# TESOL QUARTERLY

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# TESOL QUARTERLY

A Journal for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

## *Foreword*

This issue of *TESOL Quarterly* follows the pattern of the past two years in which the March issue has been devoted to the publication of a series of six lectures delivered, on a contractual basis with the TESOL organization, to staff members of the English Language Branch-Defense Language Institute, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.* With a faculty of approximately seventy members, the English Language Branch trains about 3,000 students a year in the United States, at the same time supporting foreign military schools in some fifty countries whose operations involve as many as 500,000 students per year.

The lecturers selected for this series, like those of the past two years, are experienced ESOL personnel. They represent academic institutions in a wide range of geographical areas in the United States: New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Florida, Illinois, and California.

The papers were delivered between February and July, 1971, and are printed in the order in which they were presented. A brief summary-and-discussion section follows the six papers (on page 95), each of which is concerned with different aspects of teaching English to non-English speakers, but all of which, interestingly enough, are concerned, in some measure, with the development of more efficient ways of advancing from the purely mechanical to the more truly communicative level of language use.

**BWR**

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Vol 6 No 1 Mar 1972

# *Teaching English Spelling and Pronunciation*

**Charles W. Kreidler**

The teaching of English to speakers of other languages has, in recent years, rightly given emphasis to the student's mastery of the sound system of the language. In contrast, English orthography is not emphasized, and is in part often replaced by a more regular transcription in which each graphic symbol has a consistent value and every unit of the sound system has a consistent representation. Yet the new speaker of English will eventually need to deal with the spelling system-to translate graphic symbols into sound—and he should be taught to do this. Failure to provide instruction and guided practice in pronouncing written English words may result from an erroneous notion that there is little or no system to teach. It is shown, to the contrary, that the value of a graphic symbol depends on a complex of interrelated facts: the inner structure of the word in which it occurs, the stress pattern, and the part of speech to which the word belongs. English orthography is complicated, but not very irregular. The most complex part of our spelling system is the representation of vowel sounds, for which there are three patterns of vowel letter employment. These are described. To show how necessary information about the values of certain graphemes can be formulated, three "explorations" are made: of the values of OW in, for example, *slow, now,* and *knowledge;* of TI in *tin, time, Christian, Christianity, initial,* and *initiate;* and of TU in *tug, tune, tuition, institute, statue,* and *spatula,* as examples.

Suppose you have a new class of absolute beginners in English as a second language. Suppose your textbook has been selected for you. And suppose that when you open the book you find—right on page l—the information that the letter a has five sounds, as in *mate, mat, father, fall,* and *soda;* that the letter e has three or four sounds; and so on for all the vowel and consonant letters in the alphabet. Fifty years ago the chances of finding such a textbook would have been very great. Today, fortunately, the chances of finding, or being issued, such a book are slim. I hope that the teaching procedures which such a book would imply are equally rare or even nonexistent today.

If we have done anything right in the field of language teaching in the last thirty or forty years, it has been in putting emphasis where emphasis belongs—in recognizing that the learning of a language begins with learning speech, not writing. We have learned to attach great importance to the student's systematic listening and imitation, to his acquisition of the rhythm and intonation of the new language, and to his learning to discriminate relevant sounds through minimal pairs *(sheep/ship, leak/lick, clique/click,* etc.), with complete disregard for the way such words are spelled.

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Mr. Kreidler, Associate Professor of Linguistics, Georgetown University, is co-author of *The Dynamics of Language* (high school English texts, grades 7-12, D.C. Heath, 1971).

We recognize that English spelling is not sufficiently simple and not sufficiently consistent to be a guide to pronunciation for the beginning student. As everybody "knows:' English orthography is "irregular." Consequently, at least for the adult and adolescent students who are literate in their own language(s), we often use some kind of regular guide to pronunciation. Such graphic guides have been variously called *broad transcription*, *special alphabet*, or *phonemic notation*. But whatever the name, the purpose is the same: to provide a regular way of correlating graphic units with phonological units, so that one letter or sequence of letters always stands for (represents) the same sound or sequence of sounds, and any relevant sound or sequence of sounds is always represented in the same way. In other words, every graphic unit has a consistent value and every phonological unit has a consistent representation.

Eventually, however, our students will be on their own. They leave their classes and go out into the bigger English-speaking world. We hope, of course, that when they leave they have mastered the pronunciation and the grammatical system of the language, but we know that they still have a lot of vocabulary learning ahead of them. Some new vocabulary will come to them through speech, but much will probably be acquired from the printed page. Learning new words from books will be especially true for those who go on to study medicine, electrical engineering, nuclear physics, or any academic discipline in an English-speaking institution of higher learning.

It would be ridiculous to imagine that, while these students are still in their English courses, they can learn from their teachers the pronunciation of all the words they will ever need to know thereafter. It is equally ridiculous to suggest that these new speakers of English will consult a dictionary to learn the pronunciation of every written word they encounter in the rest of their lives. More likely, they will do what we all do most of the time. They will acquire the skill, sooner or later, somehow or other, of figuring out a pronunciation for any new word they meet on a printed page.

Of course, it would be better if students could be provided, in their English courses, with instruction and guided practice in pronouncing written English words-in translating graphic symbols into sound. Do ESL students get such instruction and such practice? Probably not, for two very good reasons. We don't teach the elementary student about English orthography because we really don't understand the nature of our spelling system and how it works.

The first of these reasons does not need any elaboration. The second one does. English spelling has been typically denounced as irregular, chaotic, and so forth. True enough, it is not like the special auxiliary notations we have just mentioned, since it is not the case that, in our orthography, one letter or sequence of letters always has the same value; nor is it the case that one pertinent sound or sequence of sounds always has the same representation. If that is the only way to define regularity, then English spelling is irregular.

However, if one stretches the previous definition and says that a spelling system is regular if a graphic unit always represents the same phonic unit in a particular environment, then English spelling is close to regularity. And if one further allows position to be defined in a number of ways—position at the beginning or at the end or in the middle of a word, position before or after a possible word boundary, position in a stressed syllable or an unstressed one, position in different parts of speech (noun versus verb, for instance), even position in words of French origin versus words borrowed from Greek—if position is defined this broadly, then English spelling is seen to be quite regular indeed.

Too many statements made in the past have tended to dwell on the irregularities of English spelling. How often, in discussions of orthography, have we seen a reference to that eccentric group composed of *tough, cough, though, through,* and *hiccough*? Yet these words do not illustrate what is typical; they represent the extreme in divergence from the principle of a graphic sequence always having the same value. We have to recognize that these anomalies exist, but we also need to recognize that they are anomalies.

There is another small matter that may cause misunderstanding here. One has different kinds of difficulties with English spelling depending on whether one is performing the role of reader or the role of writer. If we are native speakers of English, most of our orientation and conscious thinking about orthography has been directed toward performing the role of writer-toward learning to recall the correct spelling of words that we know, in pronunciation and meaning. Most of our efforts have been directed toward remembering, for example, when to write i before e and when to do the opposite, when to spell with ou and when to spell with ow. An extreme case of such recalling is remembering how to spell homophones—to distinguish *principal* from *principle* or *capital* from *capitol,* for instance.

The problem we confront with the foreign learner of English is a more basic one: how to pronounce what is written. The problem is, for example, recalling when ow stands for the sound in *brown cow* and when it represents the vowel of *slow show*. The extreme case of such recall is the separation of homographs—distinguishing, for example, the noun *cónduct* from the verb *condúct,* or the noun *ínvalid* from the adjective *inválid*. Of course, the reader's problem is simpler than that of the writer. The writer has to remember, for instance, that *knowledge, gnostic, mnemonic,* and *pneumatic* are all written with a consonant letter before the letter n, and he has to remember which consonant letter in each case. The reader, however, has to remember only one fact here: that when a consonant letter appears in initial position immediately before n, it is to be ignored. It has no value.

The pairs of words just below illustate some of the kinds of knowledge that one has to have in order to read English orthography. In each pair the two words look as if they should rhyme, but they don't. These are typical instances in which graphic sames have different phonic values.

Why?

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| swallow | simply | denial | dragnet | indicate | tagged |
| allow | imply | menial | magnet | intricate | jagged |

First, *swallow* and *allow* look as if they rhyme, but of course they don't. One big difference between them is that *swallow* is stressed on the first syllable, *allow* on the second. The two vowel graphemes, a and ow, can have quite different values in stressed and unstressed syllables. Then, how does one know that one word has first-syllable stress and the other has second-syllable stress? There is, unfortunately, no way of knowing from what is on paper. In English we don't use accent marks to indicate stress. One just has to know.

With the other pairs of words, however, there are clues about stress differences and therefore about other differences in pronunciation. The words *simply* and *imply* differ in stress just as *swallow* and *allow,* and the stress difference explains the different values of y in the two words. Looking a little closer we see that the difference in stress is somewhat predictable. The word *imply* is a verb; it consists of a sort of prefix and a sort of base; it belongs to the same set of words as *apply, comply, reply, supply.* The word *simply,* on the other hand, is what we get when we add the suffix -ly to *simple,* a word that ends with a consonant followed by le. That is, *simply* belongs to the same set of words as *gently, nobly, doubly.* Word structure determines stress, and knowledge of word structure tells us how to pronounce.

You know why those look-alike words, *menial* and *denial,* are more similar in sight than in sound. An experienced reader of English is aware that *denial* contains *deny* in slightly altered form, that there is a sort of invisible word boundary inside the word which determines the place of stress and, consequently, the value of the letter i. The word *menial* has no such interior division. Instead, it has an ending similar to that of *medial, filial, labial,* and other not-so-common adjectives of Latin origin.

An interior boundary also explains why *magnet* and *dragnet* don't rhyme. *Dragnet* is a compound word with two independent parts. Like many compounds it has main stress (or primary stress) on the first syllable and middle stress (or tertiary stress) on the second syllable: *drágnèt. Magnet* is a simple word with main stress on the first syllable and an unstressed second syllable. Different kinds of stress on the second syllable of the two words account for the different values of e in the two last syllables.

The pair *indicate* and *intricate* is similar. Both words have main stress on the first syllable. *Indicate,* like all verbs of this type *(irritate, regulate, manipulate),* has middle stress on the last syllable, which therefore sounds like *Kate. Intricate,* like all such adjectives *(adequate, considerate, temperate)* has an unstressed final syllable and therefore a slurred vowel sound, **a schwa, [ə].**

Finally, look at *tagged* and *jagged.* The first is a verb, a past tense

form, and (like *rubbed, loved, and hugged)* a one-syllable word. The second word is not a verb. Its two vowel letters indicate two vowel sounds, therefore two syllables.

The point of all this is a simple one. Any English grapheme may have more than one value, but generally the value that it has in a particular word depends on a complex of interrelated facts: the inner structure of the word, the stress pattern that it has, and the part of speech to which it belongs. The consequence of this point is equally simple. Learning to identify and correctly pronounce written English words is not any sort of mechanical application of rules that can be called "phoneme-grapheme correspondences." Rather, it requires a complex ability to react to words in several aspects—or on several levels—all at once.

It might be said that English orthography does not so much represent sounds as such, but rather sounds with regard to the ways they are related to other sounds. From one point of view the word *partial* would more aptly be spelled with sh instead of with ti. After all, the sound is like that in *harsh,* isn't it? But something else is involved. Words with the spelling ti are, broadly speaking, related to words with the letter and the sound, t: *partial, presidential, correction,* etc. Words with the spelling sh *(harsh, push, rush,* etc.) are not related to words with t. Different spellings signal, not different sounds, but different sound relations.

Consider the opposite situation. The words *melody, melodious,* and *melodic* should by right have different vowel letters in the second syllable, since they have different vowel sounds in pronunciation. But that would destroy another kind of visual relationship, a single letter representing, not the same sound, but different related sounds.

To teach the student of English as a new language to work successfully with English orthography therefore means teaching him about sound relationships and word relationships. I am working at devising materials to help advanced ESL students to do this. I take it for granted that such materials should follow, more or less, the techniques which have proven successful in audiolingual language teaching. Such materials will expose the student systematically to minimal pairs of words in which similar spelling corresponds to similar pronunciations; to pairs in which similar spelling corresponds to different pronunciations; and to pairs in which different spellings correspond to similar pronunciations.

The most complicated part of English orthography is, as everybody knows, the representation of vowel sounds. Five vowel letters, a, e, i, o, and u, aided by w and y, must serve to represent some fifteen or so stressed vowel units. There are three basic patterns of using these letters to stand for these vowel sounds. The three patterns are illustrated in the accompanying chart. The first pattern contains the so-called long vowels, as in *fate, scene, white, globe, cube,* and so forth. The term "long vowel" is not particularly accurate when one describes the present-day pronunciation of these and other vowel sounds. However, it is a traditional term which is worth using to refer not so much to pronunciation as to this spelling pattern.

In the pattern we have a single vowel letter, then a consonant letter, and then a final e. This e is generally referred to as "silent e," but I would prefer to call it a disappearing e because, as *fatal, scenic,* etc. show, it disappears beore a suffix which begins with an initial vowel letter.

**CHART OF PRINCIPAL STRESSED VOWEL SPELLING PATTERNS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Pattern 1:*** | **fate** | **scene** | **white** | **globe** | **cube** |
| | **fatal** | **scenic** | **whitish** | **global** | **cubic** |
| ***Pattern 2:*** | **sad** | **get** | **big** | **hot** | **gun** |
| | **sadden** | **getting** | **bigger** | **hottest** | **gunner** |
| ***2a:*** | **damp** | **list** | **fox** | | |
| ***2b:*** | **staff** | **fill** | **less** | **stick** | |
| ***Pattern 3:*** | **lay** | **obey** | **annoy** | | |
| | **layer** | **surveyor** | **loyal** | | |
| | **wait** | **vein** | **avoid** | | |
| | **raw, craw** | **brew, shrewed** | | **cow, crowd** | |
| | **withdrawal** | **brewer** | | **vowel** | |
| | **haul** | **feud** | | **cloud** | |
| | **brief** **suit** | **foam** | **see** | **sea** | **too** |
| | | | **seed** | **bead** | **boot** |

This spelling pattern occurs in monosyllabic words, such as the examples given; it occurs also in words with main stress on the last syllable (e.g., *debate, complete, describe, explode, compute);* and it occurs in words with middle (or tertiary) stress on the last syllable (e.g., *irritate, centipede, antagonize, episode, hypotenuse).*

The second pattern is the so-called short vowel pattern, as illustrated in group 2. The same five vowel letters have different values, as in *sad, get, big, hot,* and *gun,* respectively. The pattern consists of a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant letter, which must be doubled when a suffix with initial vowel is added. As the words in group 2a remind us, the vowel letter may be followed not by a single consonant but by a cluster of consonant letters—and x counts as such a cluster. The words in group 2b are to remind us that sometimes a double consonant letter comes at the end of a word, where a single consonant letter would seem to be sufficient. Most frequent final doubles are ff, ll, ss, and ck, which counts as the doubled form of k. Like Pattern 1, the long vowel pattern, Pattern 2 occurs in monsyllabic words like those illustrated; it occurs in a final syllable with main stress *(canal, propel, begin, allot, corrupt );* and it occurs in final syllables with middle stress *(acrobat, alphabet, derelict, apricot, viaduct).*

The third pattern is more complicated. In the third pattern we group all words in which the stressed vowel sound is represented by two or three vowel letters together, including y and w as last vowel letter. The oc-

currence of three vowel letters together to represent a single vowel sound is actually pretty rare. The number of two-vowel letter combinations is fairly large. The most common of them are shown in the twelve columns or subgroupings in the chart. Let's examine them.

Three of the twelve have y or i as the second member. Y is the letter which occurs at the end of a word *(lay, obey, annoy)* or before a vowel letter *(layer, surveyor, loyal),* i is the letter which occurs before a consonant letter *(wait, vein, avoid),* but the respective groups are identical in their value.

The next three combinations are comparable. These combinations contain w as the second member, alternating with u. However, the alternation is not entirely regular. U, in the groups au, eu, and ou, never (or, as Gilbert and Sullivan would say,hardly ever) comes at the end of a word or before a vowel letter, positons in which w is more usual. Yet aw, ew, and ow also occur before consonant letters, with the result that we have such pairs as *cloud* and *crowd* to give us spelling problems.

The next three subgroups include the letter combinations ie, ui, and oa, all of which occur only within words, never finally (if we except *whoa* and *cocoa).* These are frequent in occurrence and are quite regular in the vowel sounds they represent. The last three subgroups indicate vowel letter combinations which occur both at the end and in the middle of words. The first such combination, ee, has the same value in either position. The second, ea, has only one value in final position but ambiguously stands for either the vowel sound of *bead* or that of *bread* in, medial position. Similarly, the combination oo can only represent the value of *too* in final position, but in medial position the reader of a new word has to figure out whether it stands for the vowel sound of *boot* or that of *foot.*

Patterns 1 and 2 are distinguished in word-final position, as we have seen, by the presence or absence of the "disappearing" e *(mate, mat).* Before a suffix with initial vowel the two patterns are distinguished by the occurrence of a single or a double consonant letter *(mating, matting).* So, too, in other word-interior positions the single versus the double consonant letter tells the pattern, that is, the value of a, e, i, o, or u before another vowel letter or l. For example:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pattern 1: | halo | edict | silent | locus | nucleus |
| Pattern 2: | hallow | eddy | silly | locket | knuckle |

Unfortunately, however, spellings are often based on etymology rather than logic, and the system of differentiating the two values of the vowel letters breaks down. Note the following pairs of words in which different values for the vowel letters should be distinguished by the number of consonant letters immediately following, but are not.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| famous | demon | ivy | molar | student |
| famish | lemon | privy | scholar | study |

The five single vowel letters, then, have two principal values each. The

eighteen two-letter graphemes which we have grouped together as Pattern 3 can also have more than one value. Let's go back to the problem of the letters ow in *swallow* and *allow*. How can we formulate the necessary information about this grapheme and the pronunciations or values that it has? Some of the eighteen two-letter graphemes never occur at the end of a word, some never occur before a vowel letter, some never occur before a consonant letter. The grapheme ow occurs in all three of these environments: finally, as in *vow;* before a vowel, as in the word *vowel;* and before a consonant, as in *downtown*. Parenthetically, let's note that occurrence before a suffix, as in *vows* and *vowing,* counts as occurrence in final position, not occurrence before a consonant or vowel letter. And then, as we have already seen, ow can stand for the stressed vowel, as in *allow,* or an unstressed vowel, as in *swallow*.

These are the positions in which the grapheme occurs. What about its values? We find that ow stands for three different vowel sounds: the rather uncommon one which it has in *knowledge* and a few words derived from *knowledge;* and the much more common values as in *brown cow* and in *slow show,* which are about equal in frequency. I'm not yet sure about the right pedagogical order for introducing the necessary information to the student, but I think I know what the information is. First, we must present the irregularities, the word *knowledge* and its derivatives *acknowledge, knowledgeable,* etc. Then we can make more general statements. Such statements are essentially rules. Rule 1: If ow is followed by a vowel letter, it has the pronunciation of ow in the word *vowel*. Next, we need to present the exceptional words *own* and *bowl*. With these out of the way, we are ready for Rule 2: If ow is followed by a consonant letter, it has the pronunciation heard in *downtown*. Now we move on to talk about ow in, word-final position. This is more complicated. We must present four pairs of homographs, *bow, mow, row,* and *sow*. These have to be presented with definitions and exercises in usage, so that our student ends up capable of distinguishing the bow of a violin and a bow from the waist, etc. Next, we must present about ten or twelve words in which ow in final position rhymes with *cow.* After this, we are ready for the third and final rule: In all other words final ow has the value of o. This applies to a few stressed syllables such as in *slow and below,* and to a larger number of unstressed final syllables, such as in *follow, yellow, tomorrow,* and the like.

The business about ow is rather messy. Let's look next at something more simple and straightforward. The letter group ti is sometimes equivalent to two separate graphemes which happen to occur in sequence, as in *tin* and *stick* and also *time* and *tight*. The same sequence of two letters might be considered a single grapheme when it is followed by a vowel letter. But whether it is considered a single grapheme or not, it has different values depending on occurrence in different positions—very subtle differences, Let's examine these different values.

In *Christian,* ti has the same value as ch. What is the position? It

follows an s and precedes an unstressed vowel. And we find that ti has the same value always in this position—*suggestion, celestial, exhaustion,* for instance. In *Christianity,* on the other hand, ti stands for a consonant sound and a vowel sound, approximately the sound of *tea.* The value is different because the position is different: following an s and preceding a *stressed* vowel. Next, note that in *initial* the grapheme ti precedes an unstressed vowel. Its value here is that of sh. This position and this value are extremely frequent. There are thousands of words ending in tion alone, such as *nation, action, description,* etc. When we look at *initiate,* we see ti with another value still, approximately the pronunciation of the word *she.* The value of ti is different because the position is different. Here ti is not preceded by s but is followed by a vowel with middle stress. And this is the value which ti normally has when not preceded by s and followed by, a vowel with main stress or middle stress, such as *negotiate, tertiary* or *confidentiality.* Such words, of course, are not numerous.

For our final exploration, consider the sequence tu. First of all, we have to note that u, just like the other vowel letters, a, e, i, and o, represents two different vowel sounds regularly, a so-called long vowel and a so-called short vowel. We find the short value of u when it stands for a stressed vowel and is followed by a single consonant letter in final position *(tug),* a double consonant *(tunnel),* or a cluster of consonance *(tumble).* This is true when u represents the stressed vowel of the word which, in a word like *tug,* is the only vowel. This is also true when u stands for an unaccented vowel and is followed by a cluster of consonants as in *Tuskeegee* or *tuxedo* (of course, x counts as a cluster of consonants). On the other hand, u has its so-called "long" value when it is followed by just one consonant letter which is not final. Most often we use the device of the so-called silent e to keep the consonant letter from being final, as in *tune* and *refute,* where the vowel has main stress, and in *attitude, institute,* and the like, where the vowel has middle stress. We find the same "long vowel" value when u is in an unstressed initial syllable followed by not more than one consonant letter, as in *tuition* and *tuberculosis.*

Note that the two values of u, the so-called long vowel and short vowel, are kept apart by the device of doubling a consonant letter after the vowel in nonfinal position. The device is used, of course, for all vowel letters. Unfortunately, however, the device is not used consistently. Common sense does not always apply. Thus we have a typical kind of breakdown in our spelling system with such words as *student* and *study,* where the consonant letter is not doubled in the latter case and the values of the vowel letter become ambiguous.

In all the instances so far, t has had the expected value. However, before an unstressed u, t sometimes has the value of ch. Sometimes, that is. Let's look. If t is followed by an unstressed u and that u is followed by a final s or m, then t has the expected value, and u stands for our slurred vowel, schwa, as in *status, stratum,* and the like. But if u is not followed by one of these

two final consonants, then t has the value of ch. U will have its expected "full" value if it stands for a final sound, as in *statue,* or a vowel sound before another vowel sound, as in *actual,* and *statuary.* If a consonant follows, however, the letter u just stands for a schwa, as in *century* and *spatula.*

Complicated? Yes, very complicated—but not at all irregular or chaotic, as English orthography has so often been called. On observation we see that the interpretation of graphic entities depends on very subtle kinds of environment. But the situation is not so piecemeal as it may sound. There are broad generalizations to be made. What is said here about ti is more or less parallel to what can be said about ci and si and ssi. What has been said here about the sequence tu could be paralleled by statements about du, su, ssu, and the like.

To help students acquire an understanding of English spelling and skill in using it, we need to present them with pairs of words differing in some consistent way. One such grouping, for instance, would contrast words like these:

| | |
|---|---|
| depart | departure |
| fact | factual |
| spirit | spiritual |

Another grouping would contrast word-pairs like these:

| | |
|---|---|
| elect | election |
| promote | promotion |
| resident | residential |

Through this sort of word study students might, hopefully, become more competent in handling the indispensable tool of educated people, the writing system which is used for our language.

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# *The Use of Rapid Drills in the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages*

**Robert L. Allen**

In learning a foreign language, it is more important initially to learn the signals of grammatical meaning than to learn the lexical items. Since many grammatical signals are obligatory, they can often be taught most effectively by means of *mechanical* drills, even drills involving nonsense words. Admittedly, drill and repetition are important for the mastery of a new language. I have always felt, however, that more emphasis should be placed on making sure that students *understand* just how each new structure is put together, and are then provided immediately with the opportunity to *create* sentences of their own. Not enough is made in most language programs of the motivating value of creativity, even "creativity" that is limited to fitting words that one has selected oneself into fairly rigid molds. But learning the molds should come first-and it is here that mechanical drills can be particularly helpful. However, such drills must be carefully structured and should proceed at a rapid pace. They should be short and to the point, and varied by moving from one to another before students become bored. (Examples of such drills are given in an Appendix.)

I would like to begin by saying something about my experience as a teacher of English to speakers of other languages, partly because I feel that a description of my own background may help to provide some understanding of the context within which my theories of language teaching developed, and partly also because I think it is informative—as well as a little discouraging-to realize how little we have learned about language teaching during the past thirty or forty years. We still cannot point to one or another method and say, with absolute certainty: This is the most effective way to teach a foreign language. Only two or three weeks ago, for instance, I received, from the Department of Education Research of the Gothenburg School of Education in Gothenburg, Sweden, a 129-page report on the fifth part of a project undertaken in 1968 or 1969 to assess "three different methods of teaching grammatical structures in English as a foreign language." To quote from one of the front pages of the report:

> the three methods being compared are: the Implicit method, the Explicit-English method, and the Explicit-Swedish method. In all the methods the students have systematized drills; in Ee and Es the students have analysis

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> and explanations as well. In Ee the explanations are given in the target language and in Es in the source language. In Es comparisons are also made with the corresponding grammatical structures in Swedish.
>
> The experiment took place in grade 8 of the comprehensive school. The specific grammatical structure taught is the passive voice. The experimental population consists of 12 school classes belonging to the advanced course and 12 classes representing the easier course in English. Within each comae the classes were randomly assigned to teaching method.

The results of the experiment are summarized on page 122 of the report:

> In the advanced course the three teaching methods, Im/Ee/Es, proved to be equally effective; the F-ratios were so low as to make consideration of tendencies among the absolute figures meaningless. In the easier course the Explicit-Swedish method was significantly superior to the two others in a number of analyses. However, the method differences in favor of Es should be interpreted with the utmost care for various reasons: The progress score in [the easier course] was grossly unreliable, the progress in general was limited, the superiority of Es is mainly found in two part tests where test effects, rather than differential progress, explain the Es superiority.

In reading comments like these in the year 1971, I am reminded of a statement that appears in Charles C. Fries' book *Linguistics and Reading,* a statement that Fries made almost ten years ago after "a concentrated study of hundreds out of the thousands" of investigations into the nature of the reading process and of the materials and procedures for teaching reading. One "seeks in vain," says Fries, "for the cumulative continuity that has characterized all recognized sound scientific research. He struggles hard, without success, to find the strands of fundamental assumptions and accepted criteria of sound procedure running through a series of studies attacking any of the major problems of the teaching of reading."[1] It is especially ironic that this statement should have been made by Fries, since Fries, as much as anyone, contributed to the very dogma that was being tested in the experiments of Gothenburg—the dogma that, in teaching English as a foreign language, "the grammar materials are not to be organized and set forth as rules and illustrations of these rules," but should instead be incorporated in sentences to be practiced and repeated until the structural patterns become so fixed that all expression in the new language will follow these channels without conscious choice."[2]

I must admit, in all fairness, that Fries did not rule out the use of explanations in the student's own language. In fact, in comparing the so-called "direct method" with his own "oral approach," Fries states that in the latter, "although the language of the pupil is avoided as much as possible, it is used when necessary to make sure that explanations are thoroughly understood. Generalizations concerning structure, or grammar,

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1 Charles C. Fries, *Linguistics and Reading* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962, 1963), p. 3.

2 Charles C. Fries, *Teaching and Learning English os a Foreign Language* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1945; 18th printing, 1964) p. 34.

are a regular feature of the 'oral approach' although they are always intimately related to the oral practice of the language."[3] In the "direct method," on the other hand, the teacher is supposed to teach the target language without using the student's own language, without translating, and without introducing any formal grammar.

In the very first English-teaching job I had after graduating from college in 1938, a job in the preparatory school of Robert College in Istanbul, Turkey, I was required to use the "direct method," and can say from my own experience that it *is* possible to teach English even to 11- and 12-year-olds without using a word of their own language—but that doing so is a very time-consuming process. I became very proficient at carrying all kinds of realia into the classroom so that I could point at objects without naming them in Turkish, and I also became very skillful at performing such actions as crowing like a rooster and going to sleep and waking up and getting dressed (in pantomime)—but I discovered that, even though dragging an elephant into one's classroom would undoubtedly make one's teaching more interesting and lively, one's students would still associate the English word *elephant* with their own name for the animal (e.g., *fil in* Turkish), instead of associating the English word directly with the animal itself, thus bypassing the Turkish translation. As a matter of fact, I learned that no matter how often I drank water or poured out water or splashed water around the classroom, some students would still miss the English word *water* in quizzes—but no student ever forgot the English words *cowboy* and *gangster*, although I taught each of those words only once (in response to questions which my students asked—in Turkish—after seeing American films). I believe, though I cannot prove this, that the reasons for my remarkable success in teaching the English words *cowboy* and *gangster* included the fact that the students were especially interested at that particular time in the meanings of these words, and above all the fact that they had no equivalents for these words in their own language, whereas they did have a perfectly good equivalent for the English word *water*. Even very small children seem to feel the need for *names* for objects, persons, activities, and attributes which they perceive around them: such names seem to give them the means for "grasping" and hanging onto and talking about and categorizing their environment; but once they have learned labels for such items which other people recognize, they do not necessarily feel any particular need for new labels for the same items.

In any event, as soon as I was able to be more or less my own boss in my English teaching, I began to start using Turkish words in my definitions and explanations. I found the use of the students' own language especially valuable in enabling me to make sure that my students had understood my explanations, or had concentrated on the specific details that I wanted to call to their attention. It is too easy for some student to assume that the English verb *sleep* means 'snore' if his teacher is trying to put across the

3 Fries, *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language,* p. 7.

meaning of *to sleep* by play-acting and happens to include a couple of loud, hearty snores as part of his pantomime. On the other hand, the act of sleeping is probably universal enough so that the use of some form of the Turkish verb *uyumak* would probably not interfere seriously with the students' association of the English verb *sleep* with the action or state to which it refers. I did not dispense with all of my pantomiming, however; I had learned that I could make my lessons more interesting and certainly more lively by interjecting some acting and some humor, especially humor which involved poking fun at myself. I also continued to make use of realia which I carried into the classroom as needed.

But more and more I came to believe in the importance of making absolutely certain that my students understood fully the concepts that I was trying to teach them. I was perfectly willing to make use of any device, no matter how ludicrous, that would help me to drive home the point I was trying to make. Indeed, a drawing of a bald head with one hair sticking up from it, another drawing of a bald head with three or four hairs sticking up, and a third drawing of a head covered with lots of hair proved to be more effective in teaching the concepts of "singular" vs. "plural" vs. "collective" than the use of, say, one pencil as opposed to several pencils as opposed to grass or chalk. (The use of the same root in all three examples—i.e., the root *hair*—also helps to focus the attention more directly on the *grammatical* contrasts.)

I agree with those who claim that, in the initial stages of learning a foreign language, it is more important for one to learn the items that signal grammatical meanings (such a "number" and "tense") than words which carry lexical meanings. By and large, the grammatical signals in a language—any language—tend to be obligatory: that is, they are commonly required by other elements in the sentences in which they occur, rather than by the ideas which the speaker is trying to express. The suffix *-ing* in the word *feeding* in the sentence *Mary is feeding the cats,* for example, is forced b y the presence of some form of *to be* (i.e., the word *is)* immediately preceding it. Such obligatory signals can perhaps best be taught by means of *mechanical* drills which focus students' attention on the grammatical signals rather than on the meanings of the sentences in which they appear. For this reason I have never hesitated to use nonsense words like those that appear in Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" as long as the important grammatical endings-and particularly the *regular* endings—remained clearly visible. As a matter of fact, in my own teaching I prefer to use the same nonsense words over and over again: the "roots" in the nonsense words in Carroll's "Jabberwocky" are often so tantalizing that they tend to distract from the important grammatical signals which students studying English for the first time should be primarily interested in. Sentences like *Mary is woggling the wumps* and *Mary has woggled the wumps* direct students' attention more immediately to the significant difference between the *-ing* ending of the verb in the first sentence, required

by the preceding *is,* and the ending *-d* in the second sentence, required by the preceding *has.*

Even as long ago as 1946, several years before I first heard the term "linguistics," I suggested that the grammatical structure of a sentence formed a kind of "mold" into which the lexical items could be "poured" to convey the meaning which a speaker or writer intended.[4] At first I concentrated on such overt grammatical signals as plural endings and the *-ly* in adverbs, which were clearly visible and could easily be brought to my students' attention. But I soon realized that, as a native speaker, I also felt the presence of an important grammatical difference between words like *ball* and *tall,* a difference which was not at all ovbious to a nonnative speaker: to my Turkish students, *ball* and *tall* looked very much alike. The grammatical difference between these two words lay, of course, in the fact that they belonged to different "parts of speech"—and that they filled different positions in my "sentence mold." It soon dawned upon me that parts-of-speech labels were merely labels for the different kinds of positions in my mold into which different kinds of words could fit.[5]

But how to make *ball* and *tall* look like different kinds of words to my students? The traditional way of showing the difference would have been to label *tall* an "adjective," and *ball* a "noun." But teaching new labels at the same time that I taught new words would have involved teaching two new concepts simultaneously, a procedure that I have always considered pedagogically unsound. It was for this reason, for example, that I did not use a phonetic alphabet in my own teaching: I could not believe that it was pedagogically sound to teach one new alphabet, and the pronunciation of words written in that alphabet, as a way of "helping" students to recognize and pronounce words written in regular English orthography. For the same reason, I have always opposed teaching opposites (such as *long* and *short,* or *big* and *small)* in the same lesson. When one member of a pair of opposites is taught before the other—even a very short time before the other—its meaning can serve as a king of "peg" in the memory on which to "hang" the other member of the pair when it is taught later on. Once a student has learned the meaning of *tall,* for example, it is easy to teach him the meaning of *short* as the opposite of *tall.* But when both *tall* and *short* are taught as new items together, the student may focus on the

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4 See, for example, page six in the Preface to Robert L. Allen, *Shortcuts to English: The CONTROLLED ENGLISH Course* (mimeographed; Robert College, Istanbul, Turkey, 1946.

5 It must be obvious to any reader who has been exposed to the tenets of different schools of linguistics that as long ago as 1946 I was already beginning to develop a form of tagmemic grammar (although a form not fully accepted today by orthodox tagmemicists).

fact that they are opposites, and that between them the two words cover the semantic field involving both 'tallness and *short* ness.[6] I myself was taught the Turkish words for "upstairs" and "downstains" at the same time: I learned them both, and can pronounce them fairly well. I have no trouble in remembering the Turkish words for "upstairs" and "downstairs": the words are *aşağïda* and *yukarda*. . The only trouble I have is in remembering which of the two words is used for "upstairs" and which for "downstairs." Unfortunately, if one were shouting instructions in Turkish to a night watchman who was trying to catch an intruder, it might make a big difference which word one used. (Admittedly, it makes it much more difficult to prepare language-teaching materials if one does not allow oneself to teach opposites in the same lesson. When I was preparing English materials for use with employees of the Caltex Pacific Oil Company in Sumatra in 1958, I had to map out several lessons at a time in order to be sure that one member of a pair of opposites was introduced before the other—and that the second was not forgotten and left out completely.)

But to return to the problem of trying to teach *ball* and *tall* as different kinds of words even though they look very much alike. I solved this particular problem with my 11- and 12-year-olds by using different colors for different parts of speech: nouns, for example, I would write on the board with yellow chalk, and adjectives I would write with blue chalk. Thus it became apparent (to my students) that there was an important difference between a word like *ball* and a word like *tall: ball* was a "yellow word," while *tall* was a "blue word." (At first I used the Turkish names for the colors, rather than the English names.) Above the blackboard in my classroom there was fixed a long timber which represented a typical sentence in English: the positions for nouns, adjectives, the verb, and different kinds of adverbs were painted the same colors as the colors I used for the different parts of speech in my teaching. Thus one could see at a glance the kinds of positions in which "blue words," for example, might fit.[7]

The readers that I used in my classes, once I was able to make my own selection, were Michael West's *New Method Readers*, published by Longmans, Green and Company. The concept that was supposedly "new" in the "new method" referred to in the title of the series was that of introducing vocabulary items on the basis of some word-frequency list. E. L.

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6 I have often thought that if small children were taught the word *right* (as in *right hand* and *right foot)* some time before they were ever taught the word *left*, they would be more likely not to confuse the two words even as adults. I know very few persons whom I would trust to turn in the proper direction while driving a car if someone in the car who was giving directions for reaching a certain place were to shout out suddenly, "Quick! Turn left here!" without at the same time pointing in the proper direction.

7 A color scheme similar to the one I used in Turkey is described in some detail in Robert L. Allen, "GRAPHIC GRAMMAR: The Use of Colors in Teaching Structure," in Paul L. Garvin, ed., *Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics, No. 9* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1958) pp. 109-133.

Thorndike's *Teacher's Word Book of 10,000* Words had been published by Teachers College, Columbia University, in 1921; Thorndike's *Teacher's Word Book of 20,000 Words* was published by Teachers College in 1931. The idea of building reading programs around lists of high-frequency words was a fairly new one in those days; it influenced the writing of "core vocabulary" or "basal" readers for English-speaking children as well as the writing of English-as-a-foreign-language materials abroad. The vocabulary introduced in Michael West's Readers was carefully controlled, although unfortunately the grammatical constructions and sentence patterns were not.

As a matter of fact, Michael West went so far as to lay down specific rules for the introduction of new words in language-teaching materials: in his book *Learning to Read a Foreign Language,* for example, he states that "*new words should occur at regular intervals, not in a mass*"— and even that "*each new word on its first appearance should occur at least three times in the paragraph and as often as possible in the rest of the lesson or story.*" [8] West's Readers were undoubtedly quite effective in teaching vocabulary—but I have always felt that the number of times each word was repeated may not have been as effective in helping students to master the word as was the fact that each new word was printed in bold-face type in the margin of the Reader just opposite its first appearance. I have always had a hunch that the emphasis one finds placed on repetition and pattern practice in many American and British language texts may have concealed the potential effectiveness of "one-shot learning." Possibly because of the fact that I am at heart a frustrated actor, I have always leaned, in my own teaching, towards a dramatic and even humorous initial presentation of each new concept, while at the came time making certain as well as I could that my students thoroughly understood the new concept and were then given a chance to put it to use in sentences of their own making, so that I could compliment them on being right.

It is interesting to note, I think, that Thorndike, the educational psychologist at Teachers College who had so much influence on the preparation of reading materials, postulated *two* major laws of learning, not just one. These two "laws" were the Laws of Exercise and Effect. Of the two, the latter was more original with Thorndike, and became for him the central explanation of learning. Thorndike's Law of Exercise was basically a "restatement of the old principle of frequency or repetition to explain the forming of an association." [9] His Law of Effect stated that "when a modifiable connection between the situation and the response is made or is accompanied by a satisfying state of affairs, that connection's strength is

8 Michael West, *Learning to Read a Foreign Language: An Experimental Study* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926) p. 28.

9 Geraldine M. Joncich, "Science: Touchstone for a New Age in Education;" in Geraldine M. Joncich, cd., *Psychology and the Science of Education: Selected Writings of Edward L. Thorndike* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College Columbia University) p. 14.

increased; when made and accompanied or followed by an annoying state of affairs, its strength is decreased." Too much of the kind of pattern practice that one finds in ESOL materials or in audio-lingual materials is based, it seems to me, on Thorndike's Law of Exercise, while not enough is made of his Law of Effect.

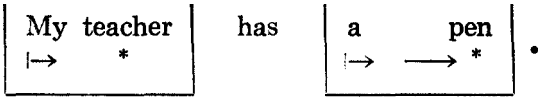
Admittedly, drill and repetition are important for the *mastery* of a new language; I have always felt, however, that much more emphasis should be placed on the kind of teaching which helps students grasp the new structures they are to learn, by means of explanations in their own language if necessary, with immediate opportunity for them to *create* sentences of their own incorporating the new principles that they have learned. To distinguish between these two phases of language learning, I will refer to the first—that of thoroughly understanding the new principle or concept being taught in a given lesson—as *"Learning,"* and the second—that of practicing the new structure again and again until it has been overlearned—as *"Mastery."* I admit that both Learning and Mastery are important in learning a new language; I admit further that I myself have probably overemphasized Learning and have underemphasized Mastery. However, I feel that not enough is made in most language programs of the importance of the motivating value of *Creativity:* of all the students to whom I have taught English, those who have *used* the language most—and have learned it best—were those who got their practice from making up sentences of their own from the very beginning, in simple (and often jocular) conversations with their fellow students, out of the sheer pleasure of manipulating the new language according to the "rules" they had already learned. Certainly this was the way in which I learned Turkish myself: I learned the grammar from a fairly conventional text, but I forced myself to use each new principle as I learned it in sentences of my own creation—and I must admit I enjoyed doing so since it was much like playing a game. I filled in the positions for words I did not know with the Turkish word **şey, which means 'thing' but which can be used as a kind of substitute** for almost any noun or verb: to the janitor in my building, for example, I would issue such instructions as **"Please şey the şey on that table to the şey over there,"** filling out my meanings with all kinds of gestures. I am sure that at first I made many grammatical mistakes, but I forced myself to speak at my usual speed and above all to make my senteces *sound* like Turkish sentences by always using Turkish sentence intonation. (I might add, parenthetically, that from the very beginning I was frequently complimented on how well I spoke Turkish.)

One of the chief criticisms I have of much programmed material and of many of the pattern practices to be found in the Michigan English language materials or in the kinds of materials that one commonly finds used in language laboratories, is that they often require a student to go on practicing a new pattern even after he has learned it and even mastered it, so

that too often the student is bored. The situation is worse when the drills are of the kind that require the student to "make up sentences" by selecting different items from different columns in a "frame": it is possible to "make up" a surprisingly large number of "correct" sentences from the following frame by merely substituting different items in the appropriate places in the original sentence—but it is also possible for students to read off the "proper responses" with so little involvement in what they are reading that they may even be thinking of something totally unrelated to English while "practicing" the drill:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My brother | has | a | red | pencil.[10] |
| My sister | | | blue | pen |
| My father | | | black | ruler |
| My friend | | | long | necktie |
| My teacher | | | large | scarf |
| | | | pretty | |

In my own teaching, I would use diagrams like the following, rather than substitution frames:




I would assume that my students already knew quite a few "star words"[11] like *teacher* and *brother*. I would then teach my students a few "arrow words," that is, words that could fit in the position in my example sentence

10 This kind of pattern practice can be even more frustrating if no explanation of the pattern is given before the drill, but if instead the student is supposed to figure out the grammatical principles involved by himself-or, worse yet, to practice the drill blindly, without asking himself (or anyone else) any questions he may have about the grammatical principles that are being "taught." When I went to Burma on a Fulbright Grant in 1953, I tried to learn Burmese from a set of books (with accompanying tapes) entitled *Spoken Burmese*, by William S. Cornyn, which had been prepared for the United States Armed Forces Institute (copyright, 1945, by the Linguistic Society of America). Practically no grammatical explanations were given in the introductory lessons, although there were many "Useful Words and Phrases" to be memorized, and numerous "Hints on Pronunciation." I have never felt more frustrated in my whole life. It may be that the best way for young children and for adults of below-normal intelligence to learn a new language is by memorizing "useful words and phrases," but intelligent students inevitably want to know just what it is, for example, that makes one sentence a question in contrast to another sentence, which is a statement-and if they are not told right away (as I was not told when learning Burmese), they may jump to the wrong conclusion as to what is involved (as I did), with the result that they will produce incorrect sentences (as I did) while trying to practice transformations like the question transformation in the target language. If a teacher wants students who are intelligent enough to wonder why, he should respect their intelligence and tell them why, instead of playing a guessing game with them, in which they may make wrong guesses which may then interfere with their later mastery of the correct forms,

11 I gave up the use of colors several yearn ago because of the difficulties involved in manipulating several different pieces of chalk in a rapid drill.

marked by an arrow; I would present these words in a list, with their translations in the target language. I would ask my students to make up their own sentences, choosing any "arrow words" and "star words" that they wanted to. At first the drill would be a purely mechanical one, with the emphasis on the grammatical pattern rather than on the meanings of the sentences. I would expect sentences like *My teacher has a red pencil* and *My teacher has* a *long ruler,* although I might also get sentences like *My teacher has a thick necktie* or even *My teacher has a red blackboard.* Later, however, I would move from the mechanical drill into a meaningful drill, in which I would ask each student to point to, or to hold up, the object he was making his statements about, in order to show that he understood what he was saying.

The star under the word *teacher* suggests, of course, that *teacher* can be replaced by other "star words," such as *brother* and *friend;* the "barred arrow" under *my* suggests that *my,* in turn, can be replaced by *your* or his or *a* or *the.* And the rectangle around *My teacher* suggests the use of other "box words" or "box units," such as *John* and *Mrs. Smith,* and even —at a later stage— *a red pencil* (as in *A red pencil has red lead).* In still a later lesson, of course, I would show my students that the "box unit" *my teacher* could be expanded to include an "arrow word" between *my* and *teacher,* so that they could, on their own, make up such sentences as *My English teacher has a red pencil.*

In such drills, needless to say, my students often used new words which they had learned, in sentences of their own devising, even before they ever saw (or heard) the same words in printed or recorded sentences. Admittedly, they would at times combine some words that would not normally be combined by native speakers of English, but at such times I would either move on quickly to the next sentence or else supply a suitable sentence myself, stopping to explain why the original sentence sounded unnatural to me.

In each of my drills, I would concentrate on a single sentence pattern or construction pattern. Admittedly, this kind of concentration on a single pattern can easily become rather boring, which probably explains why some writers of language-teaching materials try to inject interest by introducing readings dealing with different situations, in which there is often considerable variety in the kinds of sentences used. Such variety, if fairly well controlled, is excellent for supplementary reading material, but it is not really very helpful in "putting across" a new pattern. In my own teaching, I tried to maintain interest not through variety, but rather by keeping my drills *short* and *rapid,* shifting from one drill to another and then to still another before my students had time to become bored. Admittedly, most of my drills were *testing* drills—that is, they forced the student who was responding to make a choice between two or more alternatives. But whenever the student gave a wrong answer, I would correct him *immedi-*

*ately,* and move on to the next person—or even to the next item in my drill, making a mental note, however, to come back to the wrongly answered item (preferably again with the same student).

Let me illustrate the kinds of rapid drills I used to use in my ESOL classes by describing a couple of them in some detail. (Other drills-including several different kinds of drills are described in the Appendix.[12])

(1) This first drill was one which I used in order to emphasize the importance of the indefinite article in English, as in *a glass* as opposed to *glass.* I found this drill especially useful in training my students to hear the extra little pulse or syllable that is often all one can hear of the indefinite article in my rapid speech. During the drill I would hold a glass tumbler in one hand and a piece of broken glass in the other, and then, while raising one or the other, would ask my students-as a group, at first, but later individually-the question "Is this a glass?" or "Is this glass?" The only answer I would expect would be either "Yes, it is" or "No, it isn't." (Later I might ask for the fuller answer "No, it isn't; it's (a) glass," instead of merely "No, it isn't." ) I would practice with such a drill frequently, perhaps even as often as once every day, in the beginning-but as I have said, I would keep the drill *short:* after four or five minutes, I would shift to another drill, possibly another pronunciation (and hearing) drill like the one described below, a drill which at the same time directs attention to the use of the possessive suffix in English.

(2) For this drill, I would carry into class a large sheet of cardboard on which I had already drawn stick figures of two older ladies and of two young girls, each with a sloppy or grotesque hat of some sort on top of her head. (I have always made great use of stick figures in my teaching—the rougher the drawing, the better: I try to convince my students from the start that it is not important for them to be able to draw well in order to make drawings according to directions I may give. ) Under the drawing of the first girl would appear the name "Miss Adam"; under the drawing of the second, "Miss Adams"; under the drawing of the first woman, "Mrs. Adam"; and under the drawing of the other woman, "Mrs. Adams."

My drill would consist of two parts, one involving recognition, and the other production. (Again, I would start out asking for choral responses, but would soon shift to responses from individual students.) The first part of the drill would consist of my pointing to one of the hats, and asking "Is this Miss Adam's (or Mrs. Adam's, or Miss Adams's, or Mrs. Adams's) hat?" The second part of the drill would consist of my pointing to one of the hats and asking whose hat it was. Again, in the first part of the drill I would expect only short answers, such as "Yes, it is" or "No, it isn't,"

12 AlI of these drills, with the realia and/or drawings needed for each, are described in greater detail in Robert L. Allen and Virginia F. Allen, *Graded English for Caltex Employees* (6 vols.; mimeographed; Rumbai, Pakanbaru, Sumatra, Indonesia, 1958) passim.

although later I might expect negative responses to be followed by statements indicating whose hat it was that I was pointing to.

As I have said, I usually introduced every drill as a drill requiring choral responses, but soon shifted to the use of questions directed towards individual students. I would indicate the student from whom I wanted a response by looking straight at him, instead of addressing him by name. This made it possible for my drills to move along much more rapidly, and also made it possible for me to shift my attention rapidly from a student in the front of the room to one at the back of the room, or from a student on one side of the room to a student or students on the other side. I could do this without actually having to move around (although I usually did move around a little). I regularly discovered that at first, some students in my classes were not sure whether I was looking at them or at some student behind them, but in a very short time every student learned to know whether I was speaking directly to him or not. I have also found that students pay much better attention when they know that they will receive no warning that they are about to be asked a question other than by the teacher's looking at them, especially if the teacher is likely to look directly at someone who happens to be talking to someone else or to be looking out the window. All that is needed is two or three instances of an embarrassed silence while the teacher waits for a response from a student who does not realize that the teacher is looking at him for the students to catch on to the importance of keeping their attention riveted on the teacher at all times. When a teacher does not have to call on students by name, he can keep short drills like those described here moving along at a rapid tempo which leaves no time for the students to decide that they are bored. The shift from one drill to another in rapid succession adds to this kind of concentrated attention-and such drills provide students with the kind of situation they will face when they start to speak English on their own: the need to make split-second choices between two or more contrasting grammatical forms.

## APPENDIX

For those ESOL teachers who may wish to try out in their own classrooms rapid drills like those I have described, I am listing here eight more such drills, as an appendix to my original presentation. It will be noted that these drills involve several different kinds of problems faced by non-native speakers who are trying to learn English.

(1) One kind of drill which I have fequently used when teaching English pronunciation makes use of what I call “word frames.” Such frames can be used both for training students to hear the different vowel sounds of English, and also for training them to produce the vowel sounds *in words.*

One such word frame might be the following, which I would write on the blackboard:

d_____n

I would then pronounce this word frame with one or another vowel sound in it, and would ask my students to indicate, by number, the vowel sound I had pronounced. This kind of drill could not be introduced, of course, until after I had taught my students at least two or three different vowel sounds, with numbers for those sounds-but I would teach a different number for each different vowel sound from the very first introduction of the first vowel sound in my first lesson.

The idea of using numbers for vowel sounds in a pronunciation key is one which I learned from Michael West: he uses a pronunciation key with numbers for the vowel sounds in his *New Method English Dictionary,* which was first published by Longmans, Green and Company in 1935. West uses two digits together to represent diphthongs,[1] as I do, but unfortunately, he based his analysis of vowel sounds on the old International Phonetic Alphabet, which used a colon following a symbol as a sign of length: the vowel sound in *ship,* for example, was represented in the IPA by *i,* while the vowel sound in the word *sheep* was represented by *i:*. West hit upon the idea of using doubling to indicate length in vowel sounds; thus, the number 1 represents the vowel sound in *ship* in his dictionary, while 11 (to be read "one-one") represents the vowel sound in *sheep.* (Unfortunately, this suggests that the only difference between the vowel sound in *ship* and that in *sheep* is one of length: I have heard Turkish students say such things as "People sail on a sheep, [with a short *-ee-* sound], but they get wool from a shee-eep [with a long *-ee-* sound]"!

As long as I was using the *New Method Readers,* I used West's numbering system, but later I revised it so that the numbers, in my opinion at least, more directly represented the facts of American English pronunciation.[2] But even after I had stopped using West's number key, I still subscribed most heartily to the idea of using numbers for vowel sounds when teaching English to non-native speakers. The teacher can use the names for the numbers in the students' own language, of course, and can allow the students to name the numbers in their own language. But

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1 He uses the number '2' for the vowel sound in *head,* for example, and '1' for the vowel sound in *hit*—and '21' (to be read "two-one") for the diphthong in *hay.*

2 My own "number key" first appeared in a paper entitled "On the Use of Numbers in a Pronunciation Key," which appeared in Nos. 3 and 4 of the first volume of the English Language Series of the *NAFSA Studies and Papers,* published by the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors in April, 1958. My number key was also used as the basis for the pronunciation drills appearing in Robert L. Allen, Virginia French Anew and Margaret Shute, *English Sounds and Their Spellings,* (Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966). The same pronunciation key has been used in materials produced at the American English University in Beirut, as well as in materials produced by the English Language Institute in the Department of General Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh.

by having a student indicate *by number* the vowel sound in an English word which the teacher has pronounced, the teacher can prevent the student from responding with a vowel sound part-way between the vowel contrasts he is trying to teach: that is, he can force the student to take a stand as to whether the vowel sound in *ship* is "No. 1" or "No. 11" rather than something half-way between. I strongly believe in having students indicate their recognition of certain contrasts by responding in a different "modality," especially when they are drilling in a language laboratory. If a student cannot distinguish between *ship* and *sheep to* begin with, asking him merely to repeat the word spoken by the voice on the tape and then to listen to the repetition of the "correct" word by that voice is certainly no way of guaranteeing that the student will notice whether he himself had pronounced the "correct" word or not. Too often the voice on the tape says something like *ship;* the student "repeats" after the voice the word *sheep;* the voice then gives the "correct answer" *ship—and* the student nods his head in satisfaction, thinking that that is exactly what *he* said, too, since they both sound the same to him, anyway. When, however, the student is required to say either "l" or "11" after repeating the word itself, and the voice on the tape then says the word again but with a number different from the one the student gave, the student has a way of learning categorically that he was wrong.[3]

The use of numbers for vowel sounds has several advantages which only those who have conducted such drills truly recognize. Numbers make it possible, for example, to correct the pronunciation of a student who is reading something aloud and mispronounces a word: all that is necessary is to give the student the correct pronunciation with the corresponding number, and to ask him to write the number down under the vowel in his script. One can be fairly certain that the student knows how to write the numeral "l" or the numeral "3"; one cannot be nearly so certain that the student knows how to draw (let alone hear) a schwa, or a small *I.* And with numbers, one can use a single word frame like "d—n" or drills that would take up several lines on a printed page. Long ago I learned the importance of keeping my eyes on my students as much as possible: a teacher of small boys is likely to find some of his students missing if he turns around and writes on the board for any length of time. In a drill like this one, however, all that is necessary is for the teacher to write "d—n" on the blackboard, and then to pronounce words like *don, dun, dean, din,* and *den,* asking his students to indicate by number the vowel sound in each word he says. A skillful teacher will also find it possible, when continuing this drill with individual students—that is, when asking one student at a time to identify

3 See also my "Reassessment of the Role of the Language Laboratory," first published in June 1964 in No. 8 of the NAFSA Studies and Papers, *Selected Conference Papers of the NAFSA English Language Section, 1962,* and later reprinted in the *English Teaching Forum* (No. 3, Autumn 1966) by the United States Information Agency, and still later in the *Journal of English as a Second Language* (a publication of the American Language Institute of New York University), III: 1 (1968).

the vowel sounds in several different words—to tailor the drilling of any one student to that students' particular pronunciation problems.

The teacher can easily build this drill up into a more and more complicated pronunciation drill by adding one letter at a time to the word frame on the blackboard, continuing the drill briefly for each stage of the build-up (but spending more time on those stages involving consonant clusters that his students have difficulty pronouncing):

d__n
d__nk
dr__nk
dr__nks

Many of the "words" represented by these word frames are, of course, nonsense words, but I see nothing wrong in drilling with nonsense words when the focus of attention is on pronunciation rather than on vocabulary, as long as none of the nonsense words practiced involve phoneme combinations that cannot occur in English. After all, DROONKS may well prove to be a popular breakfast cereal by 1980!

(2) For the next kind of drill, I would again use a word frame like "b__n" or "t__ck," but this time I would give the numbers of the vowel sounds myself, and would ask my students (as a group and/or individually) to pronounce the word frame for me with the indicated vowel sound in it. Again, I would gradually build such a word up into one with more and more difficult consonant clusters in it by adding one letter at a time to the word frame on the board.

| | |
|---|---|
| b__n | t__p |
| b__nd | t__ps |
| b__nds | tr__ps |
| bl__nds | str__ps |

(3) One of the important principles underlying the English pronunciation of words of more than one syllable is that of the so-called reduction of vowel sounds in unaccented syllables, which commonly results in the pronunciation of a schwa sound in such syllables, regardless of the spelling. Thus, although *Jordan, Borden,* and *Gordon* are written with three different letters in their final syllables, those syllables are not pronounced like *Dan, den,* and *don,* as their spelling might suggest, but are instead all pronounced with the schwa sound. Similarly, the *e* in *panel*— but the *a* in *Chanel* (the name of the perfume)—are pronounced with the schwa sound by English speakers, even though both words end in exactly the same four letters.

How can the teacher of English to speakers of other languages teach his students to reduce such unaccented vowel sounds to the schwa sound *orally*—that is, without writing the words that he wants pronounced in some kind of phonemic transcription, which would immediately show his students those vowels that were to be pronounced as schwa? If the words

were presented to the students in some kind of phonemic transcription (as they are in many TESOL materials), the teacher could not be sure that his students had grasped the reduction principle: they might instead merely be pronouncing the schwa sound in response to seeing the schwa symbol. The only method that I have been able to devise for teaching the reduction principle orally is by means of a two-syllable word frame such as "__d__n," which I would pronounce with a "full" vowel sound in the syllable I accented and a schwa sound in the other. I would then ask my students to state the number of the vowel sound I had pronounced in the accented syllable, and indicate the syllable ("first" or "second") in which that sound occurred. (Their response to my pronunciation of *Eden,* for example, might be "Number 11 in the first syllable," while their response to my pronunciation of *a dean* might be "Number 11, in the second syllable."[4]) I would not ask my students to identify the schwa sound in the unaccented syllables—but when, in turn, I asked *them* to pronounce my word frames and with the schwa sound. Thus the word frame "h__l__n" pronounced "with expect them to pronounce the other syllable in each case with no accent and with the schwa sound. Thus the word frame "h—l—n" pronounced "with the 11 sound in the first syllable" would sound something like *healin';* pronounced "with the 11 sound in the second syllable", it would sound like the girl's name *Helene* (accented on the second syllable and with a schwa sound in the first).

(4) One of the most unusual features of the English course I taught at Robert College was the introduction of verb forms only after the students had learned to use all the auxiliaries and modals. I knew that in some languages the same verb form is used for both "actions going on at the moment of speaking" and for "habitual or repeated actions," and I feared that my own students might use the "simple present" or the "present progressive" for *both* ongoing actions *and* habitual actions in English depending upon which one they had learned first, since no matter how hard a teacher tries, he cannot stop his bright students from drawing analogies between the target language and their own and—in their desire to create sentences of their own in the new language—misusing the very first forms they learn if those forms are used for more than one function in their own language. And indeed, this was exactly the situation I found with Turkish students who had had a little English before coming to Robert College: I could tell in a moment or two whether they had been taught by tutors who used Michael West's *New Method Readers* or by tutors who used Lawrence Faucett's *Oxford English Course* (published by the Oxford University Press), since those who had started out with one series would commonly say things like "I am cleaning the blackboard now" and "I am cleaning

4 The numbers I am using here are those used by Michael West in his pronunciation key. I am using them in order not to confuse the reader, since I have already discussed them. Actually, I would prefer to use my own number system, as presented in *English Sounds and Their Spellings,* referred to above.

the blackboard every day," while those who had started out with the other series would tend to say "I clean the backboard now" and "I clean the blackboard every day." So, instead of introducing the forms of verbs in my own classes, I first taught my students to use the auxiliaries—in response to questions which I asked.

After I had taught my students several time expressions—and the personal pronouns, in addition to response signals like *Yes* and *No—I* would ask them questions like "Did you go to the cinema last night?" expecting them to understand such a question since the word *cinema* is used in Turkish as well as in English. (But I would not expect them to know—or even notice-the verb *go.)* I would expect my students to be able to figure out the meaning of my question and to be able to answer with either "Yes, I did" or "No, I didn't," using the same auxiliary in their answer that I had used in my question.[5] By including time expressions like *last night* in questions beginning with *did* or *was* or *were,* the teacher can help the student to develop a feeling for the time orientation signaled by the auxiliary. Many an English-speaking child, I am sure, has learned to associate the "meaning" of *will* with the future time expressed by *next week* by hearing one of his parents ask the other a question like the following at the supper table: "Will the c-i-r-c-u-s be in town next week?"[6]

After my students had learned most of the auxiliaries, I began to introduce the verbs—but only the forms of verbs that occur *after* auxiliaries. (By sticking to negative sentences, I was also able to include sentences with *don't, doesn't* and *didn't. )* The important concept I wanted my students to learn at this stage was the fact that there are three different non-finite forms for each verb, and that the choice of form is determined by the preceding auxiliary. The following VERB KEY shows the forms of *live* and *eat* that are used after one or another of the auxiliaries: [7]

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5 I have always been surprised that more use has not been made in teaching English to non-native speakers of the possibility of replying with short answers involving only *yes* and *no,* the personal pronouns, and the auxiliaries (with and without *-n't).* Two or three people can engage in quite a conversation (and gain quite a bit of practice in the *use* of simple *statements* and questions) even if only one of them actually uses verb forms. (It is necessary, however, for all the speakers to know the formula *I don't know* as a possible response for use when a speaker does not know the correct answer.) For example:

TEACHER (to Student A): Did you go to the cinema last night?
STUDENT A: Yes, I did.
TEACHER (speaking to Student A, but pointing to Student B): Did he (or she)?
STUDENT A: I don't know.
TEACHER: Well, ask him.
STUDENT A (to Student B): Did You?
STUDENT B: No, I didn't, but I will tonight.
STUDENT A (to the teacher): He didn't, but he will tonight.

6 For a more detailed description of the functions of auxiliaries in the English verb system, see my book *The Verb System of Present-Day American English* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966).

7 The three non-finite forms of each verb appear in the left half of the Verb Key.

**THE VERB KEY**

| | | | The 'Present' Forms | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Base Form | The N Form | The ING Form | The NO-S Form | The S Form | The Past Form |
| do (don't) | have (n't) | be | . . . . . every day, *etc.* | | . . . yesterday |
| does (n't) | has (n't) | am (not) | . . . . . once a week, *etc.* | | . . . last night |
| did (n't) | had (n't) | are (n't) | . . always, often, *etc.* | | . . . last week |
| will (won't) | ↓ | is (n't) | I, we | he | . . . an hour ago |
| would (n't) | | were (n't) | you | she | . . . a week ago |
| shall, should | | was (n't) | they | it | *etc.* |
| can, could | | been | ↓ | ↓ | I, we, you, he, she, it, they |
| may, might | | ↓ | | | ↓ |
| must | | | | | |
| ↓ | | | | | |
| live | lived | living | live | lives | lived |
| eat | eaten | eating | eat | eats | ate |

Since the verb form to be selected in such contexts is obligatory in each case, practice in the selection of the right verb form is probably best taught by means of a mechanical drill. I would start out a sentence by using a personal pronoun or somebody's name, and then add one or another of the auxiliaries-and ask my students to respond by adding the correct form of the verb we were drilling with. For examlpe: "Mary hasn't—" (STUDENT: ) "—eaten." (Frequently I also inserted a time-expression before the subject as in "Last night Mary could—" "—eat." Later I would even introduce an object like *candy* or a place phrase like *in Istanbul,* for the students to add after the correct forms of *eat* and *live:* "Last year they didn't—" "—live in Istanbul.")

Once my students had learned to add non-finite forms after auxiliaries provided by me, I would teach them that the auxiliaries *do, does,* and *did* regularly combine with an immediately following verb form to produce the remaining three of the six forms that every English verb has: the 'No-S Form,' the 'S Form,' and the 'Past Form.' In other words,

do + live = live
does + live = lives
did + live = lived

do + eat = eat
does + eat = eats
did + eat = ate

(These last three of the six forms of *live* and of the six forms of *eat* appear in the right half of the Verb Key.)

To drill the students in the use of these forms, I would merely start my sentences with some time expression followed by, or preceded by, some personal pronoun or person's name, as suggested by the headings in the Verb Key. For example: "Every day he—" "—eats candy." Again, I would expect my students to respond with the proper form of the verb. This kind of drill could easily lead into another drill, in which, after writing

a sentence like *John eats yogurt euery night* on the blackboard, I would have my students change the sentence according to different time expressions that I would provide, always repeating my time expression in the proper position in their own sentences. For example:

TEACHER: Tomorrow night.
STUDENT: John will eat yogurt tomorrow night.[8]

(5) Another kind of drill which I used with my students at Robert College was one involving the adding of tag questions after both affirmative and negative statements uttered by me. For example, I would say something like *Mary is woggling the wumps,* to which all the students—or an individual student—would be expected to add the tag question *isn't she?;* or again, *John and Mary didn't woggle the wumps yesterday,* to which I would expect the students to add the tag question *did they?* This kind of drill was especially helpful in training my students to hear (and imitate) the difference between *there are* and *they are:* compare, for example, the following two sentences —

They are woggling the wumps (aren't they?)
There are woggles in the wumps (aren't there?)

(6) One kind of drill which I have frequently used with foreign students at Teachers College in order to prepare them for dealing with sales clerks in New York City stores is a drill involving, shifts in primary stress from one word to another word in the same sentence, in reaction to "misunderstanding" on the part of the sales clerk. For example, I would place on the table in front of me a small bottle of aspirin, a big can of aspirin, and a big bottle of something else such as mouth wash—as well as a big bottle of aspirin. Then I would have some student pretend that I was a clerk in a drugstore and that he wanted me to give him a big bottle of aspirin. When first asking for the aspirin, of course, he was supposed to stress *big, bottle* and *aspirin*. But when I then offered him the small bottle of aspirin, or the big can of aspirin, or the big bottle of mouthwash, he was supposed to respond with the sentence "No, I want a big bottle of aspirin," stressing in every instance the word that indicated the one detail I had "misheard."

(7) Another kind of drill involving contrastive stress, a drill which at the same time shows how one can gradually expand a noun construction by adding more and more modifiers while at the same time maintaining the fast-paced rhythm of a rapid drill, is one requiring glasses (preferably made of plastic) and cups, both big ones and small ones, red ones and yellow ones, together with plastic spoons or plastic forks of different colors. The

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8 In 1963 I recorded a large number of drills of just this kind for use in the language laboratory at Teachers College, Columbia University; I also wrote up explanations and instructions to accompany the drills in a manuscript co-authored by Virginia F. Allen entitled *English Auxiliaries and Verb Forms,* which has unfortunately never been published.

teacher can start out by holding up one plastic glass and ask, "What's this?' When some student replies, "It's a glass," the teacher can pick up another glass of the same size and a different color, or another glass of the same color and a different size, and again ask, "What's this?" This time the student would have to reply, "It's a little glass," or "It's a red glass." By repeatedly holding up or pointing to one item and then another (while making sure that each item differs from the preceding one in only one feature), a teacher can gradually lead his student(s) into expanding a simple noun construction like *a glass* into a noun construction as complex as *a big red cup with a yellow spoon in it.*

(8) The last kind of drill which I am going to describe is surprisingly effective in teaching students to *hear,* and to *understand the significance of,* stressed words in English questions. For one such drill the teacher might draw stick figures on the blackboard representing "Mr. Jones" in the act of pulling a cart while he is at the same time pushing a wagon being pulled by "Mrs. Jones" and "Mr. Smith" together. (Both objects and both persons should be labeled, to make the drill easier for the students. ) The teacher would then explain the four different meanings of the four questions "Is *Mr.* Jones pulling the wagon?", "Is Mr. *Jones* pulling the wagon?", "Is Mr. Jones *pulling* the wagon?", and "Is Mr. Jones pulling the *wagon?"* The appropriate reply to the first question, of course, is "No, *he* isnt'; *Mrs.* Jones is"; the appropriate reply to the second question is "No, *he* isn't; Mr. *Smith* is"; the appropriate reply to the third question is "No, he isnt'; he's *pushing* the wagon; and the appropriate reply to the fourth question is "No, he isn't; he's pulling the *cart."* Most TESOL materials, I have found, do not do nearly enough to teach students to recognize-and to understand the meanings signaled by—contrastive stresses in English sentences. And yet they are among the most important signaling devices in connected discourse: by stressing certain words in his sentences, a professor lecturing to a college class frequently implies, even while stating that so-and-so did such-and-such, that someone else did *not* do the same thing (or something else). I know from my own experience that a short drill like the last one I have just described, used with a class of advanced students for only a few minutes at the beginning of each class session, can often bring about noticeable improvement in their ability to understand lectures delivered in their college courses.

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# *Teaching Writing in the ESOL Classroom: Techniques of Controlled Composition*

**Christina Bratt Paulston**

This paper examines the role of writing in foreign language teaching: the motives, objectives, procedures, and techniques. The first part of the paper seeks to examine some basic concepts in teaching composition, drawing on the relevant literature in the field, with the purpose of presenting a reasonable position of writing in the audio-lingual method. The second part of the paper deals with classroom procedures and techniques of controlled composition. The list of techniques has been culled from existing texts and from articles on producing materials for teaching composition. It is intended both as a guide for the teacher to prepare his own exercises and as a source of reference to more exercises of these types.

## I. TEACHING WRITING IN THE ESOL CLASSROOM

### Introduction

The last of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing has been grossly neglected in the audio-lingual approach to language teaching. This paper is intended as a plea to restore writing to its proper place in the curriculum and for research in the area of teaching writing. The first part of the paper seeks to examine some basic concepts in teaching composition with the purpose of presenting a reasonable position of writing in the audio-lingual method. The second part of the paper deals with classroom procedures and techniques of controlled composition.

It is not difficult to illustrate the neglect of writing in foreign language teaching and the lack of interest in it. John Carroll's "Research on Teaching Foreign Languages" reports research on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and reading but none on writing, reflecting the research interest of language teachers.[1] Braddock *et al.* list as "unexplored territory" those procedures of teaching and learning composition which are most effective for pupils learning to write English as a second language.[2] Audio-lingual textbooks generally lack any writing components whatsoever.[3] The Lackland manual states explicitly: "Speech is the primary medium of instruc-

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1 John B. Carroll, "Research on Teaching Foreign Languages," *Handbook of Research on Teaching,* ed. N. L. Gage (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963) pp. 1060-1100.

2 Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, *Research in Written Composition* (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963).

3 See, for instance, the English Language Institute Lado-Fries Series (University of Michigan Press) or the A-L M (Audio-Lingual Materials) series prepared by the Modern Language Materials Development Center (Harcourt, Brace and World).

tion in both laboratory and classroom; writing, whether on the chalkboard or in the textbook, is employed chiefly as a guide or as a reinforcement to oral performance."[4] Nor is it difficult to understand how this state of affairs came about. Given the principal ideas of the audio-lingual habit theory, which Carroll[5] calls "the 'official' theory of the reform movement in foreign language teaching in the United States," namely that speech is primary and writing secondary, that habits must be learned first as speech responses and automatized by repetition, it is quite understandable that writing has been neglected.

However, there is at present in the field of language learning and teaching a re-examination of many of the basic tenets and assumptions, and it well behooves us to examine again the role of writing in foreign language teaching. Carroll has pointed out that the audio-lingual method "is ripe for major revision, particularly in the direction of joining with it some of the better elements of the cognitive code-learning theory."[6]

I must make very clear that there is virtually no empirical evidence for my confirmed opinion that we must put writing back in the ESOL classroom if we want increased learning efficiency. The lacuna of experimental verification is immense, although Politzer[7] points out that this is symptomatic of a general lack of research in the field. Jackobovits in discussing "Theory and Practice in FL Teaching: Out of Step" points out that "it would seem to be a betrayal of the intellectual spirit to accept that which works when it should not, yet it would be folly to reject that which works merely because on theoretical grounds it ought not."[8] He goes on to say that teachers should "adopt a healthy functional attitude concerning the effects of their methods of approach, concentrating on developing and constantly using realistic evaluation criteria that would dictate maintaining or altering their activities in accord with the results they achieve."[9] Lacking empirical evidence, I will then base my remarks on the cumulative consensus of practicing language teachers as reported in the literature of what is in effect an evaluation of their activities in accord with the results they achieve. At the same time, let it be firmly stated that we must become concerned with experimental verification of the assumptions held about teaching writing.

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4 Defense Language Institute, *American Language Course*, Instructor Texts, Intermediate Phase, (Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, April 1968), p. 2.

5 John B. Carroll, "The Contributions of Psychological Theory and Educational Research to the Teaching of Foreign Languages; *Trends in Language Teaching,* ed. A Valdman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) pp. 93-119.

6 Carroll, in Valdman, 105. Carroll characterizes the cognitive code-learning theory as holding that "language learning is a process of acquiring conscious control of the phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns of a second language, largely through study and analysis of these patterns as a body of knowledge." (Valdman, 102).

7 Robert L. Politzer, Professor of Education and Romance Linguistics, Stanford University. In personal communication, March 20, 1971.

8 Leon A. Jakobovits, *Foreign Language Learning: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of the Issues* (Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House, 1970), p. 34.

9 Jakobovits, 35.

**Motives and Objectives**

In examining the reasons for teaching writing, we need to state the objectives clearly. In writing, the levels of the students' language proficiency are an important consideration. On the beginning and intermediate levels writing serves to reinforce and consolidate the other language skills; it is also important for homework and testing purposes. Writing, then, is used as a service activity, in accordance with the view that "Transfer is perhaps the single most important concept in the theory and practice of education."[10] The lack of objective evidence that writing does reinforce the other language skills is discussed by Meckel as due primarily to a deficiency in research methodology.[11] But the value of writing as a service activity is convincingly attested to by the consensus of language teachers.[12]

Furthermore, writing is one way of providing variety in classroom procedures, and it also makes possible individualized work in large classes. Writing tends to increase retention and makes possible a source for later reference. Very importantly, it provides a student with physical evidence of his achievements and becomes a source whereby he can measure his improvement. As teachers of intensive oral courses know, an accurate evaluation of increased oral proficiency by the students themselves is rare. They frequently voice the feeling that they are not progressing; a record of the student's written work may alleviate this problem.

We do know that "materials presented visually are more easily learned than comparable materials presented aurally,"[13] and certainly writing contributes to the visual presentation. Another fact in verbal learning is the following: "The more numerous kinds of association that are made to an item, the better are learning and retention. Again this principle seems to dictate against the use of systems of language teaching that employ mainly one sensory modality, namely, hearing."[14]

Another exceedingly important consideration is that of language ability and different styles of learning. Pimsleur has called one component of language learning ability "auditory ability" and he considers this "the main factor differentiating normal achievers from underachievers in foreign language learning. It is hypothesized to be the factor which accounts for differences in people's language learning ability which are not explainable by

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10 Leon A. Jakobovits, "Second Language Learning and Transfer Theory: A Theoretical Assessment," *Language Learning,* XIX: 1 and 2 (June 1969), 55.

11 Henry C. Meckel, "Research on Teaching Composition and Literature: *Handbook of Research on Teaching,* ed. N. L. Gage (Chicago: Rand McNally 1963), pp. 969-970.

12 Donna H. Carr, "A Second Look at Teaching Reading and Compositional *TESOL Quarterly,* I: 1 (March 1967), 30-34; Wilga M. Rivers, *Teaching Foreign Language Skills* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1968), pp. 240-260; Pauline M. Rojas, "Writing to Learn," *TESOL Quarterly,* II: 2 (June 1968), 127-129.

13 Carroll, in Valdman, 105.

14 *Ibid.*

intelligence or interest."[15] People with low "auditory ability" need to use compensatory skills such as writing in learning languages.[16]

On the advanced-intermediate and advanced levels, writing can become a goal in itself. The objective now is to teach writing as a skill in its own right. Even the nonacademic student, who has no need to write reports and term papers, will feel the need some time to be able to write letters, messages, memos, notes, telegrams, invitations, directions, and to fill in forms. Owens, in summing up the meeting on the teaching of writing at the Singapore conference, stated, "It is one of the main criticisms (of the audio-lingual approach) that its students can speak better than they can write."[17] Even if our objectives are not to produce students who can speak and write equally well, they do need to know the rudiments of writing. Writing skills do not transfer automatically from speaking skills, and students who are explicitly taught to write, write better than those who are not.[18] It may be well to point out here that although the teaching of creative writing in the foreign language classroom is a moot point, the consensus is that such activity is better undertaken in the student's native language.

**Procedures: Free Composition vs. Controlled Composition**

We need next to consider what kind of writing to teach, or rather the procedures to follow in teaching writing. In the following discussion, I shall concern myself primarily with students on the beginning and intermediate levels, which I consider the primary domain of controlled composition.

Let us first agree on some terms. Writing is the activity and the composition is the objective; and by composition I mean what everyone else means—writing beyond the sentence level, putting together words in a grammatically acceptable form and ordering the resultant sentences in an appropriate way. There are aspects of writing which have nothing to do with composition: we use writing exercises for memorizing patterns and vocabulary, for homework, and for testing. There are also aspects of composition which have nothing to do with writing such as information gathering and outlining, the logic of the paragraph and the clarity of thought about to be encoded. Controlled composition can be defined as applying techniques of control to writing exercises in order to achieve a correct composition.

In teaching composition, there are basically two methods. One is free composition where the student writes whatever comes into his head. The other is controlled composition where, by certain controls similar to those in pattern drills, the student is helped (guided, directed, controlled; the

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15 Paul Pimsleur, "Testing Foreign Language Learning: *Trends in Language Teaching*, ed. A. Valdman (New York: McGraw-Hill 1966), p. 182.

16 Wilga Rivera, *The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1964), p. 112.

17 R. J. Owens, "Report on Meetings of Section C—The Teaching of Writing: Regional Seminar on New Developments in the Theory and Methods of Teaching and Learning English, *Report*, Singapore, 6-14 June, 1969, p. 76.

18 See, e.g., G. Scherer and M. Wertheimer, *A Psycholinguistic Experiment in Foreign Language Teaching* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1964).

terms are usually used synonymously) to produce a correct composition. Typically such a composition consists of a written model with specific directions for rewriting the model. Again, it would be pleasant to be able to support one's teaching procedures with empirical evidence and state categorically that controlled composition is a more efficient method for teaching composition. I know of no such evidence.

To make matters more difficult, there is no consensus in the literature. Erazmus[19] and Brière[20] advocate quantity of free writing rather than quality. Brière conducted an experiment to support this view although his findings seem clearly contradicted by Dressel, Schmid, and Kincaid (on native speakers) who concluded "that mere practice in writing will not improve composition skills unless attention is given to the quality of writing."[21] The majority of opinion, however, agrees with Anita Pincas, who, astonished at Erazmus' "naive traditional views," stated that "although new teaching methods, based on the findings of structural linguistics, recognize the student's need for systematic and rigidly controlled teaching of pronunciation and grammar, they have not yet recognized the equal need in the field of compositionteaching."[22] In 1966, Slager could say, "The assumption, by now basic to the profession, is that composing—writing beyond the sentence level—must be guided or controlled."[23]

It would seem provident then to examine the major assumptions underlying controlled composition, and the practical classroom manifestations of using such procedures. Using techniques of controlled composition makes it possible to teach one thing at a time while focusing the student's conscious attention on the critical features of the language patterns,[24] two established principles in learning theory. It gives the student maximum opportunity for practice in writing correct paragraphs, thereby learning through instrumental conditioning by immediate reinforcement of the right response. It makes possible a careful grading and sequencing of the language patterns

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19 Edward T. Erazmus, "Second Language Composition Teaching at the Intermediate Level," *Language Learning, X:* 1 and 2 (1960), 25-33.

20 Eugène J. Brière, "Quantity before Quality in Second Language Composition" *Language Learning,* XVI: *3* and 4 (1966). 141-151.

21 Meckel, in Gage, 983.

22 Anita Pincas, "Structural Linguistics and Systematic Composition Teaching to Student of English as a Foreign Language: *Language Learning,* XII: 3 (1962), 185.

23 William R. Slager, "Controlling Composition: Some Practical Classroom Techniques," *NAFSA Studies and Papers, English Language Series,* No. 12, ed. R. B. Kaplan, p. 77. For other *articles* which deal with techniques of teaching writing, see Diana M. Allen, "Controlled Composition in Second Language Classrooms: Texts and Techniques," *English for Ameican Indians,* Spring 1971, 41-60; Mary Finocchiaro, "Secondary School Composition: Problems and Practices," *TESOL Quarterly,* I: *3* September 1967), 40-46; Lois Robinson, "Controlled Writing for Intermediate Students," *Teaching English as a Second Language.* ed. H.B. Allen (New York: McGraw-Hill 1965), pp. 265-270 and "Teaching Writing:' paper given at the Third Annual TESOL Convention, Chicago, Illinois, March 5-8, 1969; ERIC Clearinghouse ED 38846 Aurora Samonte, "Techniques in Teaching Writing; *RELC Journal,* I: 1 (June 1970), 127-138; and Mamie Sizemore and Grace Blossom, eds., "The Fourth Communication Skill: Writing," *Arizona English Bulletin,* 12:1 (October 1969), 30-35.

24 Carroll, in Valdman, 105.

to be written, thereby protecting the student from a hit-and-miss activity as well as from a multiple of errors. It makes it possible for the student to work within the limits of his proficiency and, with some texts, at his own pace of progress, two major principles of programmed learning.

However, in my opinion, the most important theoretical justification for using controlled composition in the ESOL classroom lies in the realm of motivation. We do know that motivation is a major consideration in language learning. Hugh Fraser reports on a program using controlled composition for native speakers in Scotland and he especially comments on the motivational aspect: "The children are in fact willing enough to write, or indeed do anything else we ask of them, provided they have a reasonable chance of success in what they are doing.[25] I have reported elsewhere[26] on an experiment where a composition class was divided into two groups, Group A using a program of controlled composition and Group B writing weekly free papers. Although the findings concerning increased proficiency were inconclusive, there was clearly discernible difference in behavior between the two groups. Group A always handed in their papers on time, asked for extra work, attended an extra conference hour and in general showed a great purpose of direction. Group B handed in late papers, very rarely attended the extra hour, frequently expressed feelings of discouragement, and certainly never asked for extra work. When writing with controlled composition, the students become accustomed to writing correct compositions, and they will carefully ask questions if they are not certain of the correct response. And because of the nature of the control, they know exactly what questions to ask before they make a mistake.

In the real world of language teaching, we are justified to look at other than theoretical considerations. In testing, practicality is a viable concept and so it should be with teaching. A teacher with fifteen students in a class and five classes a day is not likely to give daily assignments in free composition. Using controlled composition makes it possible for him to give frequent writing assignments. Another important consideration is that of teacher control. Cobb pointed out at the Singapore Conference that "one must face the unpleasant fact that many teachers in this region do not feel adequate to the task of teaching composition. The controls of various forms of guided composition assist them as well as the pupil."[27] This corresponds exactly with my own experience in working with student teachers who, although native speakers of English, were inexperienced in the classroom procedures.

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25 Hugh Fraser and W. R. O'Donnell, *Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of English* (London: Longmans, 1969), p. 137.

26 Gerald Dykstra and Christina Bratt Paulston, "Guided Composition," *English Language Teaching,* XXI: 2 (January 1967), 136-141.

27 D. Cobb, "Writing with Strict (and Lass Strict) Guidance," Regional Seminar on New Developments in the Theory and Methods of Teaching and Learning English, *Report,* Singapore, 9-14 June, 1969, p. 68.

Owens has summarized the potential advantages of using controlled composition:

1. The new materials can be used at various levels.
2. They provide plenty of practice in writing correct forms, rather than practicing the incorrect forms of too hastily required free composition.
3. They allow the teacher to gauge and control the advance of the student towards such types of free composition as may be possible within the course.
4. They cover teaching points systematically and gradually, and hence link composition work to classroom instruction, and copy-writing to free-writing.
5. They are planned to fulfill a specific purpose, and are based on discernible principles.
6. They permit the learner to pace his own progress within limits.
7. They are not too difficult to produce, provided one has an itemized graded syllabus to work from, and a clear idea of the register restriction involved.
8. They lighten the teacher's load, since they are quick and easy to correct.[28]

Although it may be possible, albeit rather doubtful, that students would learn to write equally well on the beginning and intermediate level using free composition, the practicality of the procedure of controlled composition seems overwhelmingly in favor of adopting such a technique for teaching writing.

Writing on the advanced level presents other difficulties which are outside the scope of this paper. Advanced level writing is clearly within the realm of rhetoric where the students need to write freely to express their own ideas. The most fruitful approach seems to be that outlined by Robert Kaplan.[29]

## II. TECHNIQUES OF CONTROLLED COMPOSITION

### Control

Typically a controlled composition consists of a written model of some type with directions for conversions or specific language manipulations in rewriting the model. The degree of control lies both within the model and within the type of manipulation the student is asked to execute on the model. In a substitution table composition like the following, where all fillers are

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28 R. J. Owens, "Teaching English Composition," *RELC Journal*, I: 1 (June 1970), pp. 125-126.

29 Robert B. Kaplan, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," *Language Learning*, XVI: 1 and 2 (1966), 1-20, and "A Contrastive-Rhetoric Approach to Reading and Writing: *NAFSA Studies and Papers, English Language Series, No. 12*, ed. R. B. Kaplan, 1967, pp. 85-93; see also Charles T. Scott, "Some Remarks on the Teaching of Composition," *NAFSA Studies* and *Papers, English Language Series, No. 10*, ed. R. P. Fox, 1964, pp. 43-48; J. F. Green, "Preparing an Advanced Composition Course," *English Language Teaching*, XXI: 2 (January 1967), 141-150. For texts on the advanced level, see also Robert G. Bander, *American English Rhetoric: Writing from Spoken Models for Bilingual Students* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1971); Jewell A. Friend, *Writing English as* a *Second Language* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott. Foresman and Co. 1971); Ann E. Nichols, *English Syntax: Advanced Composition for Non-Native Speakers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston 1965).

interchangeable, there is complete control, and all the student need do is copy correctly:

> A (1) man (2) walked (3) down the street. A (4) girl (5) was waiting for him outside a (6) shop. As he approached her, she smiled (7) and said, "Hello. How are you?"
>
> (1) tall, young, well-dressed
> (2) with a beard, in a black hat, with sunglasses
> (3) rapidly, hurriedly, impatiently
> (4) pretty, fair-haired, dark-skinned
> (5) in high-heeled shoes, with an umbrella, in a pink hat
> (6) chemist's, grocer's, bicycle
> (7) pleasantly, attractively, in a friendly manner etc.[30]

However, if *with a beard* had appeared as a possible selection in (5) it would not have been an appropriate selection, and the student must understand that in order to write an acceptable paragraph. Finally, the student might be asked to provide a suitable expression of his own in the appropriate place. The degree of control depends on the degree of choice the student has in writing his composition. I have argued elsewhere for a sequence of mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills in teaching structural patterns where these three types of drills were analyzed in terms (1) of expected terminal behavior, (2) of response control, (3) of the type of learning process involved, and (4) of criteria for selecting utterance response.[31] It seems reasonable that the same type of sequence should be followed in the types of composition exercises that lend themselves to it. In the following examples by Moody, which are similar in kind if not in format to Spencer's above, the first frame is a mechanical exercise:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Two of our old students | | England | last year. |
| Mr. Oladipo | | Lagos | last week. |
| Mrs. Ademola | went to | Nsukka | two days ago. |
| My uncle | | Zaria | three months |
| David's eldest brother | | Badagry | ago.[32] |

There is complete control since all alternatives are fully interchangeable; the student will write a correct composition as long as he can copy carefully the correct answers supplied by the teacher. It is important to realize that the student can produce a correct composition from such a frame and still not understand what he has written. For any learning to take place the teacher must make sure that the student does understand, or the writing practice will become mere busy work.

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30 D. H. Spencer, "Two Types of Guided Composition Exercises," *English Language Teaching*, XIX: 4 (July 1965), 158. See also, D. H. Spencer, *Guided Composition Exercises* (London: Longmans, 1968).

31 Christina Bratt Paulston, "Structural Pattern Drills: A Classification," *Foreign Language Annals*, IV: 2 (December 1970), 187-193.

32 K. W. Moody, "Controlled Composition Frames," *English Language Teaching*, XIX: 4 (July 1965), 150. See also K. W. Moody, *Written English under Control* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1966).

The following frame is meaningful:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| He<br>She<br>They | traveled by | sea<br>train<br>air<br>car<br>lorry<br>bus | because | she<br>they<br>he | did not have a car.<br>could not afford an air ticket.<br>could not go there by train.<br>knew the ships were all full.<br>wanted to get there quickly.<br>did not want to pay too much money.[33] |

The student cannot write a correct composition if he does not understand what he is doing, structurally as well as lexically. The control is diminished; thus, the correct response directly depends on the student's knowledge of English. The information for responding is still supplied by the teacher, but there is now a right and a wrong choice for the student to make. The final step is to have the student write a composition of his own, using the same patterns as in the model but making up his own story. In the drills I have named this step communicative, since the students talk about their own world and opinions, but it may well be that in writing it is not so much communicative as imaginative. In any case, there is no control of lexical items and much less of structural patterns; the student now supplies the information for responding, and the problem-solving type of learning process is very different from the habit formation of the mechanical exercises. This type of control, then, employs several composition exercises to cover one grammatical feature, the first rigidly controlled while the last may at times come close to free composition.

There is another type of control such as that found in my own *Controlled Composition*[34] and in Sandburg's *Writing Laboratories*[35] where the controls are gradually relaxed throughout the program and once relaxed do not go back to a closer control again. There is no evidence that one type of control is better than another, but for the beginning levels I believe the zigzag control from mechanical to communicative is necessary. No amount of mechanical writing is going to teach a productive generating of sentences, and the students need to work with the relaxed controls, albeit within very simple patterns. For the more advanced levels I prefer the diminishing controls where the student gains confidence by his steadily increasing liberty.

33 Moody, 150.

34 Christina Bratt Paulston, "Controlled Composition: A Program for College Students Whose Native Language Is Not English" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1966). See pages 211-212 for a discussion of control.

35 Karl C. Sandburg, "Drills for Writing Laboratories," *NAFSA Studies and Papers, English Language Series*, ed. D. Wigglesworth (1907).

**List of Techniques**

In the following list of techniques of controlling writing, I have made no attempt to classify these techniques according to control, but have listed them according to type. The reason for this is that many types of controlled composition techniques can serve with varying degrees of control. Moody makes the same "Controlled Composition Frame" above serve as the model for mechanical, meaningful, and communicative writing. The teacher should be aware of the importance of the degree of control and suit the activities according to the needs of his students.

This taxonomy of techniques has been culled from existing texts and from articles on producing materials for teaching composition. It is intended both as a guide for the teacher to prepare his own exercises and as a source of reference to more exercises of these types. I have intended it more as a catholic sampling than as a personal endorsement.

There seem to be basically five kinds of controlled composition where the writing exercises derive from (1) substitution tables or frames, (2) models with directions for rewriting the model, (3) pictorial control, or a combination of pictorial control and written or oral model, (4) dictation exercises with oral control, and (5) exercises with semi-control where content and ideas are suggested but with a minimum suggestion for structural patterns. I shall limit my discussion to techniques of controlled composition where the control is generated by written stimuli.

*Substitution Tables.* Substitution tables go by many names, but primarily they are referred to as tables or frames. They differ from the substitution conversions written from model passages in that all necessary substitutions are indicated to the student either by slot or by number. In the substitution exercises of rewriting models the student has to find all necessary correlative substitutions himself. There are (1) single, (2) correlative, and (3) multiple substitution exercises. This is a single substitution exercise from Costinett based on a previous reading:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I feel | tired | today.[36] |
| | sick | |
| | exhausted | |
| | horrible | |

A correlative substitution exercise may be quite simple as the one (Table I) from Moody[37] or as complicated as the one (Table 11) from Arapoff.[38]

What they have in common is that the student is asked to choose one filler from each slot and that his initial choice will necessitate later choices. If *Mrs. Ademola* is chosen in the first sentence, then the pronoun must be

36 Sandra Costinett, *Structure Graded Readings in English,* Book Two (Washington, D. C.: Gemini Books, 1970), p. 78.

37 Moody, 150.

38 Nancy Arapoff, "Controlled Rhetoric Frames," *English Language Teaching,* XXIII: 1 (October 1968), 31.

TABLE I

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two of our old students<br>Mr. Oladipo<br>Mrs. Ademola<br>My uncle<br>David's eldest brother | | went to | England<br>Lagos<br>Nsukka<br>Zaria<br>Badagry | last year.<br>last week.<br>two days ago.<br>three months ago. |
| He<br>She<br>They | went there | to inspect a new factory,<br>to study at the university,<br>to see Mr. _____ | | |
| | | to visit<br>to meet | her<br>their<br>his | friend _____.<br>sister-in-law. |
| | works | in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<br>in the office of a big company. | | |
| who<br>which | teaches<br>takes | students | from many different countries.<br>of many nationalities. | |
| | **makes**<br>**produces** | **many kinds of** | **tires.**<br>cloth.<br>electrical equipment.<br>batteries. | |
| He<br>She<br>They | traveled by | sea<br>train<br>air<br>car<br>lorry<br>bus | because | she<br>they<br>he | did not have a car.<br>could not afford an air ticket.<br>could not go there by train.<br>knew the ships were all full.<br>wanted to get there quickly.<br>did not want to pay too much money. |
| His<br>Their<br>Her | friends<br>brother<br>sister | met | them<br>him<br>her | at the | airport,<br>docks,<br>bus station<br>railway station,<br>motor park,<br>hotel, |
| The<br>A<br>An | manager<br>bus<br>taxi<br>old friend | | | | |
| and took | her<br>them<br>him | to | the<br>his<br>her<br>their<br>a | house.<br>factory.<br>hotel.<br>office. | |

*she* in the second. In the same way, in Arapoff's "Rhetoric Frames" the choice in box (5) is a grammatical one, but "if a student chooses *Hawaii's weather* in box (1)

> he will then select the parallel to this, '. . . . . 's weather' in box (6) for he will have learned that grammatical parallelism is a rhetorical device to promote coherence between ideas in an essay."[39]

39 Arapoff, 28.

TABLE II

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hawaii's climate<br>Hawaii's weather<br>The weather in Hawaii<br>The climate in Hawaii<br>In Hawaii the weather<br>(1) | is said to be<br>is<br>can be considered<br>(2) | just as<br>more<br>not as<br>less<br>(3) | stimulating<br>interesting<br>comfortable<br>monotonous<br>enjoyable<br>changeable<br>(4) | as<br>than<br>(5) | (name of your country)'s weather.<br>_____'s climate.<br>the weather in _____.<br>the climate in _____.<br>(6) |
| Hawaii<br>Hawaii's weather<br>The climate in Hawaii<br>In Hawaii the weather<br>Hawaii's climate<br>(7) | is said to have<br>is<br>can be shown to be<br>has<br>doesn't have<br>(9) | no variety,<br>unchangeable,<br>monotonous,<br>no seasonal changes,<br>no seasons,<br>n't any seasons,<br>changes,<br>seasons,<br>(10) | | while<br>but<br>and<br>however<br>although | _____<br>_____'s weather<br>the climate in _____<br>in _____ the climate<br>(12) |
| There are no seasons in Hawaii,<br>(8) | | | | and similarly<br>(11) | there are<br>(13) |
| has<br>is said to have<br>can be shown to have<br>is said to be<br>(14) | no variety<br>no changes<br>no seasonal changes<br>n't any seasons<br>monotonous<br>(17) | | | In Hawaii<br>(22) | the weather<br>the climate<br>(24) |
| four<br>two<br>no<br>(15) | four<br>two<br>(18) | seasonal changes.<br>seasons.<br>(21) | | The weather in Hawaii<br>The climate in Hawaii<br>Hawaii's weather<br>Hawaii's climate<br>Hawaii<br>(23) | |
| | changeable.<br>a lot of variety.<br>(19) | | | seasons in _____ (16) | |

| | |
|---|---|
| either.<br>too.<br>(20) | is,<br>can be shown to be,<br>seems to be,<br>(25) |
| four<br>two. | |

The latter is a rhetorical choice and involves language manipulations much more sophisticated than in the Moody frame.

Multiple substitution exercises may also be very simple:

> The children stole the apples
> student/borrow/book; woman/choose/cake; porter/lift/suitcase[40]

with the model rewritten as: The students borrowed the book, etc. They may be made meaningful by adding choices which are not appropriate as I pointed out above; a *girl* would not go well *with a beard*. Finally, a paraphrase of model maintaining structural patterns may be considered the ultimate in multiple substitution exercises:

> Mary was a foolish girl who thought only about beautiful clothes. One morning, she was walking along a road, carrying a basketful of eggs. She was going to the city to sell them and to buy clothes with the money. She was walking in the middle of the road, thinking of the clothes she was going to buy. Suddenly a big car came around the corner. Mary jumped out of the way, dropped the basket, and all the eggs were broken.

The student is asked to rewrite it with "John was a young man":

> John was a young man who cared mainly about lively parties. One night he was drinking at a party, enjoying an evening full of fun. He was singing to the guests to amuse them and to impress Joan with his cleverness. He was standing on the chair in the corner, singing of the girl he was going to marry. Suddenly the host came into the room. John jumped off the chair, sprained his ankle, and all the fun was spoiled.[41]

The teacher needs to take care that the exercise does not become one of ingenuity even for a native speaker, but that the model merely serve as a guide of patterns and organization.

*Models with Directions for Rewriting.* The type of controlled composition which employs a written paragraph or two with directions for rewriting it, employing specific language manipulations, is by far the most common among the extant texts. The models divide into two categories: the one where "the measure (for selection) is excellence or at least high competence, of written expression";[42] the other employs unnatural, although not ungrammatical, writing in order to elicit the correct composition.

**Faulty Models.** A paragraph consisting entirely of yes/no questions is a typical example of the latter type. The conversion from question form to statement form constitutes the composition:

> Model: Is a foreign student an exceedingly busy person? Does he frequently study five and a half days a week? However, are weekends a little different? Does even the busiest student try to spend a few hours with his

40 Spencer, 167.

41 Anita Pincas, "Teaching Different Styles of Written English," *English Language Teaching,* XVII:2 (January 1984), 78.

42 William D. Baker and T. Benson Strandness, *The Experience of Writing* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), p. iv.

friends Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon? When such friends meet, do they often relax over a leisurely meal?

Composition: A foreign student is an exceedingly busy person. He frequently studies five and a half days a week. However, weekends are a little different. Even the busiest student tries to spend a few hours with his friends Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon. When such friends meet, they often relax over a leisurely meal.[43]

The model paragraph can also be written as a series of either/or questions: "Is the Atlantic Ocean east or west of the United States? Is Mexico north or south of Central America? etc."[44]

There are also exercises with *wh* -questions, questions with modals, and *have* questions.

Fill-in-the-blanks exercises are also examples of a faulty model as in this one on subordinate conjunctions:

(1) Do you know _____ he came yesterday and not today?
(2) They told him _____ they were going and _____ was going with them.
(3) It seemed —— he did not know what to do.[45]

Florence Baskoff's use of fill-in-the-blanks compositions is interesting. She correctly names them quizzes, and they serve as the cue to elicit the responses the students have already studied in the preceding model which contained no blanks, but consisted of a piece of natural language.[46]

The last type of exercise with a faulty model is that which consists of re-ordering scrambled sentences into a coherent paragraph:

1. The people also, in ever increasing numbers, are awakening to the need for at least the rudiments of education for all.
2. These offerings have been adjusted to both elementary and secondary instruction, sometimes as additions to the regular school programs, more often in separate schools.
3. Until comparatively recent times vocational education in Latin America was neglected, for coupled with the nearly exclusive concern of the well-to-do with a classical type of education, there was the common idea that those who did manual labor needed little education.
4. The past few decades have seen a remarkable growth in schools offering commercial, technical, agricultural, and other training in trades and industries.
5. Present-day leaders, however, have come to the conclusion that if the American nations are to develop along sound social, economic, and political lines, such development must find root through a system of universal education.

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43 Lois Robinson, *Guided Writing and Free Writing: A Text in Composition for English as a Second Language* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 2.

44 Lois Robinson, "Controlled Writing for Intermediate Foreign Students," p. 267.

45 R. R. Campbell, *English Composition for Foreign Students* (London: Longmans, 1962) , p. 47.

46 Florence Baskoff, *Guided Composition* (Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, 1971).

> Check your work by referring back to the reading selection. If your ordering of the sentence is different from that actually used by the author, be prepared to defend it logically.[47]

The instructors in the English Language Institute report favorably on these exercises in Baumwoll and Saitz, but they despair of the longer ones in Kaplan. Try this one:

> With two exceptions, the sentences below constitute a four-paragraph essay, but they have been printed in a disordered sequence. Reconstruct the essay by dividing it into its four parts.
>
> 1. That they have survived for so long in such numbers is due in large degree to the fact that they have perfected a variety of highly efficient means of defense.
> 2. Some butterflies have tattered wings that resemble dead leaves, or oddly patterned wings that look like colored bark.
> 3. Another, which feeds on oaks, is stouter and rougher; it even shows what appears to be the scars where the previous season's leaves were joined to the twig.
> 4. The click beetle, for example, combines a jumping organ with sound.
> 5. He can also jump straight up to a height equal, in human terms, to jumping a five-story building.
> 6. But perhaps the most amazing of all protective devices are the ways in which insects use pattern, shape, and color as a means of disguising themselves.
> 7. A spectacular example of chemical defense is the bombardier beetle, which has a turret forming the rear of his abdomen, from which he can fire to all sides, as many as twenty-nine times in four minutes.
> 8. Some of the most fantastically camouflaged insects are those that resemble twigs.
> 9. A number of other insects rely upon leaping as a method of escaping from enemies.
> 10. The caterpillar of one moth hatches from the egg in the late summer and feeds on birch leaves; at that time its color is reddish-brown with some green markings, harmonizing well with the early fall foliage.
> 11. One kind of a twig caterpillar has a smooth, slender body like the twigs of birches on which it feeds.
> 12. Despite the popular belief, insects are not primarily destructive creatures.
> 13. For more than 300,000 million years, insects have populated the land and fresh waters of the earth with the greatest assemblage of species of any group of organisms.
> 14. When picked up, this beetle gives a startling click that might cause a bird to drop it in alarm.
> 15. The common grasshopper relies on his phenomenal leaping alone.
> 16. Some scientists feel that, if pesticides are not improved, insects might one day overwhelm the rest of the world.
> 17. A great many insects possess chemical armaments.
> 18. He can leap horizontally about twenty times his body length, equivalent to a man's covering a football field in three broad jumps.
> 19. Some simply have an evil smell or a foul taste.

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47 Robert Baumwoll and Robert L. Saitz, *Advanced Reading and Writing: Exercises in English as a Second Language* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 160-161.

20. It lies motionless for a few moments, then snaps its body and leaps high in the air with another loud click.
21. Some others have poison glands which produce large amounts of formic acid; one ant species can squirt this acid as far as a foot away.
22. But by the spring, when its color has changed, a concealing green has replaced most of the brown.[48]

My own feeling, which I recognize as one of personal bias. is that I do not like to work with unnatural language of any kind. The model, which serves to guide the student to a correct composition, should be in excellent English, and so should the resultant composition. A paragraph with ten pluperfect is just un-English, and it is not worth sacrificing a decent composition for the maximum practice.[49] For these reasons I object to the techniques of controlled composition with a faulty model, which I have outlined above.

**Excellent Models.** *Models:* The use of a model written in excellent or at least good English for the student to imitate in writing his own composition is probably the most common of all techniques in controlled composition, be it on the sentence or paragraph level. Essentially the techniques are those we are familiar with from pattern drills; the difference is primarily that the model is much more complicated.

Slager[50] lists the characteristics of models for use in controlled composition: they should be short, contemporary, and rather simple in style with a careful and obvious organization. On the more advanced level I think they should include a variety of those syntactic features which are characteristic of mature prose[51] and they should represent a variety of writing: narrative, descriptive, reflective, factual, analytical, critical, instructional, and hortatory. Janet Ross[52] and I[53] have offered suggestions for preparing models: you write your own, you can adapt existing materials, or you can use passages you find in your reading.

For lower levels one should limit the vocabulary, but the sentence structures, which must of course be known by the students, control themselves, as it were. The control lies in the conversion: either you can convert

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48 Charles Kaplan, Guided *Composition* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968) , p. 185.

49 Two texts which sacrifice natural sounding English in the students' composition for increased practice of specific patterns are Gerald Dykstra, Richard Port and Antonette Port, *Ananse Tales: A Course in Controlled Composition* (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1966), and Robinson, *Guided Writing and Free Writing*

50 Slager, 84.

51 Kellog W. Hunt, "Do Sentences in the Second Language Grow like Those in the First?' *TESOL Quarterly,* IV: 3 (September 1970). 195-202: Marcella Frank. "A Manual for Teaching Sentence Structure through Practice in the College Composition/ Communication Course," unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1963.

52 Janet Ross, "Controlled Composition," *NAFSA Studies and Papers,* English Language Series, ed. D, Wigglesworth (1967), pp. 47-49.

53 Christina Bratt Paulston, "The Use of Model Passages in a Program of Guided Composition: *On Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages,* Series III, ed. B. W. Robinett (1966).

a structure or you can't, and the difficulty lies in finding or writing convertible structures. Once this is achieved, the other structures in the passage are merely rewritten, and, in fact, all structures are controlled. Of course, if a structure causes semantic difficulty, that is another matter; the one necessity is that the model passage be understandable to the student.

> In looking for model passages to convert to specific patterns, one is at first likely to be discouraged since it seems at times difficult to find what one is looking for. Parallelism, for instance, is not very frequent in modern English but it can be found in essays, editorials, sermons, political speeches, in writing which attempts to convince readers. Passives are much rarer than one might think; newspaper accounts are a good place to look for them, as are grammars. You can read many pages of fiction without coming across any sentence connectives—the place to look for them is in writing which deals with involved abstract facts, especially in comparison. I remember looking for them in B. A. G. Fuller's *History of Philosophy,* and there in two short paragraphs were nine sentence connective. Imperatives are surprisingly scarce . . . they can be found in cookbooks and how-to books. Modifications are most easily used with fiction, i.e. the adding of adjectives and adverbs, of relative clauses and the like.[54]

Conversions. Model passages lend themselves to two kinds of writing activity: conversions and what I can only call semi-controlled composition, really an ad hoc list of techniques, where the model passage serves to suggest content and ideas, but with little structural control. The latter is an important step in going from controlled to free composition.

There are three types of conversions: substitutions, transformations, and modifications. In a substitution conversion the structural patterns of the sentence remain the same as in the model while slots are filled by a specific class of fillers. In a transformation conversion the stuctural patterns differ from the model, although the output remains controlled by the original sentence structures. Modification exercises involve primarily expanding the patterns in the model and are the result of the student's choice.

(1) Substitution conversions. As with substitution tables, there are single, correlative, and multiple substitution conversions. They lend themselves primarily to exercises in the grammatical categories of gender, number, and tense, and in replacing synonyms and transition words. Here's a correlative substitution conversion on gender changes:

Model (from Clarence Day, *Life with Father):*

> Father had the same character as a boy, I suppose, that he had as a man, and he was too independent to care if people thought his name fancy. He paid no attention to the prejudice of others, except to disapprove of them. He had plenty of prejudices himself, of course, but they were his own. He was humorous and confident and level-headed, and I imagine that if any

54 Paulston, 152.

boy had tried to make fun of him for being named Clarence, Father would simply have laughed and told him he didn't know what he was talking about.

Assignment:

Rewrite the entire passage, changing the word *Father* to *Mother* each time it appears. Remember to change the pronouns, nouns, and names whenever it becomes necessary.

Student's Composition:

*Mother* had the same character as a *girl,* I suppose, that *she* had as a *woman,* and *she* was too independent to care if people thought *her* name fancy. *She* paid no attention to the prejudices of others, except to disapprove of them. *She* had plenty of prejudices *herself,* of course, but they were *her own*. *She* was humorous and confident and level-headed, and I imagine that if any boy had tried to make fun of *her* for being named Clarissa, *Mother* would simply have laughed and told him *she* didn't know what he was talking about.[55]

If the student is asked to underline his changes from the model, the teacher can correct the composition at a glance.

The following exercise is a multiple substitution conversion. As is obvious from this example, substitution exercises need not be as easy as those cited above.

Model (from Gerald Dykstra, "A New Dimension in Laboratories"):

"The National Interest and Teaching of English as a Foreign Language," a document prepared by the National Council of Teachers of English, quotes a conservative estimate that 400 million people now speak English. Since a very large part of this number speaks English as a second language, the continuing need for teachers of English as a foreign or second language is immediately apparent. In addition, there are millions who are now in English classrooms who will not make extensive use of English as a spoken language but who will use textbooks, reference books and scholarly works in English to complete their own education in almost all professional fields. All of these need qualified teachers. Finally, of course, there are the vast numbers studying English who will never advance far enough to make practical use of English, spoken or written, but who might do so if they had qualified teachers now.

Assignment:

Rewrite the entire passage, changing . . . *400 million people now speak English to* . . . *400 million men are now learning to cook.* Follow the general structure of the model, but make whatever changes in vocabulary that are necessary for the passage to make sense. Use your imagination freely.[56]

This is my contribution to the women's liberation movement; the resulting compositions from this exercise are always funny. I will let the reader concoct his own.

(2) Transformation conversions. The usual transformation conversions are exercises on changing the imperative to various tenses, passive to active and active to passive, statements to questions and questions to an-

55 Christina Bratt Paulston and Gerald Dykstra, Controlled Composition (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971).

56 Paulston and Dykstra.

swers, negative to positive and positive to negative, adjectives and adverbs to clauses and phrases, clauses to phrases and phrases to clauses, direct to indirect and indirect to direct speech. "There are as well, in Dacanay's terminology, integration, reduction, and transposition exercises.[57]

Here is a typical transformation conversion from Baskoff:

> Change the following sentences from passive to active voice. Note: If there is no agent you must supply one as the subject in the active voice:
>
> 1. First I was directed to my seat by the stewardess.
> 2. We were told to fasten our seatbelts.
> 3. A few minutes after take-off, magazines and newspapers were distributed.
> 4. I was given some gum to chew because my ears hurt.
> 5. We were given instructions on what to do in case of an emergency, etc.

The student's composition will be something like this:

> First the stewardess directed me to my seat. Then she told us to fasten our seatbelts. A few minutes after take-off, the stewardesses distributed magazines and newspapers. One of them gave me some gum to chew because my ears hurt. The captain gave us instructions on what to do in case of an emergency.[58]

The next exercise is a direct to indirect speech transformation conversion from Arapoff. This exercise is very complicated and is followed by two pages of analysis (in the form of questions) in order to enable the student to write such a conversion himself. Nancy Arapoff believes writing is a thinking process.[59]

> Conversation:
>
> John: I've heard San Francisco is a beautiful city. Bob went there on his vacation.
>
> Don: I didn't know that. I've been thinking he'd gone to Los Angeles. I'd have liked to've heard about San Francisco. I am planning to go there on vacation.
>
> John: He might've visited both cities. He'll be arriving in a few minutes. You can ask him then.
>
> Indirect address:
>
> John mentioned to Don that he had heard San Francisco was a beautiful city. Bob had gone there on his vacation.
>
> Don replied that he hadn't known that. He had been thinking Bob had gone to Los Angeles. He would have liked to have heard about San Francisco. He was planning to go there on his vacation.
>
> John said that Bob might have visited both cities. He would be arriving in a few minutes. Don could ask him then.[60]

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57 Fe R. Dacanay, *Techniques and Procedures in Second Language Teaching* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1963), pp. 107-151.

58 Baskoff, 137.

59 Nancy Arapoff, "Writing: A Thinking Process," *TESOL Quarterly*, I: 2 (June 1967), 33-39; see also, "Discover and Transform: A Method of Teaching Writing to Foreign Students; *TESOL Quarterly*, III: 4 (December, 1969), 297-304.

60 Nancy Arapoff, *Writing through Understanding* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 25.

Integration exercises-joining sentences by conjunctions and relative pronouns-appear in most texts. These examples are on the sentence level:

Cue: The suitcase is lost, and the handle of the suitcase is red.
Response: The suitcase, whose handle is red, is lost.[61]

Cue: Steve never watches commercials. Stan does not like them.
Response: Steve never watches commercials, nor does Stan like them.[62]

They are pure pattern drill, and very effective. They should be taken to the paragraph level:

Model (from Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms):*

I did not believe the Germans did it. I did not believe they had to. There was no need to confuse our retreat. The size of the army and the fewness of the roads did that. Nobody gave any orders, let alone Germans. Still, they would shoot us for Germans. They shot Aymo. The hay smelled good and lying in the barn in the hay took away all the years in between. . . . I listened to the firing to the north toward Udine. I could hear machine gun firing. There was no shelling. That was something. They must have gotten some troops along the road. I looked down in the half-light of the hay barn and saw Piani standing on the hauling floor. He had a long sausage, a jar of something, and two bottles of wine under his arm.

"Come up," I said. "There is the ladder."

Assignment:

Hemingway is describing the retreat in Italy during World War I. One of his stylistic characteristics is his short sentences. Rewrite the entire passage, combining with subordinate conjunctions as many sentences as you can with ease. See Appendix V (which contains a list of conjunctions.)"

A less controlled integration exercise, which I have classified as a modification rather than as a transformation conversion, presents a model with the directions to add a relative clause, a reason clause, a purpose clause, etc., to certain specified sentences:

Model (from Irving Howe, "T. E. Iawrence: The Problem of Heroism"):

1) To an age that usually takes its prose plain, Lawrence's style is likely to seem mannered. 2) Unquestionably there are passages that fail through a surplus of effort; passages that contain more sensibility than Lawrence could handle or justify. 3) But it is dangerous to dismiss such writing simply because we have been trained to suspect the grand, etc.

Assignment:

Rewrite the entire passage, adding comparison clauses to sentences 1 and 3. See Appendix V (which lists conjunctions to use for comparison clauses).

The student's composition may look like this:

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61 Earl Rand, *Constructing Sentences* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969) , p. 75.

62 Jacqueline P. Grillin and G. Howard Poteet, *Sentence Strategies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 1971), p. 267; for another text on the sentence level, see also Helen E. Lefevre and Carl A. Lefevre, *Writing by Patterns* (New York: Knopf, 1967).

63 Paulston and Dykstra.

> To an age that usually takes its prose plain, Lawrence's style is likely to seem *more mannered than we are used to.* Unquestionably there are passages that fail through a surplus of effort; passages which contain more sensibility than Lawrence could handle or justify. But it is *as* dangerous to dismiss such writing simply because we have been trained to suspect the grand *as it is consistently to submit to bathos.*[64]

This adding-of-clauses type of controlled composition is a much more complicated kind of language manipulation than it seems at first,. and requires very clear thinking on the part of the student.

Many have been concerned about reduction exercises, i.e. reducing sentences or clauses to verbal phrases (embedding) in order to pack information into a sentence. A high degree of predication within a sentence is typical of mature written English, and this type of exercise is a primary concern of many writing texts, especially those for native speakers.

> Cue: A boy was frightened by a dog. The boy quickly ran to the door.
> Response: Frightened by the dog, the boy quickly ran to the door.[65]

> Cue: Even if Phil is drafted, he will propose to Nadyne.
> Response: Even if drafted, Phil will propose to Nadyne.[66]

These exercises should also be taken to the paragraph level. Janet Ross suggests one way of doing so:

> Directions:
>
> Included clauses help indicate the precise relationship between ideas. In order to make the following selection less wordy, express in one sentence the ideas between the bars. You will probably use included clauses to do this.
>
> ***At the Airport***
>
> /At the airport I always like to conjecture about the people. I see many people at the airport./ That lady is a grandmother. She is standing beside a jewelry counter. She is meeting a plane. Her daughter and two small grandchildren are on the plane./ etc.

This is a composition which one of her students wrote:

> I always like to conjecture about the many people I see at the airport. That lady standing by a jewelry counter, is a grandmother meeting a plane on which are her daughter and two grandchildren.[67]

Reduction exercises may also be done as modifications in which case the student is simply asked to add certain types of verbal phrases to indicated sentences. Earl Rand reports on an interesting procedure for teaching embedding, which he calls synthesis, following traditional British terminology. The model paragraph, which contains many embedding, is rewritten in simple sentences.

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64 Paulston and Dykstra.
65 Rand, 83.
66 Mary E. Whitten, *Creative Pattern Practice: A New Approach to Writing* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 133.
67 Janet Ross, "Controlled Writing: A Transformational Approach; *TESOL Quarterly,* II:4 (December 1966), 260-261.

> The problem of how these atoms are arranged in a protein molecule is one of the most interesting and challenging now being attacked by workers in the physical and biological sciences.

The students rewrite this sentence, which is the last of a paragraph, as they have done all the others, in simple, active sentences:

> The problem is one of the most interesting and challenging problems.
> The problem is that these atoms are arranged somehow in a protein molecule.
> Workers are now attacking the problem.
> The workers are in the physical and biological sciences.

A week later the student is asked to combine the paraphrased, simple sentences into one sentence. "He is urged (1) to place the new or main information in the independent clause and the secondary, supporting material in the subordinate clauses or phrases, (2) to pronominalize, (3) to make a sentence with an unimportant actor-subject into a passive and to delete the *by-phrase,* and (4) to use transition words."[68]

(3) Modification conversions. Modification exercises are primarily compositions to which the student has added or completed some patterns of the model. They are similar to expansion drills in pattern practice. They lend themselves primarily to the adding of adjectives and adverbs, articles and noun modifiers, phrases and clauses, and transition words. Completing a sentence, which has been partially begun, can also be considered a modification exercise.

The following are some typical exercises on the sentence level:

> Complete the following sentences using adjective clauses.
> a. This is the house where _____.
> b. The lawyer whom _____ lives in San Diego.
> c. The class which _____ starts at 9:00 A.M.
> etc.[69]
>
> Complete the following sentences using noun clauses.
> a. I believe _____.
> b. I asked the policeman _____.
> c. I don't know _____.
> etc.[70]

They can be done equally well on the paragraph level:

*A Familiar Procedure*

> Directions:
>
> Complete the four following paragraphs of partial statements with time clauses in the simple present tense, underlining the time clauses.
> Hing will go to the college cafeteria in a few minutes for another meal.
> He will take off his cap as soon as . . . He will not take off his coat until after . . . He will continue to carry his briefcase while . . .
> etc.[71]

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68 Earl Rand, "Analysis and Synthesis: Two Steps toward Proficiency in Composition," *Workpapers in English as a Second Language: Matter, Methods, Materials.* (Department of English, University of California at Los Angeles, April 1967), pp. 87-91.

69 Baskoff, 156.

70 Baskoff, 157.

71 Robinson, *Guided Writing and Free Writing,* 28.

The degree of control in these exercises depends on the degree to which possible answers have been discussed in class. There may be oral preparation or the exercises may be based on a previous reading. The student may also simply be presented with a passage and asked to add certain patterns to indicated sentences. Passages taken from fiction lend themselves best to this kind of writing activity; it is not as easy as it may seem to find appropriate passages. Here is one which lends itself particularly well to modification conversions:

Model: from Muriel Spark, *Robinson*

1) I was on the patio, pulling faces, when I noticed Tom Wells standing in the shadow of the fountain. 2) I do not know how long he had been standing there, watching me. 3) The object of my facial contortions was to attempt to discover what it felt like to be Jimmie and Tom Wells respectively. 4) My method was not infallible, but it sometimes served as an aid to perception. 5) I had practiced it since childhood. 6) You simply twist your face into the expression of the person whose state of mind and heart you wish to know, and then wait and see what sort of emotions you feel. 7) I had begun with Jimmie. 8) First I considered myself to be standing high and lean, very fair, with a straight wide mouth; and I pulled my mouth straight and wide, I made my eyes close down at the far corners; I raised my eyebrows and furrowed my brows; I put my tongue inside my lower lip, pulling my chin long; my nose, so concentratedly did I imagine it, curving up slightly at the bridge. 9) Then I was self-consciously Jimmie.[72]

With this passage the student can be asked to add verbal phrases to sentences 5, 7 and 9; relative clauses at his own discretion; reason clauses to sentences 2, 4 and 7; purpose or result clauses to 2, 5 and 7; or concessive clauses to 2, 5 and 7. It must be emphasized that directions for rewriting passages must be very clear, and that examples of reason clauses, etc. should always be given. Because there is a considerable degree of copying involved in writing these types of controlled composition, the student should not be asked to do the same passage twice simply because several language manipulations are possible with one passage.

The following is an exercise (for native speakers) on modification, based on a model passage from Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath:*

| *General* | *More Specific* |
|---|---|
| a motor vehicle | a huge red transport truck |
| He kept the motor on. | The vertical exhaust pipe muttered softly, and an almost invisible haze of steel-blue smoke hovered over its end. |
| The colors of the truck were striking. | _____ |
| It was quiet. | _____ |
| The people spoke ungrammatically. | _____ [73] |

Here is a last example of a modification conversion on adding transition words or sentence connectors, as Arapoff calls them:

72 Paulston and Dykstra.
73 Baker and Strandness, 14.

Factual Account:

American higher education has a rural tradition. America began as a civilized but rural nation. Its first colleges and universities quite naturally began in the country. Land was cheap in rural areas. It was less expensive to build schools there. Country people thought city life would have a bad influence on their children. They wanted them to go to rural schools.

Unified Report:

American higher education has a rural tradition for three reasons. First, America began as a civilized but rural nation. Therefore, its first colleges and universities quite naturally began in the country. Also, land was cheap in rural areas, so it was less expensive to build schools there. In addition, country people thought city life would have a bad influence on their children; thus they wanted them to go to rural schools.[74]

*Techniques of Semi-Controlled Composition.*

As Maryruth Bracy[75] has pointed out, there "exists a broad gap between the least-controlled writing and entirely free composition." Left to his own devices the student will still make a great number of errors, but his proficiency is such that he needs to move beyond carefully controlled manipulation of structures and vocabulary. Bracy comments on an experiment where her students wrote fewer errors when the content was controlled:

> The problem is not to structure the content so that specific sentence structures will result; otherwise, the students are back to controlled writing. The suggestion is to explore ways of re-structuring topics so as to graduate the control . . . The result would be a range of "freeness" in composition similar to the already well-defined range of control in writing.[76]

In absence of such an established range, I can merely list some established techniques of semi-control. The one principle that they all share is that the model supplies the content or the ideas for the composition, while there is little structural control. A common procedure is to present the student with a model passage and ask him to paraphrase it, to write a summary of it, to add a beginning, middle or end to it, or to outline it. Or he may be given an outline and asked to write a composition from it. Another technique uses topic sentences to control the student's composition:

Directions: Add three more sentences that develop the topic sentence:
1. Once I visited a village which was located . . .

_____

_____

_____

74 Arapoff, *Writing through Understanding.* 87.

75 Maryruth Bracy, "The Move from Controlled Writing to Free Composition, or, 'Write 300 Words on Being a Foreign Student at UCLA,'" *Workpapers in English as a Second Language*, Vol. IV (June 1970) Department of English, University of California at Los Angeles, p. 22.

76 Bracy, 22.

2. The people of the village had their own distinct customs.

_____

_____

_____

etc.[77]

Karl C. Sandburg[78] suggests drills for what he calls "writing laboratories" and I shall quote examples from his NAFSA paper at length, since I find his suggestions excellent.

> Instructions: Write a biographical sketch of the imaginary Russian novelist Ivan Ivanovich.
>
> You may describe him as you like, but the following questions and information may help you. Most of the action will, of course, be in the past tense.
>
> Parentage
>
> Born 1812. Father dies when Ivan is three—How? from tuberculosis? by political assassination? of grief over his wife's infidelity? from being thrown from a horse? Mother—rich or poor? beautiful or homely? aristocratic or commoner? strong (domineering, self-willed) or weak? selfish or generous? like or unlike her husband?
>
> Ivan's education
>
> Was it solid or sketchy? Did he study classical or modem subjects? How many languages did he learn to read? to speak? French? German? Spanish? Chinese? Latin? How widely did he read in economics and political theory?
>
> Early manifestations of revolutionary tendencies
>
> Why? Because of social abuse of his mother? Revolt against maternal authority? Being influenced by a group of young intellectuals who were anarchists in disguise?
>
> His Siberian experience
>
> Arrested in 1842 for plotting on the Czar's life. Was he guilty or not guilty? How was he treated in Siberia? harshly or kindly? How did he stand the weather? Did he lose his mind or remain sane? Released in 1847.
>
> Declining years in Paris
>
> Writes his masterpiece *Confessions of a Siberian Exile*— acclaimed or rejected by Parisian society? Died rich or poor? from starvation, gout, or tuberculosis?
>
> If the student possesses a large vocabulary he branches out from the possibilities suggested. If he does not, he still finds enough alternatives in the drill for him to do something imaginative and original (no two biographies of Ivan Ivanovich resembled each other).

The next drill is less controlled and is intended for a more advanced group. It presupposes previous drill on the patterns of conjecture. After these patterns are reviewed in class, the following announcement is made: You have probably heard of the revolution yesterday in Costra Incognita. The information which has come to us by radio and TV is unfortunately quite incomplete. We have only the facts listed below. Tell what you think must have happened.

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77 Slager, 82.
78 Sandburg, 56-57.

7:10 A.M. The national radio goes off the air. What did people think had happened? Power failure in the electrical system? Strike by the broadcasters union?

7:30 A.M. The national radio comes back on the air. A different announcer plays the national anthem. Why?

7:50 A.M. Numerous shots are heard in the vicinity of the presidential palace. What did the people think was happening? Fireworks in celebration of the president's wife's birthday? A fire in a nearby ammunition factory? A bank was being robbed? What do you think was happening?

9:50 A.M. The national radio announces that the air force has gone over to the rebels.

10:00 A.M. Airplanes bomb rebel positions. Who was flying the planes? Did the air force remain loyal to the president? Did rebel air force pilots mistakenly bomb their own positions?

11:00 A.M. The radio has gone off the air. No further word has been received. What do you think has happened? What do you think will happen?

Another technique which has proved helpful is to ask the students to write on a similar topic as in the model passage. Here is a writing assignment from Ross and Doty:

Model passage:

*Language and Culture*

To know a person's language is to understand his culture, for language grows out of and reflects culture. The Tzeltal tribe in Mexico, for instance, has twenty-five different words for expressing the idea *to carry*. Tzeltal speakers can indicate by one word each of these concepts: carrying on the shoulder, carrying on the head, carrying in a bundle, carrying in the palm of the hand, or carrying in a container, etc.

Writing assignment:

Following the model in the preceding exercise, write a composition in which you show how knowing your own native language helps a person understand your culture. Underline the verbal constructions in your paragraph, using as many as are appropriate to express your ideas but varying their function in the sentence. Also underline the subject sentence of your paragraph.[79]

J. A. Bright has some nice exercises for letter writing:

SUDAN LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY, LTD.
(Incorporated in England)

KHARTOUM
P.O. Box 86
Tel. No. 2217 (Accounts)
Tel. No. 2468 (Repairs)

Branches
Omdurman. Tel. No. 5623
Khartoum N. Tel. No. 2723

KHARTOUM ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLY

(a) Write to the above company saying that You have been sent the bill for somebody else's house.

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79 Janet Ross and Gladys Doty, *Writing English: A Composition Text in English as a Foreign Language* (New York: Harper and Row 1965), p. 144.

(b) Write to the above company asking whether it is or is not possible for them to run later buses between Omdurman and Khartoum, and whether the bus service could not be extended to cover Khartoum North.

(c) Reply to (b), agreeing to the first suggestion, but rejecting the second. Give reasons.

(d) Write to the above company asking about the terms upon which special buses may be hired. Answer your own letter.[80]

And finally, here is a semi-controlled composition exercise on parallelism of my own. This differs from the others in that there is still attempt at guiding the structures. The reader will have to experiment where in the range of semi-controlled writing such a composition belongs:

Model: from Gerald Dykstra, "A New Dimension in Writing Laboratories" Such supporting materials should also contribute toward meeting one of the major shortcomings inherent in most classroom teaching—oversize classes. Yet, if having thirty to eighty students under one teacher is not conducive to normal interpersonal linguistic communication, neither is the ideal to be found in the opposite extreme of having each student hermetically sealed off from his fellows in a laboratory booth.

Neither classroom situation nor laboratory nor textbook nor trained teacher nor any other element by itself will provide us with a panacea for all our ills, but through use of varying combinations of these some people seem to be learning some English. There is every reason to believe, and little reason to doubt, that English teaching can be further improved by new and better supporting materials which may take the best from current materials or classroom situations while meeting some of the shortcomings.

Assignment:

Rewrite the entire passage, changing *such supporting materials* to *such a political system*. Make up your own shortcomings or change *oversize classes* to *overcrowded housing in slum apartments*. Follow the general structure of the model, especially the parallel structures, but make whatever changes in vocabulary that are necessary for the passage to make sense. Use your imagination freely.[81]

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80 J. A. Bright, *English Composition Course for Overseas Students* (London: Longmans, 1962), p. 121.

81 Paulston and Dykstra.

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# *Programmed Dictation: An Example of the P.I. Process in the Classroom*

**C. Allen Tucker**

Programmed instruction is a process and should not be confused with the various specialized media through which the student normally engages in the process. Most programmers, regardless of certain philosophical or procedural differences, follow a fairly simple set of general procedures in planning, developing, end presenting programmed instruction in any subject area. The ESL teacher can learn these procedures with relative ease and, by following them, can apply the P.I. process to the learning of any of the various English language skills. One skill in particular, that of learning to hear spoken English, lends itself very well to the P.I. process through the use of programmed dictation. By following the procedures of the P.I. process the ESL teacher can learn to select suitable previously practiced drill sentences, to present them appropriately in the context of programmed dictation, and to provide the vital ingredient of IKR (immediate knowledge of results). Programmed dictation, with immediate knowledge of results provided throughout each session, can aid both the student and the teacher in identifying the student's individual errors in hearing spoken English.

In the many thousands of classrooms where English as a second or foreign language is being taught daily, several common characteristics are discernible. One of those characteristics is activity. The nature of the activity varies considerably, sometimes in relation to the age of the learners and sometimes in relation to the type of training the teacher has received. If one visits a variety of ESL classrooms, he may find that in some only the students are active, while in others the teacher is the active one. In some of the classrooms where activity occurs chiefly among the students, a visitor may observe hour-long encounters with workbooks while the teacher grades papers, or equally tiresome sessions in which the entire class chants its way through a seemingly unrelated sequence of drills with the teacher's only contribution being an evenly paced modeling of utterances in a list intonation.

Visiting a classroom at the other extreme where a dynamic teacher is the source and center of all activity—that is, he does all the talking—can be equally disturbing to the visitor. In many such cases, the teacher is obviously well-informed about the nature of English. His presentations are sparkling, and the chalkboard, rapidly filling with intricate symbols, lines, and charts, testifies to his familiarity with the professional shorthand. That he may be explaining, in English, a complex feature of the English language

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to students who are not able to understand either the language or that complex feature apparently goes unnoticed by such a teacher.

These types of classroom activities are obviously examples of extremes, and, fortunately, they can be found less frequently today than twenty years ago. However, when such instructional hours do take place or whenever relatively lengthy periods of such activities occur in any ESL classroom, both the students and the teacher are probably being involved in a comparatively fruitless use of time.

I am sure that all of us who are teachers of English to speakers of other languages are in agreement on one thing: that we and our classes fall safely and happily between these two extremes. As teachers, we plan and initiate meaningful and productive activities for the learners, and we participate in those activities in various ways other than as a live drill model. We do not look at ourselves as the primary source of wisdom in the classroom, and, therefore, we do not yield to the temptation to *lecture* brilliantly on the logic of American English syntax or whatever—at least not very often.

If one can judge the intentions and purposes of ESL teachers from their behaviors in their classrooms and from the tasks which they set for their students, one can assume that learning is facilitated in many instances by student activity or behavior. Regardless of the source of their ESL teacher training or education and regardless of their fidelity to this or that school of linguistics, most teachers proceed in their classrooms as though they knew that students acquire more of the various skills of English by engaging in behaviors which make use of these skills than by reading or hearing about the nature, form, and function of the English language. They also appear to have very definite ideas about the relative usefulness of a variety of activities—some they like; others they do not like. Some they find useful at certain stages of instruction; others they employ at another point in the sequence. Some activities seem better suited to the acquisition of a particular skill than others do.

Most successful teachers appear to have a plan in mind, not only for a particular day, but for a week or more. Many teachers have a clear idea about where all of the daily and weekly planned sequences of instruction and student activity will finally lead. Some even know exactly what behaviors will be required of the student at the end of the course-on the final examination, that is.

The students' textbooks and the instructors' manuals are not always seen as the only resource for appropriate student classroom behaviors. A great many teachers are well aware of the inadequacies of much of the commercially published material as a source for all classroom activities. Such teachers spend a great many hours in planning and preparing their own schedules of daily activities which fit within the frame of the textbook's overall sequence of lessons and which enable them to direct their students

through a series of behaviors calculated to provide the most interesting, challenging, and motivating encounter with the subject matter.

In addition, the majority of teachers are very skillful at discovering the individual differences among their students and at deciding how these differences can best be accommodated in the daily classroom activities. Many teachers are very alert to the variety of backgrounds which their students bring to the classroom—varieties in quality and quantity of previous educational and social experience, in type and effectiveness of prior instruction in English, and in the students' developed abilities to master the different skills of hearing, speaking, reading, and writing English.

The many thousands of teachers who view their jobs of teaching English in these ways are not very far removed from the general point of view of another group of educational specialists-specialists in programmed instruction.

Within the field of programmed instruction, there are probably as many philosophies and points of view about strategies and techniques as there are in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages. However, regardless of these differences or possibly because of them, programmed instruction has been assuming an increasingly larger role in the areas of training, instruction, and education during the last fifteen years. Industry has turned to programmed instruction for all levels of training, from management to the assembly lines. The military is making extensive and efficient use of programmed instruction and has been among the forerunners in research and development in this field. In the field of education, the progress of programmed instruction has been somewhat slower, somewhat sporadic, and perhaps more traumatic.

Teachers have reacted to the idea of programmed instruction in various ways. Some teachers, upon learning about programmed instruction and hearing assurances that it will never replace the teacher, have said, in effect, "You mean machines and special books and things and maybe computers that will do a lot of the routine jobs of giving information and allow me the time to do things that I can do much better than any machine could? Wonderful! Bring them in—and the sooner, the better."

Other teachers, perhaps somewhat less secure, have viewed the whole idea with alarm. Some have reacted against the "unfeeling machine" as a poor substitute for the warm, responsive environment provided by a real, live teacher. Others have seemed to take it more personally, viewing the advent of programmed instruction as the end of their professional careers as teachers. To these, even the mention of programmed instruction produces a momentary look of panic followed by the appearance of determination to stave off the ominous onslaught somehow.

Still other teachers have reacted to the notion of programmed instruction with a yawn. "All that expensive hardware that the kids can break up in a week and all those funny books full of sentences with holes in them. Forget it. It will go away." Perhaps they are right. Perhaps it will go away

when educational technology develops something better to replace it, but, since it is very present in our time, it might be useful to consider whether or not we, as ESL teachers, can make some of the basic concepts of programmed instruction work for us.

Programmed instruction is a process. It should not be confused with the specialized hardware and textbooks which sometimes constitute the media through which learners engage in the process. As a process, the concept of programmed instruction draws upon three related fields—psychology, pedagogy, and the specific subject matter being taught. It focuses on the learner and the act of learning rather than on the teacher and the act of teaching. Therefore, it draws from the three fields those facts, ideas, and practices which seem best suited to guiding the learner through the various activities involved in learning in the most efficient and satisfactory manner.

Admittedly, programmed instruction is a complex process and the principles which guide its specialists in the preparation and presentation of a programmed course of instruction in any subject area are both numerous and complicated. Many subgroups and many specialists within the field are not in agreement on a number of these matters. Yet, there are several fundamentals which appear to underlie the work of a variety of programmers. For our purposes, the following procedures, highly simplified and very briefly stated, will probably be sufficient.

First, in planning a programmed course or sequence of instruction, the programmer must know what the learner will have to be able to do with the information or skills he acquires during the training. For example, students at the Defense Language Institute English Language Branch must be able, among many other things, to comprehend the meanings of much of the specialized vocabulary in their subsequent training programs when they hear or read it. These end-of-training or terminal objectives are normally written out by the programmer in great detail emphasizing both the quantity and the quality of the required behaviors. After these terminal objectives are known, the programmer must have a reliable test instrument to measure the learner's skill in performing each of these important tasks. The programmer must know something about the kinds of learners for whom the instruction is intended. He must know what quality and quantity of prior experience with, or training in, the target subject they bring to the first day of instruction.

Only if the programmer knows how much the learners will know at the beginning and what they will have to know at the end of training can he arrive at the difference or that which must be the content of the course. Having determined the content, the programmer normally prepares a trial version of the program and administers it to as many students as necessary to determine the optimal sequence and quantity of instruction, and to select the most efficient learner behaviors. This process may require several revisions of the program.

The learner's interaction with programmed instruction usually occurs along the following lines. The learner is presented with carefully measured segments of information. The amount of information given in each segment has been determined by experience to be the largest amount that most students can cope with efficiently. After he has been given a segment of information or of the subject matter, he is given a task to perform in which he must use the information he has just received. As soon as he has completed the task, he is given immediate knowledge of the results, that is, he learns whether his results were right or wrong. If he was right, this knowledge appears to serve as a reward or a reinforcement to the learner. If he was wrong, he learns not only that he was wrong but what his answer should have been.

Most programs give the learner a number of tasks or behaviors to engage in after the presentation of each segment of instruction. Depending upon the content of the instruction, the following sequence of behaviors may include a variety of tasks which he must ultimately be able to perform, or it may be a progression from simple to difficult tasks of the same general type. In either case, the sequence gives the learner a number of opportunities to strengthen his ability to make proper use of the information which preceded the sequence of tasks.

As the student progresses through the program, he usually encounters tasks which require him to use information and skills from earlier portions of the program in combination or in conjunction with the most recent ones.

Throughout the program, all the information which is given and all the tasks which the learner performs are leading directly to similar tasks which he must perform on interim or review tasks and, eventually, on the terminal test of his competence.

Hopefully, this brief and very general sketch of some of the procedures followed in programmed instruction will make one thing clear, that is, that programmed instruction is a *process* which makes careful and extensive use of activities on the part of the learner to facilitate his acquisition of a set of recognized terminal skills or capabilities. The purposes of the skilled programmer are, like those of any responsible teacher, to help each learner as efficiently as possible to receive maximum benefits from the instruction.

Most language laboratory drill tapes are examples of programmed instruction. During the student's encounter with most language laboratory drill tapes, he receives small amounts of information or is asked to use information recently presented in the classroom. Then, he is given a series of tasks to perform, that is, utterances to repeat, modify, or transform. Often his completion of each utterance is followed by feedback or post-modeling. In addition to this immediate knowledge of results, students often have the opportunity to review their tape-recorded utterances in contrast with the correctly modeled utterances. Depending upon the format of the laboratory materials and upon the sophistication of the laboratory

equipment, language laboratory drills can exemplify some or virtually all of the usual procedures of programmed instruction.

The language laboratory, however, need not be the only occasion for programmed instruction in an ESL curriculum. Since programmed instruction is a process which emphasizes the careful, conscious control of the presentation of subject matter and of student behavior to facilitate mastery of the content and related skills, it is a process which many ESL teachers should find useful in the classroom, especially those teachers who believe that behavior engaged in by the learner contributes to his learning.

The process of programmed instruction, or the P.I. process, can be used in the classroom for the learning of any or all of the language skills. In learning how to speak or write, where the individual student's performances are very overt, the P.I. process is perhaps easiest to employ. The learning of reading is also comparatively easy to guide through this process, Many textbooks can, with a little judicious modification by the teacher, be used as the sources of appropriate segments of information in a useful sequence. Some textbooks include examples of very appropriate learner activities. It remains only for the teacher to experiment with amounts of information and sequencing of presentation to make best use of the textbook. In addition, the teacher must evaluate the activities suggested in the text, and sometimes alter and often expand them, to be sure that they are activities which require the learner to use the information he has just received and that they will move him along in a reasonably direct line toward some part of the desired terminal competence. Finally, the teacher can determine how best to provide the learners with immediate knowledge of their results so that they may receive the benefits of both reward and correction.

Most ESL teachers would probably agree that the vast majority of foreign students have considerable difficulty in learning to *hear* spoken English. In many cases, both the teacher and the individual student would be hard put to say exactly what the student *hears* in response to a spoken utterance in English. Sonetimes when a student's response is seriously incorrect—when his pronunciation is very faulty, when he uses the wrong structure, and when his response seems unrelated or inappropriate to the question or statement just uttered by another—we as teachers begin to wonder what the student actually heard. This may be a very important question because many of his errors in each of these categories may be caused by his errors in hearing. This is not to suggest that the student may be suffering from a hearing *loss* but rather from any of three types of hearing *errors.*

The first of these three hearing errors might be labeled *underhearing* or failing to hear sounds which were actually included in the utterance. Because certain English sounds do not exist in his language or do not occur in a similar environment in his language, the learner's ears may not report to his brain the occurrence of such sounds in spoken English.

The second error, a logical opposite of the first, might be labeled *over-*

*hearing* or hearing sounds which did not occur in the utterance. Again, because the learner's ears are conditioned by the phonology and phonotactics of his own language, they expect the occurrence of certain sounds in certain environments so strongly that they report the presence of those sounds to the learner's central nervous system even though the sounds have not been uttered by the speaker.

The third error is that of *mishearing* or hearing some sound other than that which was pronounced at a particular point in the utterance. In this case, the learner's ears report the occurrence of a sound at the point where one occurred, but owing to a confusion between two or more English sounds or between certain English sounds and sounds in the learner's native language, his ears report some sound other than that which actually occurred.

In the normal classroom situation, and during the usual classroom activities, it is difficult for the teacher to discover the extent to which any or all of these errors may be present in a student's attempts to hear English. It is probably equally difficult for the student to know to what extent he may be committing any of these errors.

A relatively simple process which may aid both the teacher and the learner to discover a great deal of information about the occurrence of such errors is that of programmed dictation. By combining the time-worn technique of dictation with the P.I. process, the teacher can expose both the presence and absence of hearing errors with relative ease.

Obviously, programmed dictation is impossible unless or until the students can write at least the English which they have been or are being taught. However, one need not wait until such writing can be done with few or no spelling errors. Even if the student is using the wrong letter to represent a particular English sound, if the teacher knows what sound he is representing, programmed dictation can proceed effectively while such spelling errors are being overcome gradually. Given that the students can write in the manner suggested above, preparations for and presentation of a session of programmed dictation might occur as follows.

The teacher, wanting to know if the students can discriminate between certain problem sets of vowel or consonant sounds and whether they can detect the presence of some recently practiced contracted forms or unstressed words, selects a number of drill sentences which include frequent occurrences of these features. For example, if the class were studying Unit 1402 in the Defense Language Institute's *American Language Course*, and the teacher wanted to know if the students could hear the difference between past perfect progressive and present perfect progressive in similar utterances, drill sentences such as the following might be taken from the lesson (pp. 29-30).

You have been studying English for three months.
He had been studying for only a week.
He has been writing for six hours.
The streets had been getting icy for four hours.

These sentences include the problem of hearing the correct form of *have* present in each one. Also, they provide an opportunity to discover if the student can note the presence of *for* in a variety of contexts.

With beginning students or when dictation is first used with intermediate students, sentences used for programmed dictation should always be sentences in which the patterns and vocabulary are familiar to the students. One caution, however: the sentences should not be so familiar and so brief that the student can write them from memory without having to listen to each word and sound in the utterance.

A period of ten or fifteen minutes, perhaps at the end of a teaching hour, is set aside for programmed dictation of these sentences. Plans should be made to include this activity at approximately the same point in the sequence of student activities following presentation of each new segment of subject matter.

Each sentence in programmed dictation should be read three times. The first time, the sentence should be read at a fairly normal rate of speed in a continuous stream of speech. During this first reading of the sentence, the students listen but they do not write. On the second reading of the sentence, the rate of speed is kept near normal but longer sentences are divided into phrases or thought groups with a pause following each phrase. During these pauses in the second reading of the sentence the students write what they think they heard. The third reading is very much like the second but with shorter pauses. During this reading, students are focusing their listening on those parts of the sentence about which they were uncertain during the second reading.

As soon as all students have finished writing after the third reading of the sentence, the teacher provides feedback by writing the sentence on the chalkboard or by displaying it in an opaque projector. The sentence should be written to include all contractions which were pronounced by the teacher. Otherwise, the students cannot accurately report what they heard.

The students are directed to compare their written sentence with the correct representation of it displayed by the teacher. They are urged to make corrections as indicated by any differences between their effort and the teacher's feedback. This activity, of course, provides each learner with immediate knowledge of his results. He can discover each occurrence of any of the three types of hearing error. If a student's spelling of a particular word is unlike that of the teacher but can be recognized as an appropriate phonetic approximation of the word, it should be accepted as correct. Following the student's comparison and correction activities, the second sentence is read three times. The same feedback and comparison procedures are followed after this and each subsequent sentence.

Hopefully, each sentence contains a number of opportunities for the student to hear some of the features around which the dictation session was planned. When the student sees the exact nature of his errors in the first sentence, he should be given the opportunity to avoid or to minimize

those errors in subsequent sentences. By the end of a dictation session, students should be recording the sentences much more accurately than at the beginning. At least there should be a noticeable decrease in the occurrence of errors. If this does not happen, the material is probably too difficult or too unfamiliar for them to be able to hear.

The sentences are always read at a normal rate of speed. They are not slowed down and words are not separated and given special item stress. There should be a slight pause between thought groups in longer sentences during the second and third readings to allow students time to write. It may be advisable for the teacher to look at the sentence and then, looking away from the paper, to *say* it rather than to read it.

The length of sentences for programmed dictation must be carefully controlled to suit the level of the learners' competence to hear them. If such sentences are confusingly long streams of speech, they may discourage the student, and, as a result, he may give up trying to hear them.

Each of the three presentations of a particular sentence should be as much like the others as possible. If time and facilities permit, taping these sentences in advance is a good idea. Remember that any change in stress or intonation among the three presentations of a particular sentence may be very confusing and misleading to the student.

At the end of a session of programmed dictation, the teacher may or may not collect the papers. More often than not, the papers are not collected. Occasionally, and on a very random schedule, the papers are collected. The students must know that this activity is chiefly for their own benefit. However, they must know too that the teacher is very much interested in their progress in this work. The teacher can evidence this interest by moving around the room and observing the student's work during and after the session and by discussing the results at the end of each session.

Within each dictation session, the sentences should be carefully graded in difficulty from beginning to end so that the student is progressing from simple to more complex utterances throughout the dictation. As this activity is repeated, the sentences should, of course, increase in complexity to reflect the students' increased learning. After the students are familiar with programmed dictation, a few sentences at the end of each dictation session may profitably include a number of words with which they are not familiar. Such sentences will provide an opportunity to apply their improved abilities to hear certain sounds in new word contexts. From time to time, dictation sessions should include a few sentences which review earlier material.

In general, programmed dictation should not be thought of as a testing situation. The teacher should not select sentencee which are so difficult that many of the students will experience a high incidence of error. In fact, both teacher and students should be pleased if all of the students are performing near perfection at the end of each session.

What has been suggested here is a relatively simple set of procedures,

but perhaps they will serve to show how the P.I. process can be implemented in the classroom. The teacher who chooses to adopt these procedures can play two important parts in the process. First, he must become the programmer. In preparing for programmed dictation, he must consider the content of his textbook, and possibly the content of texts from other courses which his students are taking concurrently, as well as the phonology of English in order to determine the sorts of things in which the learner must acquire skills by the end of the course. He may even want to identify those parts of the terminal behavior which can be facilitated by programmed dictation and develop behavioral objectives for each of them. He is in an excellent position to discover what the students already know of this content. Next, he can determine the difference between what the students know and what they must eventually know and from this select those features of the language which seem most appropriate as the subject matter for a set of programmed dictation sentences.

With some experimentation, he can discover how long and how difficult such sentences should be for his students. He can also determine how many sentences are required, as a general rule, for his students to achieve an adequate quality of performance.

The teacher's second very important role is played during the presentation of a programmed dictation session. Here, in addition to presenting the stimulus sentences, he provides the vital feature of immediate knowledge of results. Without this ingredient, the entire process would differ little from many other well-planned classroom activities.

When the teacher has taken time to experiment with programmed dictation and can follow its procedures smoothly and comfortably, he should find that the students approach this portion of their lesson with considerable interest and animation. In fact, if he finds, as others have, a keener sense of interest, a more willing and wholehearted involvement, and a greater apparent sense of accomplishment being manifested by most of his students, he may well decide to implement the concept of immediate knowledge of results and the other procedures of the P.I. process in other phases of classroom activity. If not, he should at least find that programmed instruction is not a menace but, in fact, can offer some assistance in some of the problem areas of language teaching.

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# *Talking Off the Tops of Their Heads*

**Wilga M. Rivers**

The problem of preparing students who can speak spontaneously in a foreign language is still far from solved. A new model of the processes to be considered in language 1earning is proposed which allots a full role to interaction (or skill-using) as an essential complement to skill-getting (cognition and production or pseudo-communication). Several recent proposals for communication drills are examined and found to be useful for preparing the student for spontaneous activity; they are still not yet examples of autonomous, student-originating interaction. It is proposed that, from an early stage of learning, situations should be devised in which the student is forced into use of the foreign language for the normal purposes of language. This type of activity is not intended as a replacement for the necessary skill-getting activities but as an essential complement to them with a full role in the program. Twelve categories of interaction activities are listed with suggestions for their implementation. There is a final discussion of the problem of correcting errors in such a way that the student's attitude of innovation and experimentation is not inhibited.

In a description of the Defense Language Institute program I read: "After basic patterns and structures are mastered, the student can proceed to more and more controlled substitution and eventually to free conversation." How delightfully simple it sounds! We breathe the fresh air of the uncomplicated. The student "masters the basic patterns and structures," we provide him with carefully controlled practice, and hey presto! he speaks freely in unstructured situations.

There were times, in days which seem now to belong to another age, when faith in the efficacy of structured courses and controlled drills to produce fluent speakers of another language went unchallenged. We knew where we wanted to go; we knew how to get there; we were happy with our products—or were we? And were they? Are such cries of frustration as "I can't say anything off the top of my head, it all comes out as phrases from the book" new to our ears?[1] This student complaint of the seventies sounds almost like a paraphrase of the more academic remark of 1948 that "while many students could participate in memorized conversations speedily and effortlessly, hardly any could produce at length fluent variations from the basic material, and none could talk on unrehearsed topics without constant and painful hesitation."[2] In almost a quarter of a century

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1 *The Advisor* (Teacher-Course Evaluation, University of Illinois, 1970-71), p. 122.

2 F. Agard and H. Dunkel, *An Investigation of Second-Language Teaching* (Boston: Ginn, 1948), p. 288.

we have still not come to grips with our basic problem: "How do we develop communicative ability in a foreign language?"[3] We may intensify practice in the classroom (practice of patterns, practice of variations of patterns, practice in selection of patterns), but how do we engineer the great leap? A child learns all kinds of swimming movements while his loving parent holds him, lets him go a little but is there to support him as he loses confidence; then at some moment he swims. One moment he is a non-swimmer, then he is a swimmer. The movements are the same, the activity is of a new kind—the difference is psychological. How does the non-swimmer become a swimmer? He becomes autonomous in his movements and in his directions: he draws on his own resources; he ceases to rely on somebody else's support; he takes off and he is swimming. How do we get our students to this autonomous stage of language use? This is the crucial point of our teaching. Until we have solved this problem we will continue to mark time: developing more and more efficient techniques for producing foreign language cripples, with all the necessary muscles and sinews but unable to walk alone. "Spontaneous expression," "liberated expression," "creative language use"—the terms may vary with changing emphases in our profession; the goal still eludes us. Let's see what we can do here and now to attack this problem in a direct and practical fashion.

We must examine the problem at the point at which we are stalled. How can we help the student pass from the storing of linguistic knowledge and information about how this knowledge operates in communication to actual using of this knowledge for the multitudinous, unpredictable purposes of an individual in contact with other individuals? We do not need new ways to help the student acquire linguistic knowledge—we know of many from our "twenty-five centuries of language teaching,"[4] and each in its heyday has seemed to be effective for this purpose. Here we can pick and choose according to our theoretical persuasion, our temperamental preferences, and our assessment of the learning styles of the particular groups of students with whom we are dealing. In any case, these students will learn according to their personal strategies in the ultimate secret of their individual personalities, even when they appear to be doing as we direct.

We need a new model of our language-teaching activity which allocates a full role to the student's individual learning in communication. I propose the following division of essential processes:

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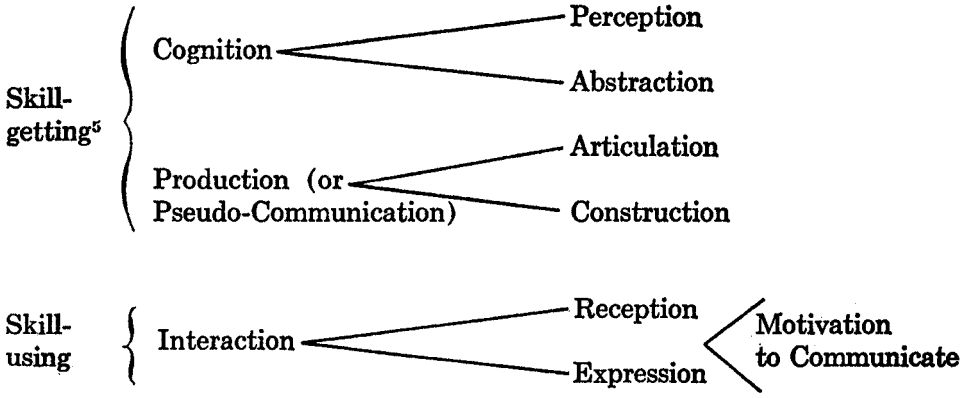
3 Throughout this paper I have used the terms "foreign language" and "foreign culture" rather than "English" and "American culture" to remind us that for our students English is indeed a foreign language and the American culture a foreign culture.

4 Kelly, *Twenty-five Centuries of Language Teaching* (Newbury House, 1969)




Ability to communicate, to interact verbally, presumes some knowledge *(cognition)* both in the perception of units, categories, and functions, and in the internalizing of the rules relating these categories and functions. I am not concerned here with how this knowledge is acquired and am willing to concede the validity (and probably the necessity) of a variety of approaches to such acquisitions. This knowledge must, however, be acquired. In the process of acquisition the student learns the *production* of language sequences: he learns through doing. Whether we use the terms "exercises" or "drills" or "activities" is immaterial; some kind of practice in putting together smoothly and confidently what he is learning is also essential. The student must learn to articulate acceptably and construct comprehensible foreign language sequences by rapid associations of learned elements. No matter how much we relate these activities to real-life situations this practice rarely passes beyond *pseudo-communication;* it is externally directed, not self-originating; it is a dependent, not an independent, activity. The utterances may even be original in their combinations of segments, but the student is not communicating anything that is of real import to him nor receiving any genuine message. This is practice in formulating communications and as such it is valuable practice. It is near-communication with all the outward appearances of communication, but the student does not have to demonstrate is these activities that he has taken the great leap into autonomy—the leap that is crucial. Our failure in the past has been in our satisfaction with students who perform well in pseudo-communication. We have tended to assume that there will then be automatic transfer to performance in *interaction*. We may have encouraged some sketchy attempts at autonomous interaction, but always with the supporting hand: the instructor or

[5] I have borrowed the division into skill-getting and skill-using from Don H. Parker. "When Should I Individualize Instruction?" in Virgil M. Howes, ed., *Individualization of Instruction: A Teaching Strategy* (New York: Macmillan, 1970) p. 176. More detailed explanation of this model can be found in the Report of the Stanford Conference on the Individualization of Foreign Language Instruction (U.S.O.E., 1971), Position Paper on "Techniques for Developing Proficiency in the Spoken Language in an Individualized Foreign Language Program," prepared by Wilga M. Rivers.

the native speaker leading the group, drawing the student out, directing the interchange.

David Wolfe suggests that progress toward autonomy is hindered by the artificiality of language learning through "drills and exercises which force the student to lie." "From the point of view of true linguistic communication," he says, such "seemingly harmless sentences" as *Yesterday I went to the movies, Last night I went to the game, Last week I went to the game* "border on the nonsensical."[6] I do not think that this is the problem. We may maintain that lying is a form of real communication, but, this aspect aside, sentences in drills of this type are pseudo-communication in any case, and it may be clearer to students that this is so if they are sometimes also absurd. In a recent foreign-language text co-authored by the playwright Ionesco, the nonsensical, shall we say whimsical, approach to adult learning is purposefully exploited with students playing manipulatively with such sentences as "The teacher is in the pocket of the vest of the watch," "The crocodile is more beautiful than Mary Jane," and "He says his parents are as big as the Eiffel Tower."[7] Such manipulations are intended to force students to think of the meaning of what they are saying which is one step toward autonomy, and pure nonsense may on occasions be more effective in this regard than the colorless, socially correct actions of Dick and Jane, of Maria and Pedro.

In recent writings on foreign-language teaching, there has been increasing emphasis on communication, and on what are being called communication drills. I myself have spoken elsewhere of the necessity for relating the content of drills to the student's own interests:

> Participation in the drill can be innovative: providing for practice in the repetition and variation of language segments, but with simultaneous practice in selection, as the student expresses his own meaning and not that of the textbook writer. . . . Practice in selection should not be considered a separate activity for advanced classes: it can and should be included in class work from the very first lessons.[8]
>
> Many drills may be given the appearance of a game, or of elementary communication, by provoking the students into asking the teacher a series of questions in response to cues, or into making a series of comments about the teacher's activities and interests, or those of other students. The more the student is interested in an activity in the foreign language, the more he feels the desire to communicate in the language, and this is the first and most vital step in learning to use language forms spontaneously.[9]

Christina Paulston has developed the communication drill concept in

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6 "Some Theoretical Aspects of Language Learning and Language Teaching." in *Language Learning,* 17: 3-4 (1967), 175.

7 Benamou and Ionesco, *Mise en Train* (Macmillan, 1969), "Le professeur est dans la poche du gilet de la montre," p. 44; "Le crocodile est plus beau que Marie-Jeanne," p. 114: "II dit que ses parents sent aussi grands que la Tour Eiffel," p. 141.

8 "From Skill Acquisition to Language Control," *TESOL Quarterly,* 3:1 (March, 1969) , 12.

9 *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) p. 109.

more detail.[10] She groups drills into mechanical drills, meaningful drills, and communicative drills. In mechanical drills, there is complete control of the response so that the student does not even need to understand the drill to produce the correct response (as in simple substitution drills). Paulston suggests that if a nonsense word can be inserted as effectively by the student as a meaningful word, then the drill is of the mechanical type. This is pure production: sometimes merely practice in articulation, at others in constructing an orderly sequence. As such it has its place in the initial phase of introducing a new structure or for practicing some problem of pronunciation or intonation. An example of such a drill would be:

Pattern: I'm reading a book.
Cue: magazine
Response: I'm reading a magazine.
Cue: newspaper
Response: I'm reading a newspaper.

In meaningful drills "there is still control of the response (although it may be correctly expressed in more than one way . . . ) but the student cannot complete the drill without fully understanding structurally and semantically what he is saying." The following would be a meaningful drill:

Question: When did you arrive this morning?
Answer: I arrived at nine o'clock.
Question: When will you leave this evening?
Answer: I'll leave at six o'clock.

In a communicative drill, however, "there is no control of the response. The student has free choice of answer, and the criterion of selection here is his own opinion of the real world—whatever he wants to say." This sounds like autonomous interaction, but Paulston continues: "Whatever control there is lies in the stimulus. . . . It still remains a drill rather than free communication because we are still within the realm of the cue-response pattern." She gives the example: "What did you have for breakfast?" with its possibility of an orthodox response such as "I had toast and coffee for breakfast," or the unorthodox "I overslept and skipped breakfast so I wouldn't miss the bus." It is clear that the unconventional student may well turn this into real interaction, but my guess is that the majority of students, feeling insecure in their knowledge of the language, would remain in the area of pseudo-communication.

Adrian Palmer suggests what he calls "communication practice drills."[11] "In communication practice (CP) drills, the student finds pleasure in a response that is not only linguistically acceptable, but also conveys information personally relevant to hemself and other people." As outlined, this

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10 "Structural Pattern Drills: A Classification," in *Foreign Language Annuls,* 4:2 (December, 1970), 187-193.

11 "Teaching Communication" in *Language Learning,* 20:1 (1970), 55-68.

is an interesting technique. Palmer maintains that "the most powerful technique at the teacher's disposal is his ability to verbally create situations which could be relevant to the student's own life and then to force the student to think about the meaning and consequences of what he would say in such situations." His CP drills are drills in that they center around practice of particular structures such as:

*I would tell him to shut the door*
*her turn on the light*
*them bring some food*

He develops them, however, by a somewhat Socratic method:

Teacher: Karen, if you and Susan came to class at 8 a.m. and it was winter and the room was dark at 8 a.m., what would you tell Susan?
Karen: (with any luck at all) I would tell her to turn on the light.
Teacher: And how about you, Paul, if you were with Mary and you wanted to read, what would you do?
Paul: I would tell her to turn on the light.
Teacher: (in student's native language) You as a boy would tell a girl to do that for you?
Teacher: (continuing in the target language) Paul, if You came alone, and if I was. in the room, what would you do?
Paul: I would tell you to turn on the light.
Teacher: Then I would throw you out of class.

In this type of drill Palmer is moving toward interaction in that a student who gives mechanically what appears to be a correct response may well be pulled up short because he has not thought about the implications of his response in the imposed setting. With training in such drills average students would possibly produce more original responses than in Paulston's communicative drills because of the goad of the teacher's teasing and their natural desire to show him they have recognized his stratagem. This type of drill teeters on the brink of interaction but is still in the area of pseudo-communication and, production practice because the whole interchange is teacher-directed with the specific intention of eliciting certain structures.

Where do we go from here? We must work out situations, from an early stage, where the student is on his own, trying to use the language for the normal purposes of language: establishing social relations, seeking and giving information, expressing his reactions, learning to do something, hiding his intimations or talking his way out of trouble, persuading, discouraging, entertaining others, or displaying his achievements. When I say the student is "on his own," I mean he is not supported or directed by the teacher: he may well be working with another or other students. In this type of practice the student should be allowed to use anything he knows of the language and any aids (gestures, drawings, pantomime) to fill out his meaning, when he is "at a loss for words."[12] In, this way he will learn to draw on everthing he

12 S. Savignon used this technique in her "Study, of the Effect of Training in Communicative Skills as Part of a Beginning College French Course on Student Attitude and Achievement in Linguistic and Communicative Competence," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1971.

knows at a particular moment is his acquisition of the language, and to fight to put his meaning over, as he would if he suddenly found himself on his own surrounded by monolingual speakers of the language. *This experience is not intended to replace the careful teaching of the language we already supply (the skill-getting activities we organize) but to expand it with regular and frequent opportunities for autonomous interaction, thus making full provision for a dimension of language learning which at present is, if not completely neglected, at least given insufficient place in our programs.* As I have said elsewhere: "Perfection at the pattern-drill level, no matter how impressive to the observer, cannot be an end in itself. It is a fruitless activity unless care is taken to see that the skill gained by such training is further extended until the student is capable of. autonomous expression,"[13] In 1964, I spoke of the need for developing "that adventurous spirit which will enable (the student) to try to meet any situation by putting what he knows to maximum use."[14] In 1968, I wrote "students should be encouraged at the advanced level, to try out new combinations of elements to create novel utterances. This is what the advanced student would do were he to find himself in a foreign country. He would make every effort to express his meaning by all kinds of recombination of the language elements at his disposal *The more daring he is in such linguistic innovation, the more rapidly he progresses."*[15] On looking back I feel it was a mistake to tag this recommendation specifically to "the advanced student" (a vague entity at best). Where we have been failing may well be in not encouraging this "adventurous spirit" from an early stage with the result that the student finds it difficult to move from structured security to the insecurity of reliance on his own resources, just as the young would-be swimmer clings to his mother's hand or "the foot on the bottom of the pool."

In Savignon's very interesting study "students in the. communicative skills. program" (which consisted of one hour per week supplementing the regular audio-lingual type course)

> were given the opportunity to speak French in a variety of communicative settings ranging from short (1-2 minute) exchanges between a student and a fluent, speaker of French in a simulated situation to whole group discussions on topics of current interest. Emphasis was always on getting meaning across; students were urged to use every means at their disposal to understand and in turn to make themselves understood. Grammar and pronunciation errors were expected and were always ignored when they did not interfere with meaning. In other words, the experimenter and the other fluent speaker who participated in these sessions reacted to what was said, not to how it was said.[16]

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13 *Teaehing Foreign-Language Skills,* p. 109.

14 *The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934) p. 78.

15 *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills,* p. 201. (Italics not in the original).

16 Savignon, p. 24. On pp. 28-29 are listed a variety of communicative tasks used during the practice sessions. Savignon acknowledges her indebtedness to L. Jakobovits, *Foreign Language Learning* (Newbury House, 1970) Chapter 3, for guidelines in defining these tasks. Professor Jakobovits was the director of her study.

One student commented: "These sessions taught me to say what I wanted to say instead of book conversations."[17] If we compare this remark with that of the student quoted at the beginning of this paper, it seems these students did begin to "talk off the tops of their heads."

Just how practice in autonomous interaction can be incorporated into the program will depend on the type of program, but incorporate it we must, giving it a substantial role in the students' learning. We must not feel that interaction practice is somehow "wasting time" when there is "so much to learn." Unless this "adventurous spirit" is given time to establish itself as a constant attitude most of what is learned will be stored unused, and we will produce learned individuals who are inhibited and fearful in situations requiring language use. With careful selection of the activity, such practice can be a part of every lesson, even quite early in the learning process, with expansion of the complexity of the task as the student advances.

Practice in autonomous interaction should be individualized in the sense that it should allow for the different ways students learn, the different paces at which they learn, the different things which interest them, and the different situations in which they prefer to learn. Students should be offered a choice of tasks (things to do, things to find out, problems to solve, situations to which to react) and then be allowed to choose their own way, their own place, time, and company, for handling them. Some may prefer to work regularly with one other person, some will prefer to work consistently with a small group, some will choose to work with the teacher. Some who are loners will prefer to work through certain situations by themselves demonstrating their capacity as individuals (and many of these in a quiet way may outpace their fellows through sheer singlemindedness of purpose).

Students cannot be set down in groups, or sent off in pairs, and told to interact in the foreign language. Motivation to communicate must be aroused. Occasionally some fortuitous incident or combination of personalities will cause a desire to communicate something in the foreign language to emerge spontaneously, but mostly it will need to be fostered by the intrinsic interest of the task proposed for the students concerned. Such interest will make the interaction which follows autonomous: a genuine communication from one person to another, not just another imposed act of pseudo-communication. Because of the personal nature of the activity we are promoting, the type of reaction to be displayed must always remain consistent with the personality of the paricular student. Some people are temperamentally incapable of interacting with a babble of words; to force them to do so is to force them back into pseudo-communication and into mouthing learned phrases. The quality of the interaction will be judged by other criteria: ability to receive and express meaning, to understand and convey intentions, to perform acceptably in situations and in relations with others.

Earlier I suggested various natural uses of language in interaction which

17 Savignon, p. 30.

can be used for this type of activity. Here I will expand on these and set down a few elaborations of each; any imaginative teacher will think of many others.

(1) *Establishing and maintaining social relations:* greetings between persons of the same and different age and status, introductions, wishes for special occasions, polite enquiries (with attention to the permissible and the expected questions in the culture), making arrangements, giving directions to strangers, apologies, excuses, refusals, mild rebukes, hedging (the gentle art of noncommunication), encouraging, discouraging, and persuading others. Students might be sent to find out from a monolingual native speaker (or one who pretends to be monolingual) how these are enacted in the cultural context of the language being learned.

(2) *Seeking information* on subjects for which students have some basic vocabulary. (At some point finding out specific technical vocabulary can be part of this type of interaction). Once again the native speaker or informant acts as though he were monolingual, or alternatively the students seek the information from other speakers of the language outside of the course or the school. The information may be useful for (1), for (3), for (4), for (8), or even for (11).

(3) *Giving information* about oneself, one's background, one's country, or about some subject in which one is proficient. The student may be giving information to other students learning to do or make something (4), or passing on information gained in (2). Simulated settings like bank or airline counters, customs desks, workshops, or restaurants may be used where the students are confined to the school setting.

(4) *Learning to do or make something.* Possibilities here are limitless. The pressure of intensive courses can be relieved by organizing actual sessions in the foreign language where students work with real-life materials and activities (sports, hobbies, crafts, physical exercise).

(5) *Expressing one's reactions.* The student can be put in real situations or simulated situations where he has to react verbally throughout a television show, at an exhibition of pictures or photographs, or during a friendly sharing of slides.

(6) *Hiding one's intentions.* Each student may be given a mission which he must not reveal under any provocation, but which he tries to carry out within a given period of time. This type of activity carries purposeful use of the language beyond course hours as students try to discover each other's missions.

(7) *Talking one's way out of trouble.* Simulated or real situations should be set up of increasing verbal difficulty where the student must use his wits to extract himself from his dilemma.

(8) *Problem solving.* A problem may involve (2) or (4), or even (6) and (7). The problem presented should be an active one whose solution requires verbal activity or enquiry. As early as 1954 Carroll posed the question

whether aural-oral methods might not be more successful "if, instead of presenting the student with a fixed, predetermined lesson to be learned, the teacher created a 'problem-solving' situation in which the student must find . . . appropriate verbal responses for solving the problem" thus being early forced "to learn, by a kind of trial-and-error process, to *communicate* rather than merely to utter the speech patterns in the lesson plans."[18]

(9) *Sharing leisure activities.* Students should have the opportunity to learn and become proficient in the games and diversions of the foreign culture. They should be able to participate in verbal competitions. Where there are special activities associated with festivals or national holidays these should be engaged in.

(10) *Conversing over the telephone.* This is always difficult in a foreign language and should be practiced early. The student should use a phone book in the foreign language and where this is possible make actual calls enquiring about goods, services, or timetables for transport. The help of monolingual contacts outside the course should be enlisted. (Some incapacitated persons and older people living alone would enjoy participating in this type of activity.) This activity can be linked with (2) or (8), and will often involve (3).

(11) *Entertaining.* The student should be given the opportunity to use his natural talents or encouraged through role-playing sessions to act out in front of a group. He may conduct a radio call-in program or a TV talk show, or groups of students may prepare and present radio or TV commercials (these may involve more or less talking interspersed with mime and are therefore very suitable for the early stages of a course).

(12) *Displaying one's achievements.* Students may tell the group about what they did in (4), (5), (6), (7), or (8), or present and explain special projects. This can be a regular culminating activity to draw together more individualized efforts at interaction.

All of these activities will obviously not be possible for all students from the earliest stage of learning. The teacher will select and graduate activities from these categories so that the attitude of seeking to communicate is developed early in an activity which is within the student's growing capacity. An impossible task which bewilders and discourages the student too early in his language learning is just as inhibiting of ultimate fluency as lack of opportunity to try what he can do with what he knows.

Some people will have deep-seated doubts about accepting such an approach because they foresee that the student will make many errors which may well become ingrained and ineradicable. It was because of such problems that many turned away from the direct method, seeking something more systematic which would seem to ensure more accurate production. Unfortunately, the emphasis on correct production at all times and the firm

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[18] J. Carroll, *The Study of Language* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953) p. 188:

determination to create a learning situation where students would not make mistakes seems to have led to an impasse for many students. If we wish to facilitate the "great leap" I have described, then a change of attitude toward mistakes during interaction practice is imperative. It is during production (or pseudo-communication) practice that immediate corrections should be made. It is then that we should make the student conscious of possible errors and so familiarize him with acceptable sequences that he is able to monitor his own production and work toward its improvement in spontaneous interaction. In interaction practice we are trying to develop an attitude of innovation and experimentation with the new language. Nothing is more dampening of enthusiasm and effort than constant correction when the student is trying to express his ideas within the limitations of his newly-acquired knowledge of the language. What is required is for the instructor to note silently consistent and systematic errors made by the student in his presence (not slips of the tongue and occasional lapses in areas where the student usually acquits himself well); these errors will then be discussed with the student at a time when the instructor is helping him evaluate his success in interaction, with particular attention being paid to those types of errors which hinder communication. Such an analytic session may be conducted from time to time with a tape of an actual communication sequence, the student or group of students being asked to detect errors in their own spontaneous production and suggest corrections and improvements. This technique makes the students more alert to their own mistakes and to other possibilities for expressing their meaning which they have not been exploiting.

Many of the types of activities listed may have already found their place in our courses. The originality of the approach lies not so much in the novelty of the activities as in the way in which they are approached. To develop control of language for communication we must at some time allow the student autonomy, and conversely discourage him from maintaining dependence. We must give the student practice in relying on his own resources and using his ingenuity so that very early in his language learning he realizes that only by interacting freely and independently with others can he learn the control and ready retrieval essential for fluent language use.

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# *Contextualizing Pronunciation Practice in the ESOL Classroom*

**J. Donald Bowen**

The teaching of pronunciation in ESOL classes has not always been as successful as other aspects of English teaching, possibly because pronunciation has been considered a separate skill and has not been well integrated in language courses. If pronunciation can be presented in meaningful contrasts and in situations that are both relevant and interesting to the students—in other words, if instruction in pronunciation can be contextualized—perhaps achievement can be improved. Productive contextualization suggests: (1) pronunciation features and contrasts should carry meaning with minimum redundancy that will offer additional clues affecting interpretation; i.e., the student should have to rely on what he hears (and produces) rather than on an intelligent estimate of what the situation calls for; (2) situations should be meaningfully related to student interest and/or experience; (3) the repetition of specific drills and situations should be minimized; (4) the language and style of pronunciation exercise material should be convincingly natural and realistic; and (5) at least some exercises should be designed to give practice when the students' attention is on the content rather than the form of the message.

Some thirty years ago foreign language classes in the United States were largely concerned with teaching students to read. Pronunciation was a low priority skill, usually presented by a quick run through the alphabet to illustrate the characteristic sound or sounds associated with each letter. It did not really matter if the sounds of the new language were not authentically produced, since any contact with the foreign culture would be almost exclusively through reading, using the familiar visual symbols of a Roman alphabet. In fact, pronunciation hints were not offered in terms of the new language sound system, but framed in terms of the native language in such instructions as: pronounced like the i in *machine,* or like the g in *get*.

Today the purposes of language teaching more often include face-to-face contact with live speakers. Indeed oral communication has come to be one of the central purposes of language study, and the philosophy on which classroom activities are based has correspondingly changed to reflect the present oral emphasis. The audio-lingual method of foreign language teaching accords pronunciation a central role in pedagogy, and the mystery of an adequate command of the spoken language is a goal seriously taken.

With respect to linguistic theory, pronunciation enjoyed an estimate of maximum importance as the phonology component of language analysis of structural linguistics, which flourished in the forties and fifties. Later, when

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transformational analysis caught the imagination of the theorists, phonology was relegated to a minor role. The linguistic primitives were syntactic or perhaps semantic units, which were interestingly and creatively controlled, manipulated, and combined to encode a message, after which a relatively uninteresting set of morphophonemics rules were applied to produce a sequence of spoken sounds. These rules are less interesting to the theoretical linguist because they are applied automatically and mechanically once the underlying syntactic elements are in place.

This new theoretical alignment has not so far had a significant effect on pedagogy. In the contemporary classroom, pronunciation has not experienced the same diminished interest as has phonology in linguistic theory. Pronunciation remains the entree to the linguistic system of a new language, and a student cannot be said to have mastered a second language unless he has a command of its spoken symbols. The ideal is to be able to pronounce and speak with native-like competence, though in most classrooms and with most students this remains an ideal, a goal to shoot at, the approximation to which serves as a measure of student achievement. In actual practice the teaching of pronunciation has been a frustrating experience. Pre-puberty aged students need only a model and an incentive to follow that model to acquire an authentic native-speaker pronunciation. A well-planned pronunciation component in the foreign language course is unnecessary. Post-puberty students are essentially unsuccessful when they attempt to speak like natives. A pronunciation component is usually quite unproductive of satisfactory results.

Most frustrating is the observation that when mature students try seriously to imitate a foreign pronunciation model, and when the expertise is available to offer technical assistance, they will demonstrate the physical capacity for a quite satisfactory production. But the minute the students' attention is diverted to the content of the message, the pronunciation control loosens, and native language influence reappears to produce a heavy speech accent. The adult learner seems to have his cultural identification firmly implanted, and his language follows this identification. Only rarely does one find an adult student of unusual language acquisition aptitude who is the exception to this rule.

What are the implications for language teachers in this observation of the difficulty of teaching native speaker proficiency in pronunciation? Should we abdicate formal responsibility, given the prediction that full success is highly unlikely? Or should we conclude that "man's reach must exceed his grasp," and use native speaker competence only as an ideal to guide students of limited aptitude toward whatever approximation to the model they are capable of achieving?

My own belief is a retreat to eclecticism, taking the best of each theoretical possibility in a compromise. For most adult students a reasonable goal is the ability to communicate orally with ease and efficiency, but without expecting to achieve a competence in pronunciation that would enable

them to conceal their own different language background. At the same time it should be possible to achieve a consistent production of the basic contrasts of the sound system, to speak fluently and understandably in a form that requires minimum adjustment on the part of one's listeners. And of course the student must be capable of understanding native pronunciation under normal circumstances of production and not require of his interlocutors a special style for his personal use. He should, for example, be capable of understanding two native speakers addressing each other in informal speech.

It is my opinion that improvements can be made in the teaching of the pronunciation component in a language course. It is my further opinion that one way to effect an improvement would be to find a means of better integrating pronunciation instruction with other elements of instruction.

In too many language classes the teaching of pronunciation is something that is done with an approach that identifies pronunciation as something to be taught separately. It is traditionally advised that the "pronunciation lesson," that segment of the full lesson to be devoted to pronunciation, should be limited to about five minutes, moving then to other aspects. But when attention is shifted, gains disappear.

It is true that there are different aspects to a language lesson, that a teacher must devote attention to grammatical forms, to the sequence of words, to the transformation of patterns, and to the meanings of related sentences used to transmit a message. But perhaps there is a way of incorporating some of these elements in a lesson segment designed to improve pronunciation. I suggest an effort to contextualized the pronunciation lesson. What I mean by this should become clear with the discussion and examples that follow.

Pronunciation instruction has been presented in various ways. First there is model and imitation. The teacher (or a recording playback device) sets a model which the student attempts to reproduce. If this were adequate, no problems would appear. But experience has shown that habits of one's first language will interfere in ways that can be explained by a knowledge of the specific differences in the pronunciation patterns of the first and second languages.

A second technique for teaching pronunciation is explanation. The teacher tries to guide the student by telling him how to produce troublesome sounds, how to manipulate his speech organs, or what characteristics the sounds should have when produced. This method may help some students, but many fail to respond, either because the explanations tend to be esoteric or because students have no effective experience in controlling speech production on the basis of instructions. Another possible limitation is that explanations usually involve labels, so that sounds can be referred to and discussed. Often these labels will be the names of letters used to represent the sounds. But since letter names may in fact repeat the minimal difference of the sounds in a pair of words, they can pose the same problem of

identification. It is not very enlightening to differentiate the two words *base* and *vase* by saying that one begins with a b and the other with a v.

A third technique is practice. Applications are seen in example sentences that provide multiple opportunities to produce a sound, such as the famous *Erre con erre cigarro* example for the Spanish trilled rr. It has never been satisfactorily explained how a sound difficult to produce becomes any easier when it appears in multiple form. If one rr is a problem, surely the solution is not a series of twelve. In my opinion the tongue-twister approach to problem sounds is wholly without merit.

A fourth technique is comparison and contrast—an application to pedagogy that has been recognized as the analytical tool par excellence of phonological research. Two similar but significantly contrasting sounds are taught together, with an effort to highlight the feature that differentiates them. Thus p and b are contrasted by voicing (voiceless vs. voiced), d and g by point of articulation (alveolar vs. velar), and sh and ch by manner of articulation (fricative vs. affricate). This kind of comparison helps pinpoint the difference, but doesn't always guarantee efficient acquisition of the two contrasting sounds. If the contrast is a new aural experience, the fact of contrast will not necessarily become simple to interpret and produce. Let me illustrate by offering a contrast from Tagalog, the two words *bata* meaning 'bathrobe' and *bata* meaning 'child.' Most American speakers of English experience difficulty even hearing this distinction, let alone understanding, producing, and assimilating it. Yet for Tagalog speakers the distinction is every bit as clear as the one in the English pair *cart* and *card*.

The contrast can be made clear by a fifth technique, which I'll refer to as a combination (of modelling, explanation, comparison, mimicry, and practice). A model of *bata-bata* has been given. The explanation is that one ends in an aspirate, the other in a glottal closure (conveniently not shown in the spelling, but illustratable in a special transcription, as /bátaʰ-bátaˀ/. A comparison would perhaps involve the closest native language phenomenon, in this case English *uh huh* and *uh uh*, transcribable as /ˀəhə - ˀəˀə/, calling attention to the fact the contrast occurs syllable initially in English but syllable finally in Tagalog—precisely the reason English speakers have perception difficulties—they have no experience with a meaningful contrast in final position. Finally, with this explanation as guidance, students would attempt to mimic and practice.

But this procedure (combining the techniques of modelling, explanation, contrast, comparison, mimicry, and practice) more often than not fails to internalize the new habits to make them actually part of the student's new-language pronunciation. When he listens, he'll fail to distinguish (unless prompted by powerful contextual clues), and when he speaks, he'll fail to consistently produce the contrast (unless close attention exaggerates the distinction). Why this difficulty internalizing a new contrast? I think it is to a significant extent because the presentation has been disembodied from a meaningful context.

Obviously there are problems of motivation involved. When communication is possible, why strive for perfection? Or as a Japanese student once confided to me: "I get along, with some difficulty to be sure, but why should I invest a tremendous effort in an attempt to sound like an American when I'm really Japanese?" Motivation can be materially heightened by increasing the chance of success.

We need reasonable and realistic goals, and these need to be tied to the student's view of his own objectives. A Basque-speaking student from Spain working under my supervision once reported experiencing while on a date a headache that was so severe she went into a drugstore and asked the manager if he had any aspirin. He answered that he did and asked how many she wanted, to which she answered two. The manager invited her and her boy friend to be seated. In two minutes he reappeared with two dishes of rice pudding. In reporting this event the next day, this young lady demonstrated a very strong motivation to improve her command of English pronunciation.

The young Basque girl was motivated by a context that demonstrated rather vividly that she could be minunderstood. How can we build a similar motivation into our classroom presentations? I believe that we should seek to introduce contextualizations ino pronunciation teaching and that it is quite possible to do so. The remainder of this paper is devoted to examples that will hopefully illustrate at least some of the ways this can be done, how drill activities can be devised that will reinforce the pronunciation aspects of what has been termed "communicative competence."

The minimal pair concept has been widely applied to teaching pronunciation contrasts that have been found empirically to cause trouble for students in specific first- and second-language situations. Typically a contrast is illustrated, such as *base-vase,* possibly explained, and then presented for identification by the students. Usually they are asked to do something overt to signal their reaction to the pair. Two words will be given, sometimes alike *(base-base)* and sometimes different *(base-vase).* Students will be asked to respond "same" or "different." Or the words will be given one at a time, with instructions to raise the left arm if *base* is heard, the right arm if *vase.* Or the identification can be made by saying A or B, or I or II, or by raising one or two fingers, etc. Or three pronunciations can be given, with the students instructed to identify by number (1, 2, or 3) the word that is different from the other two. Later students practice the contrast by imitating the teacher: *base-vase (base-vase), bile-vile (bile-vile), ban-van (ban-van), boat-vote (boat-vote),* etc.

There may be other activities used in a typical minimal pair drill, including production of the words in illustrative sentences, such as: "They are going to vote on the boat." One might say this is a form of contextualization, but if so it is not a very powerful example, since there is no indication of who is going to vote, what the occasion of the vote is, why a boat should be voted on (or, since the sentence is grammatically ambiguous, why people

should be on a boat when they vote), etc. In other words, this is a meaningless context, and it will not serve to fix the contrast in the mind or habits of the student. Minimal-pair sentences are sometimes employed, such as "This is a base - This is a vase." These may be a little better, especially if the concepts are picturable and appropriate pictures can be shown. Pictorial illustration can be difficult-which interpretation of *base* should be pictured, for example? Even when pictures are appropriate, the context is still minimal, and identification frames are not really very interesting. This pattern is typically used to teach vocabulary, not pronunciation. Of course there may be other frames than the identification "This is a _____," but rarely are effective ones employed in a classroom.

I suggest that the context for the minimal pair should be an entire situation, supported and reinforced by reasonable and credible visual images, and placed in a setting that can hope to provide a measure of intellectual stimulus and interest. The dull recitations that characterize most pronunciation lessons need to be markedly upgraded if there is to be any hope of solid improvement in classroom performance and any promise of carry-over in out-of-class competence.

The following sequence of activities describes a pronunciation lesson I have used several times as a demonstration. I begin by asking if anyone in the class is good at drawing. If no one responds immediately, I ask who is the best artist in the class, hoping somebody will volunteer, either himself or another student. When an artist is finally identified, I invite him to the front of the class and whisper my first request in his ear—to draw a horse. Not letting the other students know what he is to draw usually builds a bit of interest, and I ask class members to tell me as soon as anyone can guess what the volunteer is drawing. Depending on the skill of the artist they may say *dog* or *cow* or something, but we finally arrive at *horse.* Then I whisper a second instruction: *fire.* We go through the same process, with guesses such as *grass, bush,* and eventually *fire.* I thank my collaborator and then I draw a *horse shoe.* (This is safely within my artistic competence; I might do all the drawing myself if I were more talented.) I ask if anyone can identify what I have drawn and then, if the class level permits, have a brief discussion of what a horse shoe is, why it is used, how it is affixed to the horse's hooves, etc. As this is given, or as I give it, I am drawing a picture of a *hammer.* Then I explain how the metal shoe can be heated to white hot on a forge and bent by pounding so it will fit the horse. Together we identify the profession of the man who does this job—the blacksmith. (This detail can be omitted, with a general reference "he" if the new vocabulary load seems to be getting too high.)

I show that the blacksmith first heats the shoe, then pounds it with a hammer to shape it. Then I ask the class to identify the means the blacksmith uses for each of two tasks:

| | |
|---|---|
| He's heating the shoe. | With a fire. |
| He's hitting the shoe. | With a hammer. |

I now have the statement and rejoinder to serve as model and response for a meaningful identification drill. I have purposely not put the contrasting sound pair in sentence-final position where they will get the extra emphasis of sentence stress, because I want the students to have practice with the minimum of differentiation that will be present in a real-life use, where rarely will there be an overt, specific contrast (that is, with *both* of the contrasting sentences in the same conversation or situation). Note that both interpretations are reasonable in an overall context; one does not overshadow the other in probability of occurrence.

(This balance of probability is very important. Consider for a moment an example of minimal-pair sentences that lack balance. The sentence frame is "He came back from Paris on a _____" with *ship-sheep* as candidates for the blank. In this example *ship* is infinitely more likely than *sheep.* In cases like this one, students and native speakers alike will correct *sheep* to *ship* in their own interpretation if the wrong stimulus is offered, since people expect language to make sense. Lack of balance is a common weakness of minimal-pair sentences used for pronunciation drills, and students usually pay scant attention to the crucial features if the probabilities make one interpretation silly. And if they are not listening, they do not learn.)

After I've produced the full sentences several times,

He's heating the shoe with a fire
He's hitting the shoe with a hammer,

I then give just the first part of the sentence and ask the class to give the final phrase as a rejoinder. If, as often happens, there is disagreement, I stop and ask for a show of hands: "How many say fire? How many say hammer?" Then I announce which one I said by indicating which response I expected. As confidence builds I get a volunteer to come to the front of the room and work with me. I make my statement and he offers his rejoinder. Then I ask how many in the class agree with him, then announce what my intention was.

Then I ask the class to produce the statement in chorus, following my cue as I point alternately to the pictures of the fire and the hammer. Often it is difficult to tell if the production is accurate, so I ask individuals to produce the appropriate rejoinder on cue. If there is any doubt in my mind as to the accuracy of the production, I ask the class if they agree. After a few experiences they are conditioned to consider my query as evidence that I do not agree, so I recapture initiative by questioning a production that is perfectly satisfactory. I find this introduction of the unexpected into a class routine an excellent way to keep interest and attention. Students soon come to know "you can't be trusted," and they are encouraged to keep a more careful check, which is of course just what I want.

Finally I ask for another volunteer, who comes to the front of the room. I mark a figure 1 over the fire and a figure 2 over the hammer. Then I go to the back of the room where only the volunteer can face me. I insist that

other students face front, away from me. Then with arms folded or extended I briefly signal an intention to the volunteer. If I flash one finger, he is to say "He's heating the shoe"; if two fingers, "He's hitting the shoe." The class is to respond with the appropriate rejoinder. In this way I retain the initiative, I decide the intention. After the rejoinder of the class indicates their interpretation, I ask the volunteer if he agrees. I'm then in a very strong position to judge his performance. I know what he was instructed to say, and I can agree or disagree with the interpretation of the class. In case of a mismatch of statement and rejoinder, if I agree with the volunteer (assuming he confirms my signalled intention), the mistake is one on aural interpretation (by the class). If I agree with the class, the mistake is one of production (by the volunteer).

This last step doesn't always go right, since it depends for success on a good performance by the volunteer. He is expected to take an abstract symbol (one or two, gathered from seeing one finger or two) and convert it into a performance based on an arbitrary association. He may get confused. If the student is apt, the procedure usually goes well. But note that this is the only point at which an arbitrary meaning association is introduced, and it comes *after* logical associations have been established: *heating* with *fire, hitting* with *hammer*. This is much less an artificial signal than the left hand/right hand or A/B or 1/11 so frequently used in minimal-pair identifications. And the use I propose is purposeful. Even this last bit of arbitrariness could be avoided if one prepared a couple of flash cards with a fire and a hammer to use in the back of the room, or these two items could quickly be drawn on the rear blackboard with signals given by pointing to one or the other.

One might observe that this technique gives production practice to only one student, and that in a large class there will not be time to repeat the sequence for each student. Even if several repetitions were feasible, there is some question about the advisability of repeating the same procedures; it is possible that the loss in motivation is greater than the gain from additional practice. But the problem remains of how to generalize effective practice. Production is an individual matter, and if meaningful guidance to students is to be offered, choral practice has serious limitations beyond a very general kind of tongue-loosening activity. Students must perform one at a time with the techniques discussed here, or with any others I am familiar with, Options are (a) to repeat the last phase of the exercise with different students or (b) to follow the exercise as described with other activities that involve individual performance. As an example of the second alternative I suggest a short reading passage that embeds the pronunciation problem in various ways, preferably ways not fully expected. This makes it possible to maximize variety and to avoid excessive repetition of the elaborate procedure described earlier. As students read, individually and audibly, they can be recorded for subsequent review and analysis as a separate class activity. Rehearing a sentence or phrase or word is helpful in

case there is disagreement on just what pronunciation was used. Brief discussion following the recorded readings can answer queries on interpretations and possible misinterpretations.

A suggested selection which students can take turns reading into a recording microphone, a sentence or two at a time, is as follows:

> If a blacksmith wants to shoe a horse, he must first heat the shoe over a hot fire. Then he will put it on an anvil and hit it with a large hammer. He must heat the shoe before he hits it so the metal will be soft enough to shape. If he hits it first, the cold shoe will not take a new shape, and after hitting it, there's no point in heating it. So after first heating the shoe, he will beat it into the right shape, in case it's a little bit too big or too little. Then the shoe can be attached to the horse's hoof. The blacksmith does this by driving several long nails through the shoe into the hoof. He probably uses a smaller hammer to hit the nails than he did on the heated shoe. In any event, we'll easily see that it's a lot of work, and a blacksmith needs to be very strong to do his job.

The aim in preparing this reading is to produce something that is natural-sounding English prose, but that still incorporates the teaching points. It should also be reasonably interesting in content. It is quite likely that the class will notice that forms of *heat* and *hit* (five each) appear in the reading and that a special effort will be made to produce these forms correctly. These are distributed as follows:

> If a blacksmith wants to shoe a horse, he must first HEAT the shoe over a hot fire. Then he will put it on an anvil and HIT it with a large hammer. He must HEAT the shoe before he HITS it so the metal will be soft enough to shape. If he HITS it first, the cold shoe will not take a new shape, and after HITTING it, there's no point in HEATING it. So after first HEATING the shoe, he will beat it into the right shape, in case it's a little bit too big or too little. Then the shoe can be attached to the horse's hoof. The blacksmith does this by driving several long nails through the shoe into the hoof. He probably uses a smaller hammer to HIT the nails than he did on the HEATED shoe. In any event, we'll easily see that it's a lot of work, and a blacksmith needs to be very strong to do his job.

There is of course no objection to this attention to the forms of *heat* and *hit*. Not only is it desirable that they be learned and produced accurately, but they serve as a temporary screen to other, more important items in the reading, that test and practice the same contrast of /iy/ and /ɪ/ in other words. There are 53 of these, 21 for /iy/ and 32 for /ɪ/. There are two minimal pairs fully represented, *beat-bit* and *we'll-will*, and four minimal pairs partially represented, *eat-it*, *eats-it's*, *deed-did*, *he's-his*. The other examples of one or the other sounds occur in words that do not occur as minimal pairs. The relevant syllables are marked in the version of the reading that follows:

> If a blackSMITH wants to shoe a horse, HE must first *heat* the shoe over a hot fire. Then HE WILL put IT on an anVIL and *hit* IT WITH a large hammer. HE must *heat* the shoe before HE *hits* IT so the metal WILL BE soft enough to shape. IF HE *hits* IT first, the cold shoe WILL not take a

> new shape, and after *hitting* IT, there's no point IN *heating* IT. So after first *heating* the shoe, HE WILL BEAT IT INto the right shape, in case IT'S a LITTle BIT too BIG or too LITTle. Then the shoe can BE attached to the horse's hoof. The blackSMITH does THIS by drivING several long nails through the shoe INto the hoof. HE probaBLY use a smaller hammer to *hit* the nails than HE DID on the *heated* shoe. IN anY Event, WE'LL EASilY SEE that IT'S a lot of work, and a blackSMITH NEEDS to BE verY strong to do HIS job.

In using a reading of this kind to check (and encourage) the contrast that is being taught, good use should be made of juxtapositions of two words with different members of the contrast. In the reading the following opportunities occur: *he will, will be, if he hits, in heating it, he will beat it, he did, in any, smith needs. Also* useful are sequences of several examples of the same sound, to check for consistency: *in case it's a little bit too big or too little, any event we'll easily see.*

In spite of the relatively large number of examples of the sounds being drilled and learned (66 if everything is counted), it is important not to overload the reading selection, or at least not to give the impression of overloading. When a contrast drill becomes too conspicuous it is felt to be ridiculous, and this damages the atmosphere for efficient learning. As an example of something that would be too overloaded to be used effectively, consider the following portion:

> The blacksmith did the deed so that the horse shoes would fit the feet of the horse. He takes the shoe, first heats and then bite it. He usually has to beat it a bit. This is what he does to eat; it is his job.

This is too forced, and the contrasts are unnatural. The fact the contrasts are conspicuous means that special attention may be given them, and the conditions of generalization are violated: that accuracy of pronunciation be extended to language use where the student's attention is on the message rather than the form. Even if the student could do the above segment satisfactorily, there is no assurance that a carryover would improve his general use of the language.

My experiences with the techniques described and illustrated above have been that they capture and hold class interest. I have no controlled, experimental evidence that they teach pronunciation, but at least that first giant step toward learning is taken: getting the ears and eyes of the students focussed on a problem, since when there is no attention, there is no learning.

Many pronunciation problems can be handled by the techniques of contextualized pronunciation practice; all that is necessary is a bit of imagination and ingenuity to devise an appropriate situation, one that is (1) meaningful, (2) picturable, (3) balanced, and (4) if possible, relevant to the experience and/or interest of the students. I can suggest two or three possibilities. A pedagogue and a cook complain that:

| | |
|---|---|
| This pen leaks. | Then don't write with it. |
| This pan leaks. | Then don't cook with it. |

Pedagogues write and cooks cook, and neither likes a leaky utensil. The differentiaters *write* and *cook* are clearly distinct, and will serve to identify members of the pair *pen-pan*. All concepts are concrete and readily picturable. Both pens and pans fit the instrumental use after the preposition *with* and both have been known to leak. This contrast drills the vowel pair **/ɛ-æ/, which causes difficulties for students of English as a second language** with many language backgrounds.

Another contrast is:

| | |
|---|---|
| What's this pool for? | For swimming. |
| What's this spool for? | For sewing. |

This pair illustrates and drills two features: (1) a single vs. a double s, signalled by length, and (2) the presence and absence of aspiration with the voiceless stop consonant p. The feature of a lengthened consonant occurs only across word boundaries in English. The aspiration is present when the /p/ is initial in the word *pool*, but absent when /p/ follows /s/ in the word *spool*. This pair is perhaps a little weaker pedagogically, since while spools of thread are certainly associated with sewing, the sequence "spool—for sewing" is not quite as convincing as "pool—for swimming." However, it's not a bad match, and the balance, picturability, and relevance are satisfactory.

A pair that illustrates a stress contrast is:

**Where can I buy côld créam? At the dairy.**

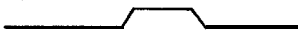
**Where can I buy cóld crèam? At the drugstore.**

In this pair a normal adjective-noun sequence is compared with a noun compound or construct. The minimal stress contrast influences the pitch pattern by placing the highest pitch on the syllable with the strongest stress: *cream* in the first sentence and *cold* in the second:

**còld créam vs cóld crèam.**

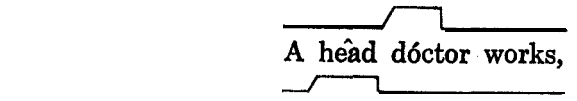
**A possible difficulty with these two concepts is their picturability. *Cream* may come in a bottle or a paper carton, or perhaps in an aerosol can, and the student may not be personally familiar with the container. *Cóld crèam* is a women's cosmetic product that might not be commonly known to men students. If this disadvantage of being unfamiliar is too great, there are many other pairs illustrating the same stress contrast that can be used:**

**What's a hêad dóctor? He's an administrator.**



**What's a héad dòctor? He's a psychiatrist.**

**or to produce a more easily handled rejoinder:**




If you disagree with the levity implicit in the use of an informal designation *héad dòctor* for a psychiatrist, pick another pair. There are plenty of them available. (I am tempted to go along with the current national joke and suggest *hôt pánts* vs *hót pànts.)*

This then is an example of contextualizing pronunciation practice. Students work with familiar (or specifically learned but relevant and reasonable) concepts, which are associated with easily distinguished clues. The activities carry messages that are not arbitrary, and the sequence has been demonstrated to hold the interest of a wide variety of students. This hopefully is a step toward making all of our language-teaching activities more meaningful and relevant to the lives, interests, and experience of our students.

Perhaps there are other ways of using meaning and meaningful communication to make teaching more effective; that is, perhaps there are other ways of contextualizing teaching materials. We know that schools do not provide the most productive language learning, that learning in an immersion situation, where a need for communication is strongly felt and sympathetic encouragement is offered, is much more efficient. In such an environment every utterance ever heard or used is meaningful and relevant to the situation it is used in. It is, to use the word I have chosen, "contextualized."

I have indicated one way to contextualized a pronunciation presentation. Perhaps there are other, maybe better ways. Surely something must be done to win and hold the attention of students, to organize materials for learning in a way that is compatible with the development of skills needed for communication. Our record of success in the schools is not an enviable one. Perhaps we can do better.

## *Summary and Discussion*

At the 1964 Conference of the Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language, Clifford H. Prator delivered a paper which represented a milestone in the field. It was entitled "Development of a Manipulation-Communication Scale."[1] From then on, more and more ESOL practitioners have been convinced of the need for more emphasis on the communicative and less on the manipulative aspects of teaching in the language class. This is not a repudiation of the need for skill-building exercises, but reflects a desire for drills which are more meaningful, more within the experience of the students; such drills should lead as quickly as possible to the freer, more creative, more nearly communicative types of activity.

If there is a unifying theme in the papers prepared under the 1971 contract with the English Language Branch - Defense Language Institute, Lackland Air Force Base, it would probably be the preoccupation of the authors with the idea which Prator expressed: the need for finding ways to lead students more rapidly from mechanical drills to the more truly communicative expression of the language. Each paper in this series (with the possible exception of Allen Tucker's article which treats a highly specialized aspect of language teaching), in its own way and within the limitations of its content, presents methods and techniques by which students are enabled to develop the ability to use English outside the classroom in the "real world."

Charles Kreidler's paper, "Teaching English Spelling and Pronunciation," makes a plea for more systematic concentration on the regular orthographic patterns of English. He feels that we should free the student early in his language-learning experience from the heavy reliance on the crutch provided by the commonly employed phonemic notation. Since students will, sooner or later, be confronted with material which appears in regular spelling and be forced to pronounce this material with no clues except the graphic symbols, Kreidler feels that specific instruction in the form of guided practice in the pronunciation of material in regular orthography should be provided. This will prepare them for the time when they will be "on their own." Kreidler's paper contains examples of some of the spelling patterns of English which can be used to give the student confidence in pronouncing English from the printed word.

From the title of Robert L. Allen's paper, "The Use of Rapid Drills in the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages," one might expect heavy emphasis upon mechanical drills, but what he really concerns himself with is techniques whereby students are led very rapidly to the point in the language-learning process where they can create sentences of their own, This "creativity" echoes the feeling so often stated in present-day professional articles that students should be practicing useful, natural lan-

1 *NAFSA Studies and Papers,* English Language Series, Number 10 (March, 1965) pp. 57-62.

guage—not the endless unrelated utterances of the old pattern drills. Allen's paper includes an appendix rich with examples of rapid drills of all kinds, adding up to a wealth of ideas for classroom use.

The third paper, "Teaching Writing in the ESOL Classroom: Techniques of Controlled Composition" by Christina Bratt Paulston, in addition to a discussion of the role of writing in language teaching, contains an excellent review of classroom procedures and techniques for teaching controlled composition. Paulston takes note, however, of the importance of exercises which demand less and less guidance until they become "semi-controlled" exercises. The process of writing is thought of as proceeding from the rather mechanical, no-error-possible, kinds of drills to the goal of free composition.

Pauston's paper is a mine of reference information, filled with examples of exercises and techniques for teaching writing. It is reminiscent of the paper of William E. Norris on reading, which in addition to a wealth of examples of reading exercises also discussed the goal of reading in ESOL programs.[2] These two papers will serve the profession well as basic references in the two aspects of language teaching which have not had as much attention as others: reading and writing.

C. Allen Tucker's paper, "Programmed Dictation: An Example of the P.I. [Programmed Instruction] Process in the Classroom," describes a very specific activity in the classroom: dictation. He calls attention to what he believes to be one of the most important ingredients of programmed instruction: immediate knowledge of results. Tucker maintains that with this immediate feedback the student can progress more rapidly at his own individual rate and will be more highly motivated in his language learning. His paper includes specific examples of ways in which dictation exercises may be programmed for use in the classroom.

Wilga Rivers, in her paper "Talking Off the Tops of Their Heads," is concerned, as she has been for quite some time, with the problem of what happens to students after they have learned the rudiments of English. How do they reach the point where they can "talk off the tops of their heads"? She has specific suggestions for activities in the early stages of language learning which complement the skill-building activities while forcing the student to use English for normal purposes. She also has an interesting and highly useful discussion of the problem of correcting errors without inhibiting the student's experimental attempts at language use. An outstanding section of the paper is a listing of twelve kinds of interaction activities, easily implemented in the language curriculum and showing promise of being an extremely helpful means of giving the students confidence in their use of language in real-life situations.

"Contextualizing Pronunciation Practice in the ESOL Classroom," the final paper in the series, concerns itself particularly with the phonological

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2 William E. Norris, "Teaching Second Language Reading at the Advanced Level: Goals, Techniques, and Procedures," *TESOL Quarterly*, IV, 1 (March, 1970), 17-35.

aspects of English, but the author's basic idea is to emphasize the need—particularly in pronunciation exercises—for practice which is meaningful to the student. J. Donald Bowen's paper describes several ingenious exercises which he has developed with this point in mind. In this paper, as in the others, we find a plea for materials which call for less attention on the part of the student to the form of what he is saying and more attention to the content, less of the mechanical and more of the communicative.

These six papers, like those in the two previous series, are rich in ideas for the classroom teacher.

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