** meets by chance (also *bumps into*)

**make sure:** ensure; cause to happen

**busybody:** an inquisitive person especially interested in the affairs of others

**run:** operate; take care of; manage

**what he is up to:** what his scheme or real purpose is

member; otherwise, his/her sudden intervention might be seen by the weaker students as a sort of reprimand. Second, teacher participation ensures genuine conversational interaction by students. Those who have memorized lines discover quickly the "wild card" nature of the teacher's role. Also, if one student dominates the exercise, the teacher can spontaneously redirect the action of the play to the weaker student.

Roleplaying is only a small part of a comprehensive approach to teaching conversation, but it is quite important. (See Michael Agelasto, "Teaching English Conversation," *Journal of Shenzhen University*, 1, 1989.) For students this kind of group work proves highly entertaining; for the teacher it provides a way to make reticent students more active. And it's fun. Here are some of the skits I use:

### Two-student skits

MARY is dining at a very expensive restaurant with her father (played by the teacher). She finds a rat tail in her fish soup. LYNN is the restaurant's famous chef. Mary complains to Lynn, who refuses to believe it's a rat. Eventually, Mary convinces the chef.

MARY goes to the dentist (played by the teacher). LYNN, her husband, goes with her. The dentist tells Mary that her teeth are in terrible shape and must all come out. She tells her husband this and hopes that he will still love her.

MARY and LYNN have a child (played by the teacher) who is a spoiled brat.† He gets into fights in school, steals students' lunches, draws on the wall, etc. The parents must find out why their child is so bad, then decide what to do.

A famous athlete (played by the teacher) has mistakenly invited two women to go to an awards banquet with him. The women, MARY and LYNN, meet at the ban-

quet as they wait for their boyfriend. They discover the situation and then must decide what to do.

MARY has lost her pet dragon (played by the teacher). She runs into her friend LYNN, who is very scared of dragons. Mary knows the dragon is living under Lynn's house. She must explain this and find the dragon.

MARY is assistant director of the nicest hotel in town. (The teacher plays her boss.) A visiting delegation of executives, headed by LYNN, is staying at the hotel. Lynn needs to tell Mary that the delegation had a party and ruined all the furniture.

MARY and LYNN are best friends who work in the same factory. Mary gets promoted and is now Lynn's boss. Lynn also wanted the job. Mary must tell Lynn of her promotion and make sure they can remain friends. (The teacher plays Mary's secretary.)

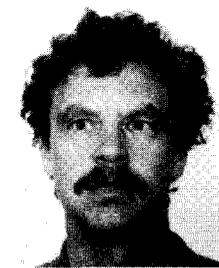
MARY is visited by her rich AUNT LYNN from Hong Kong. Lynn tries to teach Mary how to drive her Mercedes, but Mary hits a tree. (The teacher plays a passerby.)

### Four-student skits

*Guess who's coming to dinner?* It is New Year's Eve. The family is gathered for the big meal and awaits the arrival of the oldest SON (who's been living in the U.S.). He arrives with a surprise—his new WIFE. He explains what happened to his earlier wife. The family takes sides: MOTHER vs. FATHER. The teacher (an ad-lib role) plays the grandfather. This situation may be both serious and comedic.

*Love on a train.* We're in the sleeper on a train. Four people find themselves together. A MAN, his FORMER GIRLFRIEND, his NEW GIRLFRIEND, and the former girlfriend's NEW HUSBAND. Emotions flare: jealousy, anger, love, etc. The issues to be resolved: who is in love with whom, and for what reasons. The teacher will play the train conductor, a busybody.†

*Love triangle at the restaurant.* THREE SISTERS run a restaurant. They are in love with the same man—the HEAD CHEF. Sep-



Michael Agelasto, by training a city planner and screenwriter, is presently an associate professor of English at Shenzhen University, where he is working on curriculum reform as well as teaching composition and conversation.

arately he tries to romance each sister and convince each that she should get rid of the others. They finally learn what he is up to.† The teacher plays the local health inspector.

*Deadly sports contest.* It's a ping-pong match: A player (played by the teacher) is killed by an exploding ping-pong ball. A POLICE INSPECTOR arrives and discovers, through interviews, a motive for murder. He finds PLAYER #2 is guilty. But he's wrong. It's either PLAYER #3 or PLAYER #4 who murdered the teacher (who has the amazing ability to reappear as a ghost).

*Do you believe?* A STRANGER comes to visit a rural community and brings with him strange powers (such as raising the dead). Some townspeople treat him as a god, others as the devil. He's really from outer space. The townspeople (MAYOR, HOUSEHUSBAND, WORKER, and peasant [played by the teacher]) must decide what to do.

## HUNGARY

### Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis in Practice: Designing "i+1" Teaching Techniques

Zoltán Dörnyei

Eötvös University, Budapest

Stephen Krashen's theory of language learning<sup>1</sup> has been the source of considerable controversy and academic discussion, but it has undoubtedly succeeded in bridging the gap between linguistic theory and actual language teaching by affecting the thinking and attitudes of many practicing teachers. This article focuses on the practical implications of one part of Krashen's concept of language acquisition, the Input Hypothesis. It is, according to Krashen (1985:vii), "the most important part of the theory," since it attempts to answer the crucial question of how language learning actually happens and what kind of exposure to the language—inside and outside the classroom—is the most efficient for it to happen. In discussing how the Input Hypothesis can be used in designing classroom activities, I will draw on a related theory proposed by Swain (1985), which can be seen as an extension of the Input Hypothesis and can be termed the "Output Hypothesis."

1. For a concise overview of Krashen's theory see Higashi (1988) in *English Teaching Forum*.

## The input hypothesis

Krashen's Input Hypothesis claims that language acquisition occurs through understanding messages or, in other words, through receiving "comprehensible input." That is, in Krashen's view, perceptive language behaviours such as listening or reading play the major role in the learning process, while everything else, including the development of speaking skills or the knowledge of grammar rules, will follow automatically as long as a sufficient amount and type of input is provided.

How can we describe "efficient" input? Krashen argues that it should involve a message whose general language difficulty does not exceed the learner's ability (i.e., it is comprehensible), but which also contains structures that are a step beyond the student's current level of competence. If the learner is at level "i", the input should be, as Krashen puts it, a small jump ahead at level "i+1." The "+1" part of the input cannot be precisely defined but should be, according to Krashen, "roughly tuned."

The "i+1" formula has made a remarkable "career" in applied linguistics, but its practical significance can be questioned. One may wonder whether it actually says more than what most language teachers know, namely, that learning a language is a step-by-step process proceeding from the simple to the more difficult, and teaching therefore should follow a similar progressive pattern. In order to design actual teaching techniques we would need to know how much and what kind of new material can be most efficiently "consumed" by the learners at one time. Unfortunately, the "roughly tuned" "+1" element of Krashen's formula does not serve as a proper guideline. Therefore, later in this article I will argue that for practical purposes "finely tuned" input appears to be more useful.

## The output hypothesis

Swain (1985) examined the language proficiency of Canadian immersion students who had been learning French for seven years and also had several school subjects taught in French. They had obviously received an abundance of language input, which they must have understood since they were achieving well in the subjects taught in French. Yet, as Swain (1985:246) points out, "after seven years of this comprehensible input, the target system has not been fully acquired." Although these students had in some respects reached a high level of target-language proficiency, they were still relatively weak in other areas, such as verb morphology. Other researchers, such as Scarcella and Perkins (1987) and White (1987), also found that learners exposed to comprehensible input for a long time still had problems with certain aspects of the target language.

The conclusion Swain (1985) drew† from her results was that although comprehensible input is essential for language learning, it is not the *only* thing students need. She argued that the importance of language *output* should also be recognized. Output, that is, productive language use, has two main learning functions that comprehensible input cannot fulfil:

a. It is possible to comprehend a message (input) without its grammatical analysis simply by knowing the meaning of the words, whereas producing language output requires explicit knowledge of linguistic rules. Thus, output forces the learner to pay conscious attention to the form of the messages.

b. Output is also necessary for the learner to test hypotheses about the target language as well as to receive corrective feedback about some incorrectly learned or overgeneralized language forms. In other words, one must speak to be able to try out various means of expression, to see how they work, and to find out where the problem is if they fail to work.

Efficient output, according to Swain (1985), should involve more than uncontrolled student talk. She argues that learners quickly establish ways of communicating their messages even though these ways may not be the most appropriate or elaborate ones. Once that has happened, there is no communicative urge for them to further polish their speech. Therefore, in order for students to improve, they should be "pushed" to use alternative means to express their messages more appropriately or precisely. Thus, being "pushed" in output is desirable, and it involves some pressure on the student to analyse further the grammar and usage of the target language, and to produce output that is a bit beyond their current level of competence—that is, "i+1" type of output. This concept of "i+1" output is very much like the "i+1" input of the Input Hypothesis and was termed by Swain the "comprehensible output" hypothesis.

## The interrelated nature of the two hypotheses

I believe that both the input and the output hypotheses touch upon some very important aspects of language learning, and these aspects are usually not independent of each other. A student cannot be expected to produce "i+1" output without learning first about the "+1" element, that is, without receiving some sort of "i+1" input. On the other hand, comprehensible input in itself may not lead to language development, since, as we have seen, only the pressure to actively use the new material (the "+1" part) in their output will force the students to consciously analyse the linguistic forms the message contains.

## GLOSSARY

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**points out:** directs attention to; states  
**drew (a conclusion):** inferred from evidence  
**find out:** discover  
**keep track of:** maintain an awareness of  
**getting around:** circumventing; evading  
**What's more:** In addition  
**joint:** undertaken or produced together by two or more  
**pick out:** select  
**spot:** identify; notice  
**swap:** exchange  
**try and guess:** try to guess  
**jot down:** write quickly  
**Hand out:** Distribute  
**slip of paper:** a small piece of paper

In the next part of this article I will describe several classroom techniques that are based on the two hypotheses. They will clearly show the interrelated nature of input and output, especially because a student's comprehensible output may very often become comprehensible input for others.

## Designing "i+1" teaching techniques

As has been mentioned, a "roughly tuned" conception of the "i+1" formula does not serve as a proper guideline for designing actual classroom techniques. Let us, however, assume that the "+1" part refers not to a "small jump ahead" in general but rather to a definite number of new language elements. This would be the case with "fine-tuning," which Krashen considered problematic and rejected. The argument was that only the learner "knows" his/her current state of language proficiency, therefore outsiders (even teachers) are simply not in a position to manipulate the input to a precision that would allow for fine-tuning (cf. White 1987). In other words, since we cannot keep track of what exactly our students know or do not know, we can only guess what is going to be new for them, and therefore we cannot "finely tune" the new material.

There is, however, a way of getting around this problem by *having the "i" part of the "i+1" formula come from the learners themselves*. The speech or writing the students produce will represent exactly their current level of development, and all that needs to be done is to add to this the "+1" element to obtain ideal "i+1" input or output. In fact, we do this all the time when marking our students' written homework, for example. The "i" part is the student's written work, whereas our corrections comprise the "+1" element. When the students read their marked work, they are presented with real "i+1" input.

It is reassuring to find that this "theoretically ideal" input works wonderfully in practice, just as the Input Hypothesis suggests. Indeed, it involves the students to such an extent that usually you can hardly stop them from reading the corrected work immediately after receiving it, and it teaches the new information extremely efficiently. What's more, the efficiency of the task further increases if you ask the students to write sentences (or a composition) using every structure that contained a mistake—proving that "i+1" output adds to the instructive value of a language exercise. This series of tasks can be translated into input-output terms as follows:

Output → "i+1" input → "i+1" output

Marking homework is not the only way of producing "i+1" input/output. We may invent several other language tasks that are based to some extent on the input and output hypotheses. The common feature of all these "i+1" exercises is that some language behaviour is elicited from the students—that will be the "i" part—and this language material is then used for further practice by adding to it some new language elements—the "+1" parts. What is important from the practical point of view is that all these exercises will share a kind of "i+1" magic: Students will find them involving and challenging, and the exercises will fulfil their teaching purpose with remarkable efficiency.

#### Suggested teaching activities

1. In class, students produce a joint recording (e.g., a discussion of a certain topic or a roleplay activity). At home the teacher types out the text, correcting the mistakes and paraphrasing the clumsy parts. In the next lesson the students listen to the recording again, while following the corrected written version at the same time. Then they are asked to perform the situation again, without looking at the written script, using the new language elements. This is a variation on the marking of written homework mentioned before.

2. For homework, students write a free composition on a certain topic with only one specification: They have to incorporate into it 15 recently learnt new words from their vocabularies. Either the students select the items themselves or the teacher specifies the items to be used. The composition must be as long as is necessary to include all the new items. If, as an extreme, they manage to include all of them in one sentence, then they won't have to write a lot. This simple task demonstrates well the efficiency of the "i+1" principle: By adding 15 new elements to a composition which would otherwise usually not exceed the learner's current

level of competence, the rather traditional essay-writing task acquires a dynamic problem-solving character, while the students will surely master the selected new elements. If they themselves are to pick out the new words to be used, then they are also likely to master some of the other items from which they were making the selection.

3. Working in small groups, students record a dialogue. After listening as it is played back, they produce another recording in which they (a) correct the mistakes and (V) insert some new items/structures. They then play the two versions to the class, and the others must spot the changes.

*Variation:* Before preparing the second recording, students swap the cassettes so that they will be working on someone else's dialogue.

4. Working in pairs or small groups in class, each pair/group is given 5-6 new vocabulary items with their definitions/translations. Together they must write a short passage that contains the new words so that it is possible to guess their meaning from the context. When they are ready, they pass round their text to the rest of the class and the others try and guess the meaning of the new elements. The winner is the pair/group whose new items were understood by every other pair/group.

5. A version of (4): Everybody in the class is given one new vocabulary item with its definition/translation. Then each person in turn must "explain" his/her new word to the rest of the class by putting it into three sentences where the context helps them guess the meaning of the new item. (Some time may be needed to prepare for this.) Students jot down† their guesses for all the words, and the winner is the person whose word has been found out by the most students. Since some words are easier to "explain" than others, a fair result will be obtained only after several rounds.

6. Two-language texts—for students who share the same mother tongue (from Morgan and Rinvoluceri 1980). Translate an interesting English text into the students' mother tongue, leaving one word per sentence in English. Select words whose meaning can be guessed from the context. Hand out copies of this text in class and let stu-

dents work out the meaning of the items themselves. A fairly long text can be used in class several times, leaving more and more words in English every time.

7. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to perform a situational roleplay activity for the rest of the class. Afterwards, each of the participants is given a slip of paper with an expression or a phrase on it, and they are asked to perform the same activity again, but this time incorporating the new expression/phrase into their parts at least twice. The audience must spot these expressions and try to guess their meaning.

*Follow-up:* Collect all the introduced phrases and expressions on the board. Ask the students to extend their original roleplay situation so that they can include all the new expressions in it naturally.

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## JAPAN

### Heroes and Villains: Gaining Insights into Your Students' Values

Paul Wadden

*Kyoto University of Foreign Studies*

The finest teachers have considerable insight into the character and values of their students, appreciating them as diverse individuals within a single, multifaceted class. In foreign-language teaching, such apprehension† of students does not come easily, given the communicative and cultural barriers that often separate student and teacher. Yet in language instruction, perhaps more than in other fields, rapport between teacher and student is vital to learning. Thus, inevitably, the committed EFL instructor has to take some pains to



*Zoltán Dörnyei is a lecturer at the Department of English, Eötvös University, Budapest. His interests include the motivational psychology of foreign-language learning. He is also involved in teacher training and writing coursebooks.*