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In This Issue

Together, the articles in this issue of the TESOL Quarterly indicate the scope of our professional concerns. In addition, they reveal the variety of ways in which issues in such areas as teacher training, curriculum, teaching methods and techniques, and learner characteristics can be usefully explored.

• Giuseppina Cortese describes the development of a curricular innovation for post-intermediate EFL learners at the university level. An experimental course, consisting of a series of group and individual projects on the topic of American Indians, was designed to tap the students’ reading ability in developing their oral and writing skills. Cortese discusses the rationale for each of the projects and activities in the course, which culminated with a simulation of a court hearing involving an Indian land claim. She argues that the learners’ progress validates the assumptions on which this pedagogical experiment was based: 1) Receptive skills can be used to advantage in developing productive skills; 2) needs analysis should be an ongoing process; and 3) “language teaching can be usefully conceived as action-based research aiming at learner-specific procedures.”

• Maria Fröhlich, Nina Spada, and Patrick Allen report on a study of the effectiveness of a classroom observation instrument in reflecting differences in second language classrooms. The COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching) scheme is a two-part observational tool which analyzes classroom events at the level of the teaching/learning activities taking place and at the level of verbal interaction. Observation of 13 classes in four different second language programs—core French, extended French, French immersion, and ESL—in the Toronto area indicated that the COLT is sensitive to differences in the communicative orientation of classrooms. The classrooms were shown to differ on a number of dimensions, including the amount of group work which took place, the degree to which activities focused on meaning, the extent to which teachers controlled the topic, and the type of materials used. This preliminary evidence for the validity of the COLT is, as the authors point out, a necessary
first step in research on the kind of communicative orientation which is most beneficial for developing different aspects of second language proficiency.

- Donna Johnson presents the results of a national survey of graduates of bilingual education programs. The survey, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, addressed the following questions: “Do program graduates work in the field of BE [bilingual education] after completing their programs? What students do they teach, and what do they teach?” The survey revealed that the vast majority of BE program graduates were serving students with limited English proficiency as teachers, teacher trainers, or administrators. The data also offered evidence that funds made available to many of these individuals through ESEA Title VII stipends and fellowships have had the intended effect. The findings help to dispel widespread misconceptions about bilingual education. In contrast to the widely held view that most BE teachers neither teach ESL nor use English during most of the school day, it was found that for a full 70 percent of the BE teachers in the sample, teaching English was a primary responsibility of their jobs and that only 12 percent of the teachers surveyed used a language other than English for more than 60 percent of the school day.

- Vivian Zamel concludes from her study of ESL teachers’ responses to writing that “our responses communicate conflicting and constricting notions about the nature of writing.” Like their counterparts who teach composition to native speakers, the ESL teachers in Zamel’s study provided students with written feedback that was “often confusing, arbitrary, and inaccessible.” In addition, the responses indicated little expectation that students would revise beyond the surface level. Zamel argues that all teachers of composition have the opportunity to investigate their responding behavior. By doing this, they may become convinced of the value of offering students text-specific comments and reactions, of evaluating student work according to a flexible standard, and of providing students with the opportunity to incorporate responses into their texts. Above all, however, teachers must “respond not so much to student writing but to student writers.”

- Robert Politzer and Mary McGroarty describe an exploratory study of the relationship between the language learning behaviors which students report using and gains in language proficiency. The authors found that student gains on a measure of grammatical knowledge were “positively associated with behaviors quite distinct from those related to acquisition and an increase in functional skills.” Politzer and McGroarty point out, however, that cultural background and other variables may play an important role in determining how easily students can adopt “good” language learning behaviors. Thus, their
study is a first step in both validating and qualifying claims made about the influence of classroom study, individual study, and social behaviors on second language development.

- Arguing that “literary study—including a study of poetry—can play an important role in language classrooms at many levels,” Jean McConochie presents a seven-step approach for teaching a narrative poem in an ESOL class. McConochie illustrates this approach with Robert Frost’s “The Death of the Hired Man” and shows how a poem can be treated first at the narrative level—“start with the story,” McConochie recommends—and then at the level of formal analysis. By working with students to analyze a poem—the story, the underlying cultural assumptions, and the formal characteristics of the poem—and then to reassemble its overall meaning, the teacher can help students “to extend their range of interests and feelings, to become truly educated men and women.”

- Kyle Perkins and Barbara Jones examine the concept of passage dependency, or “the extent to which questions can be answered without reading the texts upon which the questions are based.” The performance of 44 university-level ESL students on two reading tests showed little evidence of passage dependency. Rather, the ability to answer many of the items appeared to depend on general background knowledge. The authors also classified test items according to the type of cognitive task which each item imposed on the subjects. Using latent trait measurement techniques, Perkins and Jones found that “questions which reveal whether or not inferences have been made and questions which test memory are quite effective for testing comprehension.”

Also in this issue:

- Reviews
- Brief Reports and Summaries
- Two exchanges in The Forum: Peggy Rodriguez and Robin Sabino comment on Roberta Abraham’s “Patterns in the Use of Present Tense Third Person Singular –s by University-Level ESL Speakers,” and Reinhold Schlieper reacts to Nancy Rennau Tumposky’s recent article, “Behavioral Objectives, the Cult of Efficiency, and Foreign Language Learning: Are They Compatible?”, both Abraham and Tumposky respond.

Stephen J. Gaies
This article describes a curricular innovation in a post-intermediate EFL university course. The aim of the project was to build on the reading proficiency of the learners to improve their much less fully developed oral and written communication skills. An experimental course was developed around a connected series of group and individual projects on the topic of American Indians. The main psychopedagogical guidelines for the course were provided by the maturation process as described by the Russian psychologists Vigotsky (1962) and Leontiev (1981) and by the notion that shared knowledge is a prerequisite to purposeful and meaningful interaction (Castelfranchi and Parisi 1980, Hartmann 1980).

University students from different study areas used reading materials to develop proficiency in speaking and writing. In the final project, a videotaped simulation of a court hearing involving an Indian land claim, each of the 18 students delivered a speech and participated in a debate. For this and the preceding projects in the course, the issues of teacher roles, learner roles, materials, skill transfer, and empathy-building activities are discussed.

There was considerable evidence for the validity of the three assumptions on which this pedagogical experiment was based: 1) It is feasible to reverse the canonical sequence of skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in language learning; 2) needs analysis is an ongoing process of learner observation which takes into account both cognitive and affective responses; and 3) language teaching can be usefully conceived as action-based research aiming at learner-specific procedures.

READING BEFORE SPEAKING:
REASONS AND AIMS

Language teachers are familiar with the problem of intermediate-level learners who cling to what they have acquired, without trying to venture any further. Their active vocabulary is
limited to that of stock situations presented in course materials, and their performance in any interaction outside these routines tends to be somewhat childlike—full of repetitions, set expressions, and long, winding paraphrases. For some people, this “survival language” is a mortal embrace: Locked within it, they eventually preface any exchange in the target language with an apology (“my English is very poor”), never to reach beyond language-like behavior.

However, the very same people who struggle with the spoken word may be reasonably fluent or even quite proficient in the receptive skills, particularly reading. A number of interesting procedures are being developed (see, for example, Davies 1980) in which reading activities pave the way for verbal interaction. This trend has two important implications.

First, a healthy subversion of the audiolingual “canonical” skill sequence, which made it imperative to start with the oral mode, is taking place outside the confines of ESP, where reading-only courses have been going on for years, even with beginning learners. Second, and more important, reading, in connection with speaking, is no longer a mere pretext, as in the traditional “read, answer, then discuss” routine.

Articulate adults are not likely to invest any significant amount of attention in reading if they are aware that a reading passage is merely a lexical supply for the ensuing “conversation.” If reading is to contribute to language maturation as a whole, which amounts to much more than picking up, in piecemeal fashion, vocabulary on sundry and often unrelated issues (Dubin and Olshtain 1980:358), then it should be conceived as a reading project in its own right—a project in which learners have their say in the selection of the topic and materials and become truly engaged. Presumably, the individual whose cognitive and affective response to the written sources is authentic will actually interact with the texts, which will lead to genuine oral discourse if the variables of group dynamics are properly handled.

In the course described here, written sources were used as the backbone of a larger project aimed at developing expository and discussion skills. The learning group consisted of 18 people, a rather unusual feat in a university where oversize classes are the norm. This manageable size afforded a unique opportunity to experiment with a “soft” approach to course planning, in which the pedagogical project could gradually unfold through careful observation of

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1 University of Turin, Faculty of Political Science, 1983-1984. The author served as tutor for this course.
learner conditions. Put differently, the teaching conditions allowed for an ongoing process of needs analysis.

The sociolinguistic concept of needs is a striking example of a theoretical notion which has influenced teaching practice, only to be severely remolded in the process. Pre-pedagogical determination of needs ("designing the program to meet the students’ needs") was quickly seen as a highly manipulative procedure in direct contrast to a student-centered ideology (Rivers and Melvin 1981:84). Hence, a more comprehensive notion of needs has been envisaged, which takes into account the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor traits of learners. In arguing for this more inclusive view, Richterich (1979) has recommended that teachers constantly adjust their objectives in the course of the teaching/learning, process, rather than focus on initial needs analysis.

The approach developed at the CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d’Applications Pédagogiques En Langues) at the University of Nancy is an important example of this “action-based” framework (Riley 1982:102), in which the classroom is the research ground for producing, applying, and modifying learner-specific procedures. Di Pietro’s (1981, 1982) “open scenario” is another approach which incorporates a great deal of student observation on the part of the teacher and is built on the teacher’s ability to deal with students as whole persons.

THE LEARNERS AND THE CONTEXT

The 18 students in the experimental course were fairly homogeneous in English proficiency; although their productive ability lagged far behind their receptive skills, their reading fluency was far superior to that of their intermediate-level peers.

Most of the more than 150 students in the regular intermediate course were graduates of technical and vocational high schools, with fewer years of language study (and with a narrower EFL syllabus) than the students in the experimental course. The average intermediate-level student is usually very weak in both receptive and productive skills. Although the reasons for this are too numerous to be discussed here, one major factor should be mentioned: namely, the time lag between leaving school and entering the university. The majority of the students in the Faculty are in fact student-workers, with a school history which is not comparable to that of full-time students. Foreign languages is obviously one of the subject areas in which these students suffer most from the lack of continuity in their education.

The learners in the project reported in this article were in many
ways the “lucky few” whose EFL background was both continuous and fairly well-developed. Most of these students were lyceum graduates whose previous EFL training included work in extensive reading. Some had been to England for a brief holiday, and in two cases the holiday abroad had also included some language training. However, with few exceptions, even these students seemed to lose confidence when challenged to use the language for anything other than practical, routine matters, and their awareness of this problem contributed to their reluctance to use English.

Intermediate-level EFL teaching in the Faculty of Political Science consists of an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) reading-based course (see Cortese 1979 for a discussion of the aims and methodology of this course) and supporting course work. The EAP course is the main requirement; the collateral course work begins with intensive remedial work in grammar and vocabulary, to give students an opportunity to revise (or rather, revive) the English they have learned, and then concentrates on listening and speaking.

The skills profile of the group of 18 students clearly called for a different syllabus design, especially in the collateral course work. To exploit the students’ receptive abilities, the working plan for this post-intermediate group was structured to include a “standard” EAP reading course, with more challenging reading assignments for the final examination, and a concurrent course aimed at improving expository and discussion skills. This article reports on the latter of these courses.

THE READING PROJECT
Guidelines for Topic Selection

At the initial meeting of the group, it was agreed that the course should begin with a reading project. Since the learners represented the variety of degree programs offered by the Faculty of Political Science (major study areas include history, economics, government studies, and other social sciences), it became clear that the topic should lend itself to interdisciplinary treatment. This would allow the participants to apply the knowledge they had acquired in their respective academic areas.

From the teacher’s point of view, it was essential that the topic be so involving as to make the language factor almost incidental. It was therefore necessary, first of all, to make the students want to acquire new knowledge. By creating cognitive needs and helping learners find ways of working together to satisfy these needs, it would be
possible to lower the "affective filter"—to use Krashen's (1982) term—and to develop the ideal learning condition defined by Leontiev as "operational tension":

Operational tension is connected with the necessity of carrying out a particular activity: it allows a person to "settle into" that activity and always leads to the best possible performance (1981:70).

An appealing theme, complex enough to be explored both extensively and intensively, would also allow for a great deal of practice in repetition, restatement, reformulation, and amplification. These are staple native-speaker strategies, but transfer into the foreign language is not easy when learners are made to hop from one topic to a very different one, without time to perceive the interconnectedness of a semantic field.

Relatedness is all important to the learner. The need for continuity is fundamental to Vigotsky’s notion of “contiguous development areas,” as Leontiev points out:

L.S. Vigotsky . . . proposed the well-known concept of the “contiguous development” areas: the thought tasks set to pupils should to some extent outreach the actual level of their knowledge and intellectual activity, so that it would “lift” them up to an increasingly higher level. It is in this sense that we talk of development-fostering tuition (1981:60).

Krashen’s (1982) “i+1” formula seems to suggest for language maturation the same path as the one described above: Like cognitive development, linguistic development is a matter of constantly challenging the learner into further acquisition. However, the Russian psychologists make clear that genuine acquisition will take place only if the new material is made compatible with, and therefore relatable to, previously consolidated experience. This is perhaps what Krashen means by “new comprehensible input,” although it would seem that relatedness is not equivalent to, but a condition for, comprehension.

American Indians, the topic for the reading project, was selected both in light of the above considerations and independently, on the basis of intrinsic pedagogical value. While American Indians cannot be considered a purely academic subject, it is important for young adults, who instinctively sympathize with their cause, to develop a more informed attitude. Although EFL school readers frequently include at least one passage on American Indians, it is usually a glorious rendition of warpath Indians, too often implying that they belong to the past. Not surprisingly, the students were very keen on finding out about American Indians today.
From Reading to Oral Reporting

Acting as library-resources manager, the teacher prepared a bibliography of locally available materials in English on American Indians which was organized by subject area. (See Table 1 for an overview of the reading project. In the table, the bibliography is designated English language bibliography to contrast it with the preliminary reading done in Italian.) Two class sessions were devoted to the English language bibliography to explain its organization and to help students select the book they would read independently. The students were advised to select a book which would not only attract them but would also be compatible with their major area of study and their EFL reading fluency. Only the most fluent students were encouraged to choose materials requiring much critical and interpretive reading. Thus, a history book which had been criticized by the Indians was chosen by a student who had lived abroad and had near-native language proficiency; her reading purpose was to find out precisely where the alleged bias lay. It was agreed that participants would take a full month, which included the Christmas holidays, to carry out their extensive reading and that they would make an oral report to the class on the main topics and lines of argument in their books, as well as on the authors’ methodologies and personal attitudes.

At the same time, the basic reading was organized. Obviously, the participants needed to isolate and focus on a number of central themes to which their individual reading would contribute. A framework of basic information had to be developed quickly but without creating language problems which would lower initial motivation. Hence, the preliminary reading was done in Italian.

During initial class meetings, participants were encouraged to discuss the image they had of American Indians, an image that had developed mostly from exposure to the cinema and the media. As it became obvious that these images were stereotypes, participants became aware of the need to draw a more accurate picture from authoritative, unbiased sources. A history book which included recent American Indian history up to the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973—a major event the students were too young to remember—was read by all participants, and in the ensuing discussion, major themes were identified for further exploration in individual reading.

A growing collection on North American Indians is available in the University libraries, and a number of dissertations on this theme have been completed or are under way. Readers interested in obtaining a list of the source materials used in the course are invited to write the author at Università degli Studi di Torino; Istituto di Scienze Politiche “Gioele Solari”; Via S. Ottavio, 20 10124 Torino, Italy.
<table>
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<td>Book Report (Writing)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>RU</td>
<td>R → W</td>
<td>Weeks 7-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Role of Materials:  I = Information;  LR = Language Resource;  O = Organization;  S = Support

Role of Teacher:  FT = Formal Tutor;  LA = Language Adviser;  LF = Language Facilitator;  M = Manager of Resources;  P = Participant Observer

Role of Learner:  D = Discussant;  FL = Formal Learner;  N = Negotiator;  PT = Peer Tutor;  RU = Resource User

Skills:  R = Reading;  S = Speaking;  W = Writing
It was necessary to help participants cope with English vocabulary referring to new concepts and to keep the discussion from wandering prematurely into detail. Students were encouraged to switch to Italian whenever they felt at a loss, and prompt reformulation in English was done with the help of the class. Thus, the frustration of long, winding paraphrases was avoided, and useful terminology was introduced. Other features of classroom management were occasional teacher-student questioning, which helped students take notice of important points and explore them further, along with remarks which mapped the connections among participants’ comments. This participant-observer behavior was aimed at stimulating the discussion and reinforcing the feeling that content was what mattered, language being a mere vehicle for it. Therefore, hardly any attempt at “correcting” or changing the students’ interlanguage was made.

Area majors were often able to supply helpful explanations for new notions. Concepts such as ethnocentrism, acculturation, culture change, and matrilineal society were explained by two anthropology students, while an economics student answered queries on taxation policies.

While these initial sessions were gradually creating a group feeling, it was also evident that American Indians were changing from an essentially academic topic to a palpable reality in the students’ minds. As they grew more familiar with the geography, names, and history of American Indian nations, the students also became more responsive to the literature and to one another. The “anchoring ideas” were consolidating; at the same time, the students were mapping the shared knowledge which both psycholinguistic theory (Castelfranchi and Parisi 1980:50-51) and discourse analysis (Hartmann 1980:20) view as prerequisite to purposive and meaningful interaction.³

Discussion of the preliminary reading helped the students begin their individual reading in English. Understandably, problems arose with the book reports, which required a major upgrading in the quality of discourse. Up to this point, oral performance had mostly consisted of fairly brief utterances (objecting and explaining, (Hartmann’s (1980) useful survey of discourse analysis stresses the relevance of studies of information structure:

Knowledge of objects and events in the world around us is transmitted through language, but in turn the production and comprehension of meaningful discourse relies heavily on presuppositions and beliefs, shared between interlocutors (20).

Apart from linguistic and psycholinguistic research, the importance of basic cognitive networks for any learning process has been emphasized in cognitive learning theory (see the notions of “anchoring ideas” and “advance organizers” in Ausubel 1968).
agreeing and amplifying, defining and illustrating, providing additional examples, comparing and contrasting, and asking for clarification). Now, the learners were required to plan and produce fairly extensive connected discourse, for which their textual strategies were deficient. Training was needed in discourse planning, as well as in surface cohesion devices; the students needed to become aware of where the problems lay, and this could be done more easily through writing.

**Peer Editing Workshop**

Each student next produced a written version of the oral report, which was distributed to all participants for criticism. As the maximum length was three pages, learners had to be selective about the information included and to place it within a critical perspective. Peer correction needed some encouragement at first, but the feeling that criticizing meant “doing wrong” soon disappeared. The students were more relaxed because they did not have to listen until their attention became strained; after silent reading of a colleague’s work, requests for clarification followed and multiplied. Interest triggered fascinating discussions; this was the case, for instance, with a complex study of the Navaho Mountainway Chant, which set the participants’ minds to work on the significance of myth, symbolism, ethics, and values across culture, and on the complexity of the so-called primitive cultures. At the same time, however, such discussions made it impossible to work on more than two reports in any of the two-hour weekly sessions.

From the point of view of language development, the great advantage of the workshop sessions was that the students could see that problems of meaning derived only to a limited extent from lexical items or lack of grammatical accuracy. Rather, requests for clarification were much more frequent in connection with long, convoluted sentences which were obscure to everyone but the author. Awkward texts, so overburdened with repetition as to cause the reader to miss the point, were reworked. This was done at first with the help of the teacher and gradually by the students themselves as they became familiar with how lexical variation, pronominal reference, and connective can make one’s ideas more quickly intelligible to others. Lastly, and most important, it was possible to deal in a concrete way with the transition from sentence-level problems to problems in discourse planning and organization. Insufficiently signaled or badly effected topic transition, lack of intersentential connective, and lack of verb tense agreement across
sentences were three areas of major concern which indeed made the
students become sensitive to discourse grammar. While mechanical
errors were not much of a problem, ineffective control of discourse
sequences made comprehension simply impossible (see Tomiyana
1980).

In concentrating on language to make meaning intelligible, the
students were keeping in mind the potential reader (Britton 1975:121)
and learning that writing cannot be done in a vacuum. By the time
all reports had been edited, many important aspects of textuality
had been actively dealt with through a variety of examples. At the
same time, turn taking and the style of the questioning had become
more sophisticated.

In exploring the interfaces of reading, writing, and speaking, the
students were applying their adult intelligence to a serious subject
and were working together to maximize the results of individual
reading. Mutual editing carried none of the initial hesitation and was
done quite naturally as a cooperative venture. Occasionally, the
combination of informal English with formal idioms from scholarly
sources caused much laughter, as did a number of hilarious instances
of lexical invention in which mother-tongue interference had a large
part. On the whole, the statement that writing tasks based on the
integration of reading and writing are both challenging and reasur-
ing (Watson 1982: 10) proved very true. The students were receiving
support from written sources, from the class, and from the teacher,
and yet they were at the same time pursuing more effective
communication in both speech and writing.

After all reports had been revised and discussed, the teacher’s role
shifted from language adviser to explicit language trainer. The
writing problems which had emerged from the learner texts were
organized under a number of headings (see Zughoul and Kambal
1983) ranging from vocabulary (appropriate lexicon, lexical vari-
ation, word formation, register) and local errors, mechanical in
nature and pertaining to grammar (e. g., subject-verb agreement, use
of phrasal verbs, prepositional phrase, adjectival clause), to errors
involving longer stretches of discourse (time markers, logical/argu-
mentative sequence, pronominal reference, punctuation) to cogni-
tive-order problems with the organization and coherence of content
(topic flow, paragraphing). For each category, a number of ex-
amples of student writing were presented on the overhead projector,
reworked, and discussed. While the previous editing had been occa-
sioned by comprehension difficulties in a content-based discus-
sion, this editing review focused more systematically on relating
verbal object to cognitive content and on coaching the learners’
text-producing skills.
THE SIMULATION

Preparing book reports was connected more with the ability to process the information contained in the written sources than with composition writing. Book reports were only moderately challenging for untrained EFL writers, who would be frustrated by more demanding tasks. At the same time, intensive work on a number of main themes, paralleled by reworking of the written texts and opportunities for improving spoken interaction, was of psychological benefit to the weaker students, who gained confidence and spoke more often.

The learners were ready to try out their expository and discussion skills in more autonomous tasks. They had assimilated a great deal of information and enjoyed working together. They were therefore ready for group work which would be geared to closer integration of skill domains and would permit them to express intellectual and emotional responses to the literature on American Indians.

The teacher prepared a working scheme for a simulations which included a blueprint of the situation to be simulated, a list of roles, and an indication of the tasks to be performed. Two sessions were then devoted to completing the blueprint, discussing and assigning roles, and planning other preparatory work.

The teacher's framework centered on a situation which would require the students to 1) gather data from more written sources to make role contents convincing; 2) write, in groups, a speech which would match in content, degree of formality, and style of delivery the status and role of the speaker(s); and 3) participate in an impromptu debate, which would follow. (See Table 2 for an overview of the simulation.)

The situation would be a hearing of the U.S. Supreme Court concerning a land claim. The judge and a legal assistant would first present a briefing on the case, with information on its course through the judicial system to the Supreme Court, and then hear witnesses in preparation for making a final decision. The list of witnesses would include two representatives of the Tribal Council, two representatives of the American Indian Movement (AIM), two representatives of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), two holy men of the tribe, two representatives of the Council of American Indian Scholars, two white anthropologists with fieldwork experience in the area, two Indian/white relations experts who would speak on economic affairs, and a newspaperman with long-standing experience in coverage of news about Indians.

4See Cortese and Potestà (1983) for a detailed FL syllabus geared to the integration of skills and focusing on English and Italian for academic purposes.

5For a discussion of simulations in classroom language learning, see Jones (1982).
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*Role of Materials: E = Evidence; I = Information; O = Organization; S = Support
Role of Teacher: LA = Language Adviser; LF = Language Facilitator; M = Manager of Resources; P = Participant Observer
Role of Learner: D = Discussant; N = Negotiator; PT = Peer Tutor; RU = Resource User
Skills: R = Reading; S = Speaking; W = Writing
The roles were designed to fit the academic curriculum, EFL competence, and even the personal situations of students. The roles of magistrate and legal researcher, for instance, were meant for the most fluent of the students. They would introduce the other speakers and chair the debate in a style consistent with the formality and protocol of law courts, but their speaking time would be shorter. The role of journalist was tailored for a very articulate student, actually on the staff of a small newspaper, who could not contribute to group work because of scheduling conflicts.

Following the “open scenario” procedure, in which “new developments and/or new information are meted out in phases rather than given all at once” (Di Pietro 1982:16), the students were asked to develop the scenario by themselves, starting with additional data for the land claim case. At the end of a very lively session in which details were proposed, evaluated, and gradually made to fit the global design, the students had produced a map of a fictitious area called Green Valley. Situated on the border of an Indian reservation and separated from it by a watershed which caused an abundant rainfall in the valley, the area was formerly inhabited by the tribe and now cultivated by white farmers. The attitude of the white community toward the Indians was indicated by their naming the watercourse between the rich valley and the dry reservation lands Custer River.

Written sources provided realistic figures for land and population size. A complex case for litigation gradually emerged, in which Green Valley was rightfully being claimed as holy-land according to oral tribal history, while the white community was clinging to what they regarded as their own legal property.

When the roles suggested by the teacher were examined, the objection was rightly made that someone should speak for the white farmers, but predictably, nobody volunteered to take up this role. Therefore, it was decided that the court hearing would focus on the Indians' own views on the land claim and show the human, religious, historical, social, economic, and political implications of the claim.

At this stage, the students divided up into pairs or triads and were given source materials which included scholarly essays; BIA materials; AIM materials; American Indians, the Subject Report based on the 1970 U.S. Census; the 1977 Annual Report of the Native American Rights Fund; and copies of the American Indian Journal, published by the Institute for the Development of Indian Law.6

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FROM RECEPTIVE TO PRODUCTIVE 19
The students’ eagerness was most gratifying and proved that an open-ended condition can indeed be productive. Each pair or triad worked in a separate place, and the teacher observed the variety of strategies chosen by the groups. Some started with an outline, which they heavily revised after studying the materials; others skimmed the materials, took notes, and compared ideas before producing a writing plan; others did not make an outline.

Most students decided to write their speech in full; they would then revise their speech but would not improvise from notes. While content, attitude, and point of view were decided on fairly quickly and autonomously by each group, the actual writing took longer and involved consultation with the teacher. The language problems at this point concerned 1) making lexical/syntactical choices which would match the given role and attitude of the speaker (scholarly and generally formal with a few colloquialisms, polemical and ironic, wise and full of dignity, angry and outspoken, and so on); 2) inserting metaphors, Indian sayings, or in-group expressions from the sources, without overdoing it; and 3) applying rhetorical devices effective in speaking (repetition and parataxis rather than abundant use of reference items and conjunctive items).

Group tutoring now focused on how a text could “come alive.” A number of remarks had been made in the editing workshop to point out to the students that a reader has no proxemic or kinetic elements to aid decoding; now the role of pitch, intonation, and eye, hand, and body movements in efficient interaction was explored.

In addition to writing up their speech in extended form, some students made diagrams to present supporting data on the overhead projector, and the anthropologists’ group designed a questionnaire and a set of (imaginary) interviews. The students themselves decided on the subdivision of tasks: on how to process and utilize the written resources, organize role contents, and select presentation techniques. Indeed, they felt responsible for making decisions as well as for implementing those decisions (see Purvis 1983:221).

To make the performance pedagogically useful, the sessions in which the simulation took place were videotaped. The simulation would thus not be a mere end-of-the-course affair; everyone would have a chance afterward to evaluate how well the job had been done.

The speeches, which took little more than an hour, were delivered in a slightly tense atmosphere. Some students were camera-conscious; others were very anxious to take notes on unfamiliar material for the discussion which would follow. The roles had in fact been developed independently by each group, with the understanding that no information about content, attitudes, and so on would leak out of each group before the performance.
The debate was much more spontaneous than the speeches and at some points hilariously funny. All the Indian groups were polemical, and soon the two BIA officers found themselves under heavy attack. Their own speech had been a masterful attempt at reconciling opposing points of view, but it was met with antagonism. Accused of being ambiguous, the BIA representatives retorted that theirs was a realistic solution, and this caused another polemical outbreak.

The tape was viewed during a session about a week later. Although formal evaluation was not the primary purpose of the session, the students proved to be very demanding self-critics. Whole sequences were played over or skipped as the class saw fit. Most students caught themselves making syntactic or lexical slips. The most often repeated remarks were, “I always do that,” and “I should have said . . .,” or “What I wanted to say was . . .” Sympathetic laughter was often the reaction to the errors produced by difficult situations, such as the rush of double negatives in the speech of the BIA officer who, in a passionate attempt to reject all accusations of ambiguity, kept repeating, “We don’t want to play no tricks on you . . . So this isn’t no trick!”

Successful and unsuccessful uses of argumentative strategies, ritualized exchanges, turn-taking cues, and nonverbal behavior were noted, and a number of instructive incidents were discussed. For example, faced with the unexpected problem of two witnesses who, having suddenly turned camera-shy, were obviously avoiding speaking, the judge finally burst out: “And now this Court would really appreciate the opinion of . . .” The thoroughly authoritative intonation and imperious countenance had put the real message across (“Now you people just go ahead and speak!”) and compensated for the excessive formality of the actual words. Videotaped episodes like this one proved far more effective than any lesson on functions in discourse.

The videotapes allowed the participants to see how well they had been able to put into practice the central theme of the course: Successful communication involves a multiplicity of codes. The camera operator had been instructed to capture both individual behavior and group action, and two positive features immediately caught the students’ attention. First, the students never gazed in the same direction, but rather maintained good eye contact with several interlocutors; second, there was a remarkably spontaneous use of facial expressions and hand movements. This was a significant change. In future versions of this course, videotaping will ideally take place at regular intervals to chart learners’ progress in these areas.

Evaluation did not take place exclusively on this or other particular
occasions. Rather, it was an ongoing process. One of the advantages of individualized instruction, whether by peer tutoring or by teacher facilitation, is that defensive strategies are gradually pulled apart, and one can really see through to the progress being made. Thus, it was the amount and quality of progress, not specific formal tests, on which evaluation was based. The absence of formal testing events was indeed part and parcel of the methodological perspective of this experiment; in contrast to laboratory-like experiments, discrete and global items for evaluation were not pre-established but grew out of the observation of student needs and of their progress toward their communicative goals. Indeed, evidence of progress from the state of being controlled by language toward that of controlling language for one’s communicative purposes was the criterion that counted most in the overall evaluation.  

DISCUSSION

The course had been taken very seriously; it had not been a flirtation with the exotic or with uncritical radicalism. The participants understood that American Indian cultures are numerous, complex, and widely different but that they have a common spirituality from which much can be learned. As students of history, economics, and the social sciences, they had explored the complexity of Indian-white relations and had developed an understanding of the enormous significance of human rights and the right to self-determination.

The variety of speech acts which the students could handle in connected discourse was substantially greater than at the beginning of the course. But it was the ability to convey point of view and illocutionary force, to match verbal behavior to its intended effect, and to use codes appropriate to the interacting partner (the court magistrates, the antagonistic or cooperating role group) that was most rewarding, as one could see the participants actually doing things with words. One reason for this was familiarity with the topic: The propositional and referential content were the product of a non-episodic, incremental treatment of a given universe of discourse. With the exception of two students whose hesitancy was the result of desultory participation in the course, one could hardly recognize the same people who months before were so dependent on the approving, encouraging nods of the teacher. Although even the better

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7For a technical treatment of assessment procedures, including a grid for assessment of oral production and definitions of parameters and rating values, see Cortese and Potesta (1983:248-251).
students still retained a number of fossilizations (e.g., dropping of the -s marker in present tense), the continuity, amount, and effectiveness of student-to-student interaction largely compensated for flaws in accuracy.

Ongoing observation of students and adjustment of teaching aims and techniques to their changing needs were key elements throughout the course. The unconventional—that is, non-dogmatic—role of, the teacher stimulated responsive and responsible decision making on the part of the learners, who became genuinely involved in the setting and management of tasks. The richness of this response provided ample opportunity for practicing those rules and strategies of discourse which involve context- and situation-specific, socially shared conventions, for which no comprehensive, abstract description exists.

It must be emphasized that class size was a critical factor in the feasibility of the pedagogical approach presented in this article. The fact that there were only 18 learners in the group provided a genuine opportunity to teach along more “student-sensitive” lines. A larger group would certainly have limited individual student observation. In addition, a larger group would have made it difficult for the teacher to act mainly as a consultant/facilitator, since almost inevitably, a greater degree of teacher control would have had to be introduced. Thus, while the curricular approach described here affords both teacher and learners a productive and satisfying learning experience, the applicability of such an approach may be to some extent limited.

This reservation notwithstanding, this pedagogical project provides evidence for the feasibility of exploiting reading skills for the improvement of oral production skills. This approach seems particularly compatible with adult learners and appears to stimulate integrative motivation. Experimentation under way with beginner classes in which adult learners are introduced to the language through reading has provided encouraging initial results.

A genuine student-centered pedagogy is not easily implemented under any circumstances. One of the necessary conditions is for learners to experience language as a total psychological activity involving cognitive and affective responses. In this course, the self-image of the students, which is normally subject to considerable pressure in the competitive atmosphere of the classroom, seemed instead to grow, precisely because the focus was constantly kept on the exchange of feelings as well as on the exchange of ideas. To this teacher, the experiment has been a forceful reminder of a truth which emphasis on pre-pedagogical planning has somewhat obscured: The ability of students must be trusted. If vagueness and
improvisation lead nowhere, excessive planning and control will stifle abilities which are waiting to be developed.

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Support system for learning to write in English

Guided Composition
Second Edition

Florence Baskoff, American Language Institute, New York University
271 pages • paper • Instructor's Annotated Edition • 1984

Baskoff's text for ESL/EFL students concentrates on writing paragraphs and short compositions. Each chapter contains a model composition that focuses on a rhetorical form, an organizational principle, and a grammatical topic. Exercises isolate specific grammatical and lexical problems for the non-native speaker and provide extensive practice in sentence writing. Composition assignments are based on the form and content of the model composition.


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1985 TESOL SUMMER MEETING GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY JULY 12-13
Differences in the Communicative Orientation of L2 Classrooms

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University of Michigan

PATRICK ALLEN
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

In recent years, the development of communicative competence has become the explicit focus of numerous second language teaching programs. Although models of communicative competence and principles of communicative language teaching have been discussed extensively in the literature and a variety of communicative materials have been developed, very little research has been carried out to examine the relationship between actual classroom practices and the development of communicative competence.

This article reports on the results of a study which was intended to validate an observation instrument designed to capture differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classroom interaction in a variety of settings. Thirteen classes in four different L2 programs were observed. The observation scheme used in the study contained categories derived from theories of communicative competence, from the literature on communicative language teaching, and from research in first and second language acquisition, which suggests a number of factors thought to influence the language learning process. These observation categories include features of communication typical of classroom interaction as well as of "natural" language outside the classroom. An analysis of the observation data revealed differences in the communicative orientation of the four types of classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the development of communicative competence has become the explicit focus of numerous second language teaching programs. Although models of communicative competence (e.g.,
Hymes 1972, Canale and Swain 1980) and principles of communicative language teaching (e.g., Munby 1978, Breen and Candlin 1980, Johnson and Morrow 1981) have been discussed extensively in the literature and a variety of communicative teaching materials (e.g., Byrne 1977, Johnson and Morrow 1979, Fletcher and Hargreaves 1980) have been produced, very little research has been carried out to examine the relationship between actual classroom practices and the development of communicative competence.

Any study which attempts to compare the effects of instructional differences on the development of L2 proficiency must include pretesting, classroom observation, and post-testing. To conduct a process-product study of this kind, at least three prerequisites have to be fulfilled: 1) A model of communicative competence has to be posited; 2) tests to assess learners’ communicative competence have to be developed and validated; and 3) observation categories have to be created and pilot-tested to relate what happens in the classroom to learning outcomes.

Within the context of a five-year project in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto, currently in its third year of research (Allen, Cummins, Mougeon, and Swain 1983), these three issues have been addressed. The concept of L2 proficiency which has been developed posits a componential view of communicative competence which includes grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic competence: that is, knowledge of the formal systems of lexis, morphology, syntax, and phonology; knowledge of the ways in which sentences combine into cohesive and coherent sequences; and knowledge of the ways in which language is produced and understood appropriately in different contexts. The underlying assumption is that learners may develop competence in any of these areas relatively independently and that second language programs may differentially affect the development of these components of communicative competence. With respect to the second prerequisite—the development of tests of communicative competence—instruments have been designed to measure the various competencies.

The third task—the design of an appropriate observation scheme—is the focus of this article. The article reports the results of a study in which the observation instrument which was developed was pilot-tested in a variety of instructional settings. It is important to emphasize that this study was not intended to evaluate the second language classes and programs observed, but rather to determine whether this particular observation scheme was capable of capturing differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms.

A large number of observation instruments designed to describe
and analyze what goes on in the classroom have emerged during the past 30 years (for overviews, see Dunkin and Biddle 1974 and Simon and Boyer 1974). The vast majority of observation schemes are concerned with teacher-student interaction in classrooms in which a subject other than language is taught. The number of observation instruments designed specifically for the second language classroom, where language is not just the medium but also the object of instruction, is much smaller (see Long 1980). The instrument with which we eventually hope to relate L2 classroom events to learning outcomes is referred to as COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching). The development of the COLT scheme was preceded by a review of various instruments designed to emphasize features which were viewed, on theoretical, empirical, or intuitive grounds, as relevant to the L2 classroom (e.g., Moskowitz 1970, 1971, Fanselow 1977, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978, Bialystok, Fröhlich, and Howard 1979, Mitchell, Parkinson, and Johnstone 1981, Ullmann and Geva 1982). For an account of the development and revision of the COLT categories, see Allen, Cummins, Mougeon, and Swain (1983).

METHODOLOGY
The Observation Instrument

The COLT scheme (see Appendixes A and B) consists of two parts: Part A, which contains categories derived primarily from pedagogical issues in the communicative language teaching literature, and Part B, the categories of which reflect issues in first and second language acquisition research. Part A describes classroom instruction in terms of the types of activities that take place; Part B describes the verbal interactions which take place within activities (for a fuller explanation, see Allen, Fröhlich, and Spada 1984).

Part A contains five major parameters: Activity, Participant Organization, Content, Student Modality, and Materials. These parameters and their subsections were designed to measure the extent to which an instructional treatment may be characterized as communicatively oriented. For example, in the literature on communicative language teaching, considerable discussion is devoted to the value of such elements as the use of authentic materials in the classroom, opportunities for group-work interaction, and emphasis on the formal, functional, discoursal, and sociolinguistic features of the language through meaning-based instruction. Classes which contain these and similar elements are often characterized as being more communicatively oriented than classes which rely on more teacher-centered and form-focused activities.
Part B analyzes classroom activities at the level of verbal interaction. Seven communicative features were selected to measure use of the target language and the extent to which learners are given the opportunity to produce language without teacher-imposed linguistic restrictions, to engage in sustained speech, to initiate discourse, to react to the meaning of what is being said, to elaborate on one another’s utterances, and to exchange unknown or relatively unpredictable information.

Sample

The study was conducted with a total of thirteen classes, predominantly at the grade 7 level, in four different second language programs: four core French classes, one history and one language arts class in both the extended French and French immersion programs, and five ESL classes. The four program types, the first three of which are characteristic of French as a second language (FSL) education in Canada, can be briefly distinguished as follows:

1. Core French is the regular program, in which the French language is the subject of instruction. In Ontario, French is now compulsory up to grade 10. The starting point and the amount of instruction vary, but on the average, students start in grade 4 or 5, with 20 to 40 minutes of French a day. In Toronto, students normally start in grade 4, with 40 minutes a day.

2. Extended French includes, in addition to core French, the teaching of one or more school subjects through the medium of the target language.

3. In French immersion programs, French is the medium of instruction in subject-matter classes. At the primary level, programs typically involve half a day of immersion in kindergarten, followed by one or more years of total French instruction. In grade 2 at the earliest, a daily period of English language arts is introduced. By grade 4 or 5, the proportion of the day in English may increase to 50 percent.

4. The ESL classes in the study were “self-contained—students spent all or most of the day with their ESL teacher. In addition to English language instruction, students also received varying amounts of subject-matter instruction. The more typical ESL situation in Toronto is a program in which students are withdrawn from the regular classroom for varying amounts of time to receive primarily language instruction.
The study was begun with a number of tentative expectations about the main characteristics of the four types of programs. These expectations were based on some preliminary classroom observations; discussions with teachers, consultants, and school board officials; and a review of textbooks and other teaching materials. Core French is taught as a subject within a limited time period, and classes in this program were expected to contain a relatively large proportion of form-focused, teacher-centered activities. Since extended French involves the presentation and discussion of subject-matter material in addition to core French instruction, the teaching in this program was expected to be somewhat less structured and more meaning-oriented. French immersion is designed for students to receive the same education as they would in the regular English program, except that the medium of instruction is French; French immersion classes were therefore expected to provide greater opportunity for authentic discourse and for the negotiation of significant meaning. ESL teaching in Toronto differs from the three types of French programs, since many more opportunities for English language acquisition exist outside the classroom. As a result, it was expected that ESL teachers would tend to use class time to practice various aspects of the language code but that they would also seek to introduce communicative enrichment material from the “real world outside the classroom whenever possible.

As noted above, the purpose of the study was to validate the observation instrument, rather than to evaluate the programs themselves. The reason for including classes from different L2 programs was to ensure that the COLT categories were capable of describing activities in a range of instructional settings. No claim is being made at this stage that the classes selected constituted a representative sample from each program type.

**Procedures**

Each class was visited twice by two observers. The observation period per visit varied from 30 to 100 minutes, depending on the length of the lesson. In one ESL class, however, instruction was totally individualized; that is, the students were working on different topics, with different teaching materials, for varying lengths of time. For this reason, only one of the Part A parameters, Participant Organization, could be reliably observed for this class. Therefore, with the exception of Table 1, the tables in this article which refer to Part A of the COLT report on the results of 12 classes only. All classes, with the exception of the one ESL class already mentioned,
were recorded on audiotape; thus, results for Part B are also based on 12 classes.

Part A of the COLT scheme (see Appendixes A and B) was used during the classroom observations. The parameters and categories of Part A describe instruction at the level of activity. All coding in Part A was done in real time—that is, during the observation period—by the two observers present in the classroom. In addition to identifying the Activity (e.g., drill, dialogue, repetition drill, conversation), the observers placed a check mark in the appropriate boxes under each of the other four major headings: Participant Organization, Content, Student Modality, and Materials. In the course of a single activity, several categories might be marked under each of these four main headings. For example, under the heading Participant Organization, there might be instances of student-to-student interaction, teacher-to-student interaction, and teacher-to-class interaction. In such cases, check marks were placed in the boxes for each of the appropriate Participant Organization categories, and a circle was drawn around the check mark which represented the primary focus or predominant feature of the activity. This procedure was followed for all Part A categories.

Part B coding (see Appendixes A and B), done after the lesson, was based on the audiotape recording of the class, A time-sampling procedure within each activity identified in Part A was followed. Coding started at the beginning of each activity, lasted for one minute, and was resumed after a two-minute interval. During the one-minute coding periods, the frequency of occurrence of each category of the communicative features of teacher and student interaction was recorded by two coders.

Although the coding of Part A and Part B was carried out independently, the coders checked their entries for Part A immediately after each observation period and their entries for Part B after each minute of coding. Wherever necessary in coding Part B, the tape was replayed, and any problems were discussed. For this reason, it was not considered necessary to calculate intercoder reliability coefficients. In any future study, however, intercoder agreement will be determined statistically.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS PART A

Initial analysis of the Part A data consisted of calculating the
percentage of classroom time spent on the individual categories under each of the four major headings. These calculations were carried out separately for each visit. Subsequently, tables were prepared to present the average percentage of observation time coded for various categories by class and by program.

To illustrate, let us consider two hypothetical visits to Class 1 and Class 2 in Program X. During the first visit, Class 1 spent 10 minutes in group work, and for the remaining 20 minutes the teacher interacted with individual students or the whole class (T —> S/C). During the second visit, the class spent 15 minutes in whole-class interaction and 15 minutes in group work. In Class 2, T —> S/C interaction was coded as the dominant activity for the whole class during both visits. The following calculations were carried out:

### Participant Organization—Percentage of Time by Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Class</th>
<th>Visit 1</th>
<th>Visit 2</th>
<th>Visit 1</th>
<th>Visit 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T &lt;—&gt; S/C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Participant Organization—Percentage of Time by Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Class</th>
<th>T &lt;—&gt; S/C</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>58.34</td>
<td>41.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Participant Organization—Percentage of Time by Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Class</th>
<th>T &lt;—&gt; S/C</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79.17</td>
<td>20.83</td>
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</table>

The primary category checked off during an activity always received credit for the entire length of time that the activity lasted, just like one which occurred exclusively. For example, during an activity in which the teacher and students were interacting meaningfully, the occasional choral repetition of a word or phrase would not

COMMUNICATIVE ORIENTATION OF L2 CLASSROOMS 33
Participant Organization

For this first major heading, percentages were calculated for the following categories: Whole Class, Group Work, Individual Seat Work, and the combination of Group Work/Individual Work. Whole Class is further subdivided as follows: teacher interacting with individual students or the entire class (T S/C), students interacting with the class or individual students while one central activity is going on (S S/C), and Choral Work. The mean percentages by program are shown in Table 1.

As previously stated, the study was begun with various expectations about which categories would best describe the four types of programs. In core French, the expectation was that there would be a great deal of whole-class interaction with the teacher addressing either the whole class or individual students, as well as a substantial amount of choral work. Whole-class interaction, but not choral work, was thought to be a likely characteristic of extended French and French immersion programs. In the ESL classes, more group work than whole-class interaction was expected.

The data support these expectations to the extent that all the FSL programs were characterized by a considerable amount of whole-class interaction. However, the expectation about choral work in
core French was not supported, since the core French mean of 14.4 percent for Choral Work was largely attributable to one particular class. In the ESL classes observed, individual seat work—and not group work, as expected—predominated.

Content

The Content parameter describes the subject matter of the activities—in other words, what is being talked about, read, written about, or listened to. The categories and subcategories of Content in the COLT observation scheme are as follows (see Appendix A for definitions; Topic Control is discussed separately at the end of this section):

Management
  Classroom procedures
  Disciplinary routines

Explicit focus on language
  Form
  Function
  Discourse
  Sociolinguistics

Other topics
  Narrow range of reference
  Limited range of reference
  Broad range of reference

Topic control
  Control by teacher
  Control shared by teacher and student(s)
  Control by student(s)

For these categories, the expectation was that there would be predominant focus on form in core French, focus on form as well as other topics (particularly of limited and broad range) in extended French, and relatively greater focus on meaning than form in French immersion and ESL.

Percentages were calculated first for those categories which had occurred exclusively or had been marked as the primary feature of an activity. For example, during one activity, a teacher might have focused exclusively on grammar (Form). During another activity, Form and Sociolinguistics might have been checked off, but because the teacher had made only a brief reference to sociolinguistic aspects of language use, Form was considered the primary focus. Percentages were then determined for those categories which had
occurred in combination, that is, in situations in which the observers felt that two categories had received roughly equal emphasis. For example, a core French class was practicing verb endings for the second person singular and plural, with explicit reference to the differences in the use of *tu/vous* when addressing friends and strangers. Thus, the content of this activity was simultaneously Form and Sociolinguistics.

The mean percentages of total observed time for Content categories and subcategories are presented in Table 2. With the exception of the ESL classes and their unexpectedly strong emphasis on form, the data supported initial expectations. In comparing programs, it becomes apparent that in the core French and ESL classes, more than half of the class time observed involved activities which focused exclusively or primarily on form (58.44 and 66.43 percent, respectively). By contrast, in the extended French and the French immersion classes, the focus on form decreases, and the focus on meaning (i.e., Other Topics) increases (40.55 and 62.53 in extended French and French immersion, respectively).

This shift can be largely attributed to the teaching of subject matter, since subject matter is coded as Other Topics—Broad Range of Reference. It is interesting to note that the extended French program occupies something of a middle position between core French and French immersion; form is given substantial weight (half of the observation time, if combinations are included), although considerably less than in core French and considerably more than in French immersion. However, the difference in the emphasis on form between French immersion and extended French may be attributable in part to the lower proficiency level of the students in the latter program; at the time of the observations, students had been in the extended French program for only a few weeks.

It is also important to note which subcategories of Content—Language were seldom or never coded. One is Discourse, which was defined as “explicit focus on the way sentences combine into cohesive and coherent sequences.” Although students were exposed to oral and written discourse through listening and reading activities, explicit reference to aspects of cohesion or coherence was never made. Nor was there explicit reference to Function, that is, illocutionary acts. Another category which rarely appeared in the classes observed was Sociolinguistics. The major exception was one of the French immersion classes, in which the language appropriate for journalistic reports and that suitable for advertisements were compared and discussed during an entire lesson.

The last Content category is Topic Control, that is, who selects the
## TABLE 2
Content:
Mean Percentages of Observed Time by Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Other Topics</th>
<th>Combinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Socio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core French (4)</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>58.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended French (2)</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>25.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Immersion (2)</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>14.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL (4)</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>66.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
topic and controls what is being read, written, or talked about. The data for these categories are presented in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Teacher/Student</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core French (4)</td>
<td>93.89</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended French (2)</td>
<td>88.72</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Immersion (2)</td>
<td>80.02</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL (4)</td>
<td>91.08</td>
<td>8.92</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, teachers controlled topic selection and content most of the time in all four programs. Again, core French and ESL, which had the two highest percentages for Teacher Control and the two lowest percentages for Teacher/Student Control, appear to be most similar.

**Student Modality**

The data for Student Modality—the particular skill or combination of skills involved in a classroom activity—are presented in Table 4. Although these categories present useful information about the amount of time devoted to listening, speaking, reading, and writing, they provide no insight into how these skills were being developed. Thus, the parameter of Student Modality does not directly address the issue of whether skills practice was more communicatively based in one program than in another. In the COLT, such differences would have to be captured in the open-ended description under Activity.

**Materials**

The final major heading in Part A of COLT is Materials. In this report, differences among the programs in type and source of materials are presented. A teacher might select a topic and then give the students a great deal of freedom in developing the topic. For example, “Write a short paragraph about your impressions when you first came to Canada.” In such cases, Teacher/Student Control would be checked off. Since the coders found that Use of Materials frequently overlapped with Topic Control, data for the former are not reported in this article. In addition, because it proved difficult to find a satisfactory definition for Use of Materials, this category has been deleted in the revised version of COLT.

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TABLE 4
Student Modality
Mean Percentages of Observed Time by Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modalities*</th>
<th>Combinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core French (4)</td>
<td>7.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended French (2)</td>
<td>13.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Immersion (2)</td>
<td>12.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL (4)</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* L = Listening; S = Speaking; R = Reading; W = Writing

TABLE 5
Type of Materials:
Mean Percentages of Observed Time by Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Combinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core French (4)</td>
<td>43.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended French (2)</td>
<td>35.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Immersion (2)</td>
<td>31.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL (4)</td>
<td>52.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type. Materials were classified as Text, Audio, or Visual. Since the development of discourse competence may be affected by the extent to which students are exposed to extended written texts rather than to isolated, disconnected sentences, Text was subdivided into Minimal and Extended. Mean percentages by program are presented in Table 5, which shows that text materials were used predominantly in all programs and that visual materials played a substantial role only in core French.

It was expected that the use and production of minimal text would predominate in core French, that a balance between minimal and extended text would be found in ESL and extended French, and that extended text would predominate in French immersion. These expectations were based on the assumption that classes which focused more on teaching the language code would likely include more activities involving minimal texts (e.g., worksheets with grammatical exercises) than would programs which incorporated subject-matter instruction. With the exception of ESL, the data supported these expectations.

Source. The second category of Materials refers to the origin and purpose of the teaching materials used. Were the materials designed for L2 teaching and learning (Pedagogic), or were they originally intended for some other purpose (Non-Pedagogic)? A third possibility was that non-pedagogic, or “authentic,” materials had been adapted for instructional purposes, in which case they were coded as Semi-Pedagogic.

Table 6 presents data on the source of teaching materials by program. Pedagogic materials made up the largest percentage across all programs. They were used most extensively in core French (83.69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Materials</th>
<th>Pedagogic</th>
<th>Semi-Pedagogic</th>
<th>Non-Pedagogic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core French (4)</td>
<td>83.69</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended French (2)</td>
<td>72.88</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Immersion (2)</td>
<td>67.56</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>24.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL (4)</td>
<td>63.99</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>15.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Percentages, calculated from total class time observed, do not add up to 100 percent because materials were not used all the time.
2 These figures also include materials developed for native speakers of the target language: this applies to the extended French, French immersion, and ESL programs.
3 Data for 5.52 percent of the time observed are missing.
percent), followed by extended French (72.88 percent), French immersion (67.56 percent), and ESL (63.99 percent). Non-pedagogic materials were used relatively frequently in the French immersion and ESL settings (24.13 and 15.75 percent, respectively) but rarely in the other two programs.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS: PART B

Part B of the COLT observation scheme analyzes the communicative features of verbal interaction during classroom activities. It consists of the following seven features and their categories (see Appendix A for definitions):

Use of target language
  Use of L1 or L2

Information gap
  Giving information
    Predictable or unpredictable
  Requesting information
    Pseudo or genuine

Sustained speech
  Ultraminimal turns
  Minimal turns
  Sustained turns

Reaction to message/code

Incorporation of preceding utterances
  No incorporation
  Repetition
  Paraphrase
  Comment
  Expansion
  Elaboration

Discourse initiation

Restriction of linguistic form
  Restricted
  Limited
  Unrestricted

All of these features and categories were used for coding teacher and student talk, with the exception of Discourse Initiation and Restriction of Linguistic Form, which were used for coding student talk only.

Materials developed for teaching/learning purposes, not for second language learners but for native speakers of the target language, were coded as Pedagogic. This applies particularly to the extended French, French immersion, and ESL programs. In the future, such materials will be coded in a separate category.

COMMUNICATIVE ORIENTATION OF L2 CLASSROOMS
To compare communicative features of verbal interaction across programs, each category in Part B was calculated as a proportion of its feature. For example, in the core French program, the percentage of L2 use within the feature Use of Target Language was .96; the percentage of L1 use was .04. These proportions are presented by program in bar graphs; Figures 1 and 2 present the data for teacher and student verbal interaction, respectively. In addition to a descriptive comparison, one-way analyses of variance and Duncan Multiple Range Tests were conducted to find out if the differences between programs reached statistical significance.

Teacher Verbal Interaction

As indicated in Figure 1, teachers used the target language most of the time in all four programs. They generally gave unpredictable information, such as directives or new information. No significant differences between programs were found for these categories.

Teachers did not generally ask genuine questions—that is, questions to which they did not already have the answer. Although differences between programs did not reach statistical significance, it is interesting that the proportion of genuine requests steadily increased from program to program in this order: core French (.16), extended French (.37), French immersion (.42), and ESL (.52).

There were important differences between programs in the feature of Sustained Speech. Teacher turns in core French were rarely sustained; only 28 percent of core French teacher turns were longer than a sentence. As in the case of Genuine Requests, the proportion of sustained teacher speaking turns in classrooms in the other programs increased in this order: core French (.28), extended French (.52), French immersion (.57), and ESL (.61). The difference in the proportion of sustained teacher turns between core French and the remaining three programs was significant (F(3,14) = 5.37; p < .05).

The final communicative feature of teacher talk, Incorporation of Preceding Utterances, reflects how teachers reacted to student utterances. As indicated in Figure 1, teachers in all programs most frequently used comments such as “Good” and “Right” in reacting to students’ utterances; paraphrasing was used the least. One interesting difference among programs involved the use of expansions and elaborations. These types of utterances occurred extremely rarely in

5 For the feature Information Cap, each subcategory (e.g., Giving Unpredictable Information) was calculated as a proportion of the superordinate category (e.g., Giving Information), not as a proportion of the feature.
core French and ESL, but they were used at least to some degree (although the differences were not statistically significant) in extended French and French immersion. Despite the argument that elaborations and expansions contribute to first language development, teachers in this study rarely built on student responses to develop a topic or to engage students in further discourse. It has to be remembered, however, that the sample was extremely small and may not have been representative.

The feature of Reaction to Message/Code occurred extremely rarely in teacher verbal interaction and is thus not included in Figure 1.

**Student Verbal Interaction**

As Figure 2 indicates, student verbal interaction was almost always in the target language. However, students generally used the target language only while the teacher exercised control over classroom activities. During seat work, most interaction occurred in the native language. This is not reflected in the present data, since at those times the tape recorder was usually turned off.

Students in core French gave significantly fewer unpredictable responses (.14) than did students in the other three programs (F(3,14) = 4.38; p < .05). The greater proportion of unpredictable responses in extended French (.41) and French immersion (.49) can be partially attributed to the introduction of subject matter (i.e., history). When the focus is on meaning and on topics other than the language code, the opportunities increase for teacher questions which have more than one acceptable answer.

Core French also differed from the other programs in terms of length of student speaking turns. The majority (.58) of student speaking turns in core French were ultraminimal; in the other three programs, student turns were much more often minimal: .56 in extended French, .46 in French immersion, and .44 in ESL. Sustained turns were almost nonexistent (.03) in core French; they increased slightly in extended French (.11) and rose to .29 and .31 in ESL and French immersion, respectively.

The final set of data in Figure 2 reflects the degree of restriction imposed on the linguistic forms which students could use in producing target language utterances. Unrestricted utterances were very infrequent in core French (.07) but increased in this order: ESL (.34), extended French (.47), and French immersion (.71).

The remaining four features—Reaction to Message/Code, Incorporation of Preceding Utterances, Discourse Initiation, and Requesting Pseudo/Genuine Information—occurred extremely rarely in student
FIGURE 1
Category as Proportion of Communicative Feature for Teacher Talk, by Program

Legend:
- Core French
- Extended French
- French Immersion
- ESL
FIGURE 2
Category as Proportion of Communicative Feature for Student Talk, by Program
DISCUSSION

The data show that many of the descriptive categories introduced in Part A of the COLT are capable of differentiating between the four L2 programs observed. The categories of Content and Materials were particularly revealing in this regard. Expectations about the distinguishing characteristics of each program were largely supported. The main exception was the ESL program, for which a great deal of group work, in which students would discuss topics other than the language code, was expected. Instead, a strong focus on grammar and vocabulary was found, even during group work, and students were frequently involved in individual seat work which did not foster communication. When communication did take place during seat-work activities, it was generally in the students' first language. One possible reason for the focus on form in the ESL classes is that the ESL learners in this study, unlike the FSL learners, had considerable opportunity for acquisition outside the classroom and that because of this, the ESL teachers may have felt that the language code was the appropriate focus for the classroom.6

To characterize each program according to the degree to which it was communicatively oriented—that is, to place each program on a "communicative continuum"—the authors selected those features frequently mentioned in the literature on communicative language teaching and assigned scores from 1 to 5, depending on the percentage of time spent on each. The selected categories are as follows:

Group work
Focus on meaning (including management and other topics) and any combinations of form and the other content categories
Topic control by teacher and students or student alone
Use of extended text
Use of semi- and non-pedagogic materials

The scores were based on an interval scale: 0-19 percent of class time equals a score of 1; 20 to 39 percent, a score of 2, etc. Thus a class which spent 15 percent of class time on group work, 45 percent on other topics, 10 percent on activities controlled by students, 90

6In the present study, there was insufficient time to conduct interviews with teachers. In the future, time will be provided for teacher interviews.
percent on extended text, and 15 percent on non-pedagogic text would receive individual scores of 1 + 3 + 1 + 5 + 1, for a total of 11.

When these calculations were made on the data, the following order was obtained:

Core French (6)
ESL (7)
Extended French (10)
French immersion (12)

In other words, core French was the least “communicative” in terms of the categories, and immersion the most. ESL and extended French occupied a place in between. Since the purpose of this study was to determine whether the COLT scheme is capable of capturing differences in the communicative orientation of different types of classrooms, the results reported here should not be interpreted as an evaluation of the L2 programs observed. The data base is far too small to support such a conclusion, and variability between teachers within the programs was not taken into consideration.

While results of the Part B analysis confirm some of the findings of other studies on classroom interaction (e.g., Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978, Wells 1981)—for example, that students usually have the exclusive role of responding to questions which are generally pseudo-requests and that students rarely interact with each other in teacher-centered classrooms—there were some interesting differences among the programs observed in this study. In particular, students in immersion classes, where subject-matter instruction in the L2 was part of the curriculum, were given more opportunity for unrestricted language use, for sustained speech, and for giving unpredictable information. By contrast, students in core French classes generally were required to give predictable responses in restricted form and of ultraminimal length. The extended French and ESL classes tended to be situated in between core and immersion classes. These findings are consistent with the ordering of classes along the communicative continuum obtained in the analysis of the Part A features.

Second language classrooms are typically based on a rather high degree of teacher control. Learners rarely initiate discourse; they are seldom asked questions to which the teacher does not already have an answer, are expected to produce specific language forms, and are not often given the opportunity to exchange information with an interlocutor in a natural manner. Clearly, this controlled approach to language teaching is very different from the way in which languages are used and acquired in a natural setting. Therefore, it has been suggested that classes which more closely approximate the condi-
tions for naturalistic language use may be more beneficial to the learner (Breen and Candlin 1980, Johnson and Morrow 1981, Savignon 1983). On the other hand, it should not be assumed that spontaneous classroom interaction will produce the best results in all circumstances. A number of writers recently have drawn attention to the importance of guidance and control, especially in programs which take place in a more traditional context and where the time available for practice may be limited (Brumfit 1980, Valdman 1980, Widdowson 1984).

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to determine whether the COLT observation scheme, which was derived from a model of communicative competence and a review of current issues in communicative language teaching, was capable of capturing differences in the communicative orientation of four second language programs.

The results provide preliminary evidence that the scheme is capable of doing so—the programs did indeed differ in their communicative orientation. The development of an observation scheme capable of capturing the characteristics of different types of classrooms is an important step toward identifying what makes one set of instructional techniques more effective than another. In particular, it is hoped that the COLT scheme will assist in clarifying a number of issues relating to the current debate on the respective advantages of more communicative approaches versus more controlled, structure-based approaches to second language education.

The crucial question, which obviously cannot be answered on the basis of the present study, is what kind of communicative orientation is most beneficial for developing different aspects of second language proficiency. For example, do classes that involve students primarily in form-focused, teacher-centered activities with highly controlled language promote the development of grammatical competence? Similarly, do classes in which students spend most of their time in group activities emphasizing the expression and negotiation of meaning further the development of discourse competence and fluency in the target language? Only a study which compares instructional differences within a program and relates these differences to proficiency can provide an answer to these questions. We are currently beginning such a process-product study, in which the COLT observation scheme will be employed to examine some of the process variables and thus help in assessing the effect they have on language learning.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, with Patrick Allen, Jim Cummins, Birgit Harley, and Merrill Swain as principal investigators. The paper is a jointly revised version of a presentation given by Maria Fröhlich and Nina Spada at the 18th Annual TESOL Convention, Houston, March 1984.

We would like to express our thanks to the members of the Development of Bilingual Proficiency project in the Modern Language Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, particularly to Françoise Pelletier for her participation in the classroom observation and the data coding and to Jud Burtis for his statistical assistance. Our thanks are also extended to the Toronto Board of Education and to the teachers who allowed us access to their classrooms.

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Nina Spada is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Director of Curriculum at the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan. She recently completed her Ph.D. in applied linguistics at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Her experience includes ESL instruction, teacher training, and research in second language teaching and learning.

REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

COLT Observation Scheme: Definition of Categories

The COLT observation scheme is divided into two parts. Part A describes classroom events at the level of episode and activity, while Part B analyzes the communicative features of verbal exchanges between teachers and students or among students themselves as they occur within each activity.

Part A: Classroom Events

I. Activity
   The first parameter is open-ended; no predetermined descriptors have to be checked off by the observer. Each activity and its constituent episodes are separately described: e.g., drill, translation, discussion, game, and soon (separate activities); alternatively, teacher introduces dialogue, teacher reads dialogue aloud, students repeat dialogue parts after teacher (three episodes of one activity).

II. Participant Organization
   This parameter describes three basic patterns of organization:
   A. Whole Class
      1. Teacher to student or class, and vice versa (One central activity led by the teacher is going on; the teacher interacts with the whole class and/or with individual students.)
      2. Student to student, or student(s) to class (Students talk to each other, either as part of the lesson or as informal socializing; one central activity led by a student may be going on, e.g., a group of students act out a skit with the rest of the class as the audience.)
      3. Choral work by students (The whole class or groups participate in the choral work, repeating a model provided by the textbook or teacher.)
   B. Group work
      1. All groups at work on the same task
      2. Groups at work on different tasks
   C. Individual seat work (Students work on their own, all on the same task or on different tasks.)
   D. Group/individual work (Some students are involved in group work; others work on their own.)
III. Content
This parameter describes the subject matter of the activities, that is, what the teacher and the students are talking, reading, or writing about or what they are listening to. Three major content areas have been differentiated, along with the category Topic Control:
A. Management
   1. Procedural directives
   2. Disciplinary statements
B. Explicit focus on language
   1. Form (explicit focus on grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation)
   2. Function (explicit focus on illocutionary acts such as requesting, apologizing, and explaining)
   3. Discourse (explicit focus on the way sentences combine into cohesive and coherent sequences)
   4. Sociolinguistics (explicit focus on the features which make utterances appropriate for particular contexts)
C. Other topics (the subject matter of classroom discourse, apart from management and explicit focus on language)
   1. Narrow range of reference (This subcategory refers to the immediate classroom environment and to stereotyped exchanges such as “Good morning” or “How are you?” which have phatic value but little conceptual content. Included in this category are routine classroom references to the date, day of the week, weather, and so on.)
   2. Limited range of reference (Topics in this subcategory refer to information beyond the classroom but still conceptually limited: movies, holidays, school topics such as extracurricular activities, and topics which relate to the students’ immediate personal and family affairs, e.g., place of residence, number of brothers and sisters. and so on.)
   3. Broad range of reference (Topics of broad range go well beyond the classroom and immediate environment and include reference to controversial public issues, world events, abstract ideas, reflective personal information, and other academic subject matter, such as math or geography.)
D. Topic control (Who selects the topic that is being talked about—the teacher, the student, or both?)

IV. Student modality
This section identifies the various skills involved in a classroom activity. The focus is on the students, and the purpose is to discover whether they are listening, speaking, reading, or writing, or whether these activities are occurring in combination. The category Other covers such activities as drawing, modeling, acting, or arranging classroom displays.

V. Materials
This parameter describes the materials used in connection with classroom activities.
A. Type of materials
   1. Text (written)
      a. Minimal (e.g., captions, isolated sentences, work lists)
      b. Extended (e.g., stories, dialogues, connected paragraphs)
   2. Audio
   3. Visual
B. Source/purpose of materials
   1. Pedagogic (specifically designed for L2 teaching)
   2. Non-pedagogic (materials originally intended for nonschool purposes)
   3. Semi-pedagogic (utilizing real-life objects and texts but in a modified form)
C. Use of materials
   1. Highly controlled (close adherence to materials)
   2. Semi-controlled (occasional extension beyond the restrictions imposed by the materials).
   3. Minimally controlled (materials as a starting point for ensuing conversation, which may cover a wide range of topics)

Part B: Communicative Features
I. Use of target language
   A. Use of first language (L1)
   B. Use of second language (L2)
II. Information gap
   This feature refers to the extent to which the information requested and/or exchanged is unpredictable, i.e., not known in advance.
   A. Requesting information
      1. Pseudo (The speaker already possesses the information requested,)
      2. Genuine (The information requested is not known in advance.)
   B. Giving information
      1. Relatively predictable (The message is easily anticipated in that there is a very limited range of information that can be given. In the case of responses, only one answer is possible semantically, although there may be different correct grammatical realizations.)
      2. Relatively unpredictable (The message is not easily anticipated in that a wide range of information can be given. If a number of responses are possible, each can provide different information. )
III. Sustained speech
   This feature is intended to measure the extent to which speakers engage in extended discourse or restrict their utterances to a minimal length of one sentence, clause, or word.
   A. Ultraminimal (utterances consisting of one word—coded for student speech only)
   B. Minimal (student utterances consisting of one clause or sentence, teacher utterances consisting of one word)
   C. Sustained speech (utterances longer than one sentence or consisting of at least two main clauses)
IV. Reaction to code or message
This feature refers to a correction or other explicit statement which draws attention to the linguistic form of an utterance.

V. Incorporation of preceding utterances
A. No incorporation (no feedback or reaction given)
B. Repetition (full or partial repetition of previous utterance/s)
C. Paraphrase (completion and/or reformulation of previous utterance/s)
D. Comment (positive or negative comment on, but not correction of, previous utterance/s)
E. Expansion (extension of the content of preceding utterance/s through the addition of related information)
F. Elaboration (requests for further information related to the subject matter of the preceding utterance/s)

VI. Discourse initiation
This feature measures the frequency of self-initiated turns (spontaneously initiated talk) by students.

VII. Relative restriction of linguistic form
A. Restricted use (the production or manipulation of one specific form, as in a transformation or substitution drill)
B. Limited restriction (a choice of more than one linguistic form but in a very narrow range, e.g., responses to yes/no questions, statements about the date, time of day, and so on)
C. Unrestricted use (no expectation of any particular linguistic form, as in free conversation, oral reports, or personal diary writing)
APPENDIX B

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT): Part A

Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT): Part B
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Results of a National Survey of Graduates of Bilingual Education Programs

DONNA M. JOHNSON
University of Arizona

A national sample of graduates of bilingual education programs at the doctoral, master’s, and bachelor’s levels was surveyed by mail and by telephone to determine what proportion of them had entered the field of bilingual education and to describe the jobs they held. Results of the survey, conducted under contract to the U.S. Department of Education, indicated that the vast majority of the graduates were applying their skills to the education of students with limited English proficiency. The majority of the graduates of bachelor’s and master’s programs were working as elementary teachers, 94 percent of them with Spanish-speaking pupils. More than two thirds taught ESL. Three quarters of the teacher-trainer graduates held positions involving either teacher training or administration. Those teaching in college and university settings taught broad-based courses, while those training teachers in school-district settings taught more functionally oriented courses. The survey results provide national baseline data on employment outcomes of bilingual education training programs.

INTRODUCTION

A significant portion of ESEA Title VII program money has been directed toward preparing bilingual education (BE) teachers and teacher trainers. Funds are provided for training programs and for student fellowships and stipends. The extent to which program graduates enter or continue in the field of BE can be viewed as one measure of the success of the training programs. The U.S. Department of Education has been interested in determining to what extent training money contributes to the improved education of students of limited English proficiency (LEP). Do program graduates work in the field of BE after completing their programs? What students do they serve, and what do they teach?

In December of 1978, the Department of Education contracted
with RMC Research Corporation to conduct a 30-month study of BE training programs in colleges and universities. The major purposes of the study were to 1) provide a comprehensive description of BE training programs offered by institutions of higher education (IHEs) and 2) estimate the extent to which graduates of such programs contributed to the national supply of BE teachers.

In the first phase of the study, a representative sample of 56 two- and four-year IHEs was selected. A team of two researchers visited each IHE to collect information on program operations. The results of this portion of the study, reported in Binkley, Johnson, Stewart, Abrica-Carrasco, Nava, and Thrope (1981), provide a comprehensive description of BE doctoral, master’s, and bachelor’s programs. Two projects were conducted during the second phase of the study: 1) a survey of program graduates and 2) a study of the need for and the supply of BE teachers nationwide. The latter was part of an ongoing series of studies. Results of the second phase are reported in Kaskowitz, Binkley, and Johnson (1981). This article describes the survey of graduates.

The objective of the survey of graduates was to obtain data on the professional status of graduates of bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs one to three years after completion of training. The major question of interest was, What proportion of graduates subsequently participate in the field of bilingual education and in what capacities? This and related questions were investigated for two separate groups of graduates: those who completed programs designed to train bilingual education teachers and those who completed programs designed to prepare bilingual education teacher trainers. A national sample of 809 teacher graduates was surveyed by mail, and a sample of 168 trainer graduates was surveyed by telephone.

METHODS

Sample

Graduates were selected in the second phase of a two-stage sampling plan. The 56 IHEs that had been visited in the initial phase of the study served as the first-stage sample. (For a description of the first-stage sampling procedures and sample representativeness, see Binkley, Johnson, Stewart, Abrica-Carrasco, Nava, and Thrope 1981). Directors of the bilingual education programs in

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1 The reports were not released by the Department of Education until June 1982, 12 and 9 months, respectively, after their completion. The complete reports and executive summaries are available from the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1555 Wilson Blvd., Suite 605, Rosslyn, Virginia 22209.
each institution were asked to provide lists of program graduates for each of three academic years: 1977-1978, 1978-1979, and 1979-1980. The second-stage sample of graduates was selected from the lists provided.

**Sample of teachers.** Those students who completed a program leading to certification or endorsement in BE and/or a degree in BE at the bachelor’s or master’s level were classified as teacher graduates, since the primary purpose of these programs is to prepare BE teachers; however, graduates of master’s programs who had received a Title VII fellowship were categorized as trainers.

A stratified sampling design was used for the second-stage selection of teachers. Four stratification variables believed to be correlated with responses to be obtained on questionnaires were selected:

1. Year of graduation
   a. 1977-1978
   b. 1978-1979
   c. 1979-1980
2. Existence of BE certification in the state
   a. BE certification
   b. No BE certification
3. Type of program
   a. Bachelor’s (with or without BE certification)
   b. BE credential only
   c. Master’s (with or without BE certification)
4. Language group to be served
   a. Spanish
   b. Language other than Spanish

The selection of these stratification variables resulted in a sampling matrix of 36 cells (3 x 2 x 3 x 2). The size of a sample to be drawn depends on the level of precision desired in deriving population estimates as well as on other factors, including financial resources. The sample drawn was large enough so that, in general, one can be 95 percent confident that if 50 percent of the sample has a certain characteristic, the true percentage of the population having that characteristic lies between 40 and 60. Sampling error is greatest at 50 percent and decreases as the percentage of the sample having a certain characteristic approaches 0 or 100 percent (Fowler 1983).

In general, a proportional sample was randomly drawn from each IHE for each cell of the sampling matrix. Since so few graduates were trained to teach students of language groups other than Spanish, all cells in the “language other than Spanish” stratum were sampled exhaustively. Table 1 presents the number of teacher
graduates sampled, while Table 2 presents the estimated numbers of graduates in the national population. Of a total of 1077 identified graduates from the 56 IHEs, 809 (or 75 percent) were sampled. An estimated 6462 BE teachers graduated nationwide in the three-year period 1977-1980. Thus, the sample represents approximately 13 percent of the national population of BE teacher graduates from the three years studied.

Sample of trainers. Of the 226 trainer graduates from the 56 IHEs, names and addresses were available for only 168 (74 percent). Since the number from which to sample was small, all 168 trainer graduates were surveyed. This number represents 33 percent of the national population. Students who graduated from doctoral programs and other types of post-master’s programs were classified as trainers for the purpose of this study. In addition, those master’s graduates who had at any time received a Title VII fellowship were also classified as trainers, since the intent of the fellowship program is to prepare trainers of BE teachers. Table 1 presents the number of trainer graduates surveyed according to year of graduation and degree received, while Table 2 presents the estimated numbers of trainer graduates in the population.

### TABLE 1

Numbers of Teachers and Trainers Surveyed by Year of Graduation and Degree Received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s Creden-</td>
<td>Master’s Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1978</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-1979</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-1980</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Master’s graduates who had received a Title VII fellowship

One important goal of the first phase of the study was to obtain national estimates of the numbers of BE teachers prepared annually by colleges and universities. Data on numbers of graduates were obtained from the 56 IHEs visited as well as from an additional sample of 21 non-Title VII-funded IHEs that were telephoned. National estimates were calculated from the sample data. For programs of a specified type, the national number of graduates for a given year was estimated by multiplying the average number of graduates from programs of that type in the sample by the number of programs of that type in the population. (For a more detailed description of the methodology used to derive national estimates, as well as complete data on numbers of enrollees and graduates, see Chapter IV of Binkley, Johnson, Stewart, Abrica-Carrasco, Nava, and Thrope 1981.)
TABLE 2
National Estimates of Bilingual Program Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>2210</td>
<td>2305</td>
<td>8462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Trainers</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kaskowitz, Binkley, and Johnson (1981:12)

Conduct of the Survey

A common flaw in survey research is to ignore sources of error other than sampling. Nonresponse can be a major source of error if those who do not respond differ in important ways from those who do. For example, those BE teacher graduates who held positions as BE teachers might be more likely to respond immediately than those graduates who were unable to find employment. For this reason, it is important to achieve high response rates and to compare the responses of those who respond immediately to the responses of those who respond later or only after follow-up measures are implemented.

To achieve the highest possible response rates, five attempts were made to obtain responses from teacher graduates. A 16-page questionnaire consisting of 44 questions was developed, pilot-tested, revised, and mailed to teacher graduates. A second set, or wave, of questionnaires was sent to those who did not respond to the first wave. For the third and fourth waves, the teacher questionnaire was reduced to 10 questions to increase the response rate. Questionnaires were coded by wave so that bias could be analyzed according to wave. After four waves, the response rate was 64 percent for those teachers in the sample preparing to work with Spanish-speaking pupils and 75 percent for the teachers preparing to work with speakers of a language other than Spanish.

Teacher trainers were surveyed by telephone using a 22-page, 42-item questionnaire. After two attempts to locate trainers, a 67 percent response rate was achieved. To increase response rates for both teachers and trainers, a special telephone follow-up of nonrespondents was undertaken. Of a total of 328 teacher and trainer nonrespondents, 228 (182 teachers and 46 trainers) were randomly selected for follow-up. Teachers were interviewed with the short form of the teacher questionnaire that had been mailed in waves 3 and 4. Trainers were interviewed with the same questionnaire that had been used in the first two attempts to reach trainer graduates. These telephone interviews provided responses from an additional SURVEY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM GRADUATES 63
78 teachers and 14 trainers, bringing the final response rate up to 76 percent for both teachers and trainers. While there is no agreed-upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate, 75 percent is generally considered adequate (Fowler 1983).

Data Analysis

Response bias. Bias due to response wave and nonresponse was studied by comparing those who responded to the initial mailing (the first wave), those who responded to subsequent waves (2, 3, and 4), and those contacted in the follow-up study of nonrespondents (wave 5). Teacher data were analyzed for bias across the five waves by comparing responses on key questions. There was little or no bias among waves 1, 2, 3, and 5. While wave 4 was significantly biased (p < .05) toward fewer teachers in the field of BE, the magnitude of the bias and the number of cases were small. The results indicated that the sample was not likely to be biased due to nonresponse. Therefore, subsequent analyses were run with all waves combined.

Descriptive analyses. Data were analyzed using descriptive procedures. Separate analyses were performed for teacher data and trainer data. Data were further analyzed by program type, year of graduation, state certification status, and language group.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Program Graduates

Data were gathered on the age, sex, ethnicity, and language background of the survey respondents to provide a general profile of BE program graduates. The mean age of program graduates was 33, with a range of 21 to 62 years. The overwhelming majority of the graduates were female—80 percent of the teachers and 78 percent of the trainers. For all three years combined, 60 percent of the teacher graduates and 61 percent of the trainer graduates were Hispanic, while 31 percent of the teacher graduates and 29 percent of the trainer graduates were white, non-Hispanics. It is interesting to note that over the three-year period the percentage of white, non-Hispanic teacher graduates increased slightly (26 to 31 to 36 percent), while the percentage of Hispanics decreased (69 to 61 to 51 percent).

The majority of program graduates rated themselves as highly proficient in at least two languages. Respondents were asked to rate their English proficiency on a four-point scale based on the Foreign Service Institute Scale (Jones 1979): 5 = native proficiency, 4 = full
professional proficiency, 3 = moderate professional proficiency, 2 = limited working proficiency. The trainers’ proficiency in English was rated as higher than that of the teachers. While 78 percent of the trainers reported native proficiency, only 58 percent of the teachers gave themselves this rating. An additional 33 percent of the teachers reported full professional proficiency, however (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 = Native Proficiency</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Full professional Proficiency</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Moderate Professional Proficiency</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Limited Working Proficiency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In this and subsequent tables, percentages may total to slightly more or less than 100 due to rounding.

Findings from the first phase of the study (Binkley, Johnson, Stewart, Abri-Carrasco, Nava, and Thrope 1981) indicated that the vast majority of students in the IHE training programs had been educated in the United States in all-English schools and were therefore fluent in English. While most program directors saw no need to have program requirements for English proficiency other than those which were in effect university-wide, 10 of the 56 IHEs did report explicit program requirements in English proficiency.

Survey respondents were asked to select the one language other than English in which they were most fluent and the principal means by which the language was acquired. Spanish was the language in which 94 percent of the teachers and 90 percent of the trainers were most fluent. Most of the Spanish speakers had acquired the language primarily at home (see Table 4). Respondents were asked to indicate whether they could use the language for 1) teaching content-area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Method of Acquisition</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spoken in the Home</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned Informally Outside the Home</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studied Formally</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
subjects to pupils for whom it was the home language, 2) teaching
the language arts of the language to pupils for whom it was the
home language, and 3) teaching it as a second (or foreign) language
to pupils for whom it was not the home language. These questions
were included in this format so that the results could be compared to
data from other federal surveys. Between 87 percent and 97 percent
of the teacher and trainer graduates reported that they could
perform these functions. Thus, graduates rated themselves as gen-
erally competent to perform bilingual teaching functions in English
and in a language other than English. While an investigation of the
validity of graduates’ ratings of their proficiency level was outside
the scope of this study, the data do provide a general picture of
graduates’ language proficiency characteristics.

Field of Employment

A primary purpose of the survey was to determine the graduates’
employment status as of the 1980-1981 school year. A full 91 percent
of the teachers and 98 percent of the trainers were employed for pay
in some field.

Fifty-seven percent of the teacher graduates were employed
directly in the field of BE; an additional 20 percent reported that
they were serving LEP students. Thus, a full 77 percent were
applying the training received through their I HE bilingual program
(see Table 5). An additional 3 percent reported their major field of
employment as serving a minority population. This small percentage
might also be applying many of the skills gained through the BE
program. Thus, 80 percent were working in a BE-related field
(defined as categories 1, 2, or 3 in Table 5). The analyses of positions
held and characteristics of those positions were carried out for all
graduates working in a BE-related field. Thus, the results presented
in Tables 6 through 11 are based on this group.

Of the trainer graduates, 63 percent were employed directly in
BE, while another 20 percent reported that they were serving LEP
students. Thus, a total of 83 percent of trainers were applying skills
gained through their IHE preparation to the education of LEP
students. An additional 3 percent reported serving primarily a minor-
ity population.

The percentage of teacher graduates who found employment
directly in BE was greater in states that offer BE certification than in
states without BE certification. In states with BE certification, 65
percent found employment in BE, while only 39 percent did so in
states without BE certification. This finding was expected, since
states with BE certification are likely to have more BE programs.
There was no discernible employment pattern based on year of graduation or on language group for either teachers or trainers. There was, however, some relationship between the receipt of a Title VII stipend or fellowship and employment in the BE field. The percentage of teacher graduates who reported having jobs in BE was 61 percent for those who had at one time received Title VII support, but only 47 percent for those who had received no Title VII support. The percentage of trainer graduates who entered the field of BE was 76 for those who had received Title VII support and 62 for those who had not received any such assistance. Graduates reported that financial assistance from Title VII was critical in allowing them to complete their programs. About four fifths of the Title VII stipend or fellowship recipients at both levels reported that they could not have completed their programs without support.

Of those teacher graduates who were not employed in a BE-related field, 66 percent had found, or remained in, elementary teaching positions. The main reason given for not being employed in a BE-related field was “no opening” (37 percent). The next most frequent response category chosen was “inadequate salary” (12 percent). Of the trainer graduates who were not employed in a BE-related field, most worked either as elementary or secondary teachers (36 percent) or had obtained positions as educational administrators (34 percent). It is probable that many of these administrators had some control over the education of LEP students and were thus applying some of the skills gained through their IHE programs. In general, respondents not employed in a BE-related field expressed interest in pursuing BE employment opportunities. About half (56 percent of teachers and 49 percent of teacher trainers) had, after graduation, applied for one or more jobs related to their training. Moreover, 48 percent of these teachers and 36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Employment</th>
<th>Percent of Employed Teacher Graduates</th>
<th>Percent of Employed Trainer Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bilingual Education</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Position Serving LEP Population</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Position Serving Minority Population</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. General Education</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Education-Related Position</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Position Outside Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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percent of these trainers were continuing to look for a BE-related job.

Positions Held by program Graduates in BE-Related Fields

The great majority of teacher graduates who did find employment in BE-related fields were working as elementary teachers (see Table 6). Eighty-two percent of the bachelor’s graduates and 70 percent of the master’s graduates held elementary teaching positions. For trainers, the type of employment differed according to the degree received. Of the trainers from master’s programs (who had received Title VII fellowships), 55 percent were elementary teachers. The largest group of doctoral-level trainers (31 percent) were employed as administrators; the next largest group (28 percent) were employed as professors or instructors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Teachers¹</th>
<th>Trainers²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Teacher</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Trainer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum/Resource</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor/Professor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The national estimate of BE teacher graduates in this group in 1979-1980 is 1844.
² The national estimate of BE trainer graduates in this group in 1979-1980 is 204.

These results provide further evidence to support the policy of the U.S. Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) of shifting the awarding of Title VII fellowships from master’s students to doctoral students. A study of the Title VII fellowship program conducted by Coballes-Vega, Marra, and Espino-Paris (1979) indicated that the majority of master’s-level
fellowship recipients did not subsequently serve as teacher trainers but found employment in school districts, typically as teachers. The data presented in Table 6 indicate that doctoral graduates were more successful than master's graduates in finding teacher training positions. A total of 36 percent of doctoral graduates were instructors/professors or teacher trainers, while only 15 percent of the master's graduates who had received fellowships fell into these categories. An additional 10 percent of the doctoral graduates were curriculum specialists or resource specialists, positions that usually involve conducting training. The 31 percent serving as BE administrators were serving OBEMLA'S goal of providing leadership in the field of BE. Thus, Title VII fellowship funds are more profitably used with doctoral students than with master's students, since a total of 77 percent of the former obtained positions involving training and/or leadership.

Characteristics of Employment in BE-Related Fields

Data were gathered on 14 characteristics of the employment of graduates. The results reported here are limited to four areas: languages spoken by students, language use on the job, subjects taught, and salaries. These results pertain to all respondents employed in a BE-related job (categories 1,2, and 3 in Table 5).

Nearly all the respondents reported working directly with one or more non-English language groups as part of their job (94 percent of teachers and 96 percent of trainers). Of these, the vast majority worked with Spanish-speaking students (94 percent of teachers and 97 percent of trainers), followed by speakers of Vietnamese (12 percent of teachers and 26 percent of trainers) and Cantonese speakers (9 percent of teachers and 10 percent of trainers).

Respondents were asked to provide information about their use of the primary language(s) of their students. Ninety-one percent of teachers and trainers reported using a language other than English in their jobs. Of these, 95 percent reported using Spanish; fewer than 5 percent reported using other languages. Table 7 presents the percentage of the day during which the primary language of the students was used. Most respondents used the language less than half the workday. Only 13 percent of trainers and 23 percent of teachers used the language more than half the workday. It is not surprising that trainers make less use of the non-English language than teachers, since teachers deal directly with LEP students, while the audiences of the trainer are often fully bilingual and linguistically heterogeneous.
TABLE 7
Distribution of Teachers and Trainers According to the Percentage of Workday Involving the Use of a Language Other than English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Workday</th>
<th>Teachers(^1)</th>
<th>Trainers(^1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) The national estimate of teachers in this group in 1979-1980 is 1844. 
\(^2\) The national estimate of trainers in this group in 1979-1980 is 204.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate the primary duties of their jobs (see Table 8). Most of the elementary teachers whose principal jobs were in a BE-related field described their primary responsibilities as “teaching all subjects” (71 percent). The single subject taught by the highest percentage was English as a second language (48 percent), followed by reading/language arts (46 percent) and math/science (36 percent). At the secondary level,

TABLE 8
Percentage of Teachers Teaching Each Subject Area by Teaching Level\(^*\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
<th>Elementary Teachers</th>
<th>Secondary Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE Cert.</td>
<td>No BE Cert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign/Second Language (Other Than English)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Other Than English)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/Language Arts</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math/Science</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art/Music/Drama</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Physical Education</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\) The national estimate of teachers in this group in 1979-1980 is 1844.
Note: Columns total more than 100 because respondents could select more than one category.
the highest percentage of teachers taught ESL (58 percent), followed by reading/language arts (50 percent). The data include resource teachers and curriculum specialists with teaching responsibilities, as well as full-time teachers in self-contained or other types of teaching situations.

While 48 percent of elementary teachers and 58 percent of secondary teachers reported that ESL was one of their "primary duties," 70 percent of the teachers answered yes when asked, "Do you teach ESL/EFL?" These results indicate that many teachers taught ESL in addition to what they considered to be their primary responsibilities.

Of the trainers (see Table 9), the highest percentage of those teaching in colleges or universities taught courses in culture (37 percent) and general issues in bilingual education (34 percent), followed by courses in teaching reading (27 percent), teaching a second language (25 percent), and curriculum (24 percent). The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
<th>College or University</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Issues in BE</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Content Areas</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Language Arts</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Reading</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching a Second Language</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Acquisition/Bilingualism</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics/Applied Linguistics/Sociolinguistics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture/History/ethnic Studies</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Community Relations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Psychology or Sociology/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling/Special Education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Program Evaluation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training/Supervision</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Development/curriculum</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis/curriculum utilization</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The national estimate of trainers in this group in 1979-1980 is 204.
Note: Columns total more than 100 because respondents could teach more than one subject.
Culture category was broadly defined to include courses in anthropology, history, literature, and ethnic studies. The General Issues in BE category included courses in the history and philosophy of BE and models of BE. Training that was conducted in other settings, such as school districts, was more focused on pedagogy: teaching a second language (48 percent), teaching reading (46 percent), teaching content areas (44 percent), and teaching language arts (37 percent). Thus, the training conducted outside the college/university setting is, as might be expected, much more practical in its orientation. A heavy focus on ESL was found for trainers as well as teachers. When asked, “Do you teach, or train others to teach, ESL?” 62 percent responded yes. Nearly one fifth of the trainers spent 91-100 percent of the workday engaged in this activity (see Table 10).

**TABLE 10**

Distribution of Graduates According to Percentage of Workday Devoted to Teaching ESL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Workday Teaching ESL</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-100</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The national estimate of teachers in this group in 1979-1980 is 1644,
2 The national estimate of trainers in this group in 1979-1980 is 204.

Table 11 presents descriptive data on salary levels reported by teachers and teacher trainers who were working full-time. The majority of the teachers earned between $10,000 and $20,000, while master’s and doctoral graduates earned higher salaries. Although there are sex differences, conclusions cannot be drawn about the reasons without detailed information on such factors as previous experience and type of job. Such an investigation was not within the scope of the study.
TABLE 11
Percentage of Full-Time Teachers and Trainers in Each Salary Range by Sex and Degree Earned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary Range</th>
<th>Teachers¹</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Trainers²</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M  F</td>
<td>M  F</td>
<td>M  F</td>
<td>M  F</td>
<td>M  F</td>
<td>M  F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5,000</td>
<td>2  4</td>
<td>0  1</td>
<td>2  2</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>2  4</td>
<td>0  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,001-10,000</td>
<td>9  4</td>
<td>0  2</td>
<td>1  4</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>9  4</td>
<td>0  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001-15,000</td>
<td>47 61</td>
<td>49 21</td>
<td>43 22</td>
<td>0 7</td>
<td>47 61</td>
<td>49 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,001-20,000</td>
<td>41 23</td>
<td>41 58</td>
<td>35 50</td>
<td>26 37</td>
<td>41 23</td>
<td>41 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,001-25,000</td>
<td>0  4</td>
<td>10  15</td>
<td>20 19</td>
<td>22 40</td>
<td>0  4</td>
<td>10  15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,001-30,000</td>
<td>0  4</td>
<td>0  2</td>
<td>0  1</td>
<td>35 14</td>
<td>0  4</td>
<td>0  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,001-35,000</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>17  2</td>
<td>0  0</td>
<td>0  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td>100 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The national estimate of teachers in this group in 1979-1980 who were working full-time is 1696.
² The national estimate of trainers in this group in 1979-1980 who were working full-time is 192.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The employment rate in teaching was high for BE teacher graduates. Eighty-two percent were employed in some type of teaching position. This result compares very favorably with data from other studies (Metz and Crane 1980, Graybeal 1981), which report that only about 55 percent of the general population of teacher graduates obtain teaching positions within a year of graduation. Not only did the graduates of BE programs obtain or keep teaching jobs at a much higher rate than other types of teachers, but a large proportion of them (77 percent) were found to be applying their training to the teaching of LEP students. Employment results for graduates of teacher trainer programs were even more positive. Eighty-three percent were serving LEP students, and 77 percent of these were in either training or other leadership positions.

These results indicate that federal funds spent to prepare BE teachers and trainers have been having the intended effect. The funds have helped provide approximately 2000 qualified BE teachers per year, and most of those teachers do indeed serve the intended target population of LEP pupils. Support to students through Title VII stipends and fellowships has been critical both in recruiting majority and minority bilingual students and in enabling them to complete their programs. Those who received Title VII...
assistance were more likely to secure BE positions than those who did not receive assistance.

Data regarding the characteristics of students revealed that males are underrepresented among BE teacher and trainer graduates. This problem is not specific to the field of bilingual education, however. While three fifths of the program graduates under study were Hispanics, the proportion of Hispanic teacher graduates decreased slightly during the three years under study. Program graduates generally rated themselves as proficient enough to provide instruction in two languages. The language other than English in which nine tenths of all graduates were proficient was Spanish, and most of these graduates reported that they had acquired Spanish primarily through using it in their own homes.

Data on the characteristics of jobs held by graduates help to dispel some common myths about bilingual education. Two misconceptions often expressed by community members not familiar with bilingual education goals and practices are that bilingual education teachers use a language other than English during most of the school day and do not teach English to their LEP pupils. The finding that contradicts the first myth is that only 12 percent of BE teacher graduates employed in a BE-related field used a language other than English for more than 60 percent of the workday. Findings from this study regarding teacher language use in the classroom are consistent with those of several other studies (see, for example, Halcon 1983 and Tikunoff 1983) that demonstrate that in bilingual classrooms, English is used substantially more than the native language of the LEP pupils. The second myth is dispelled by the finding that a full 70 percent of teacher graduates working in a BE-related field taught ESL. For 48 percent of the elementary teachers and 58 percent of the secondary teachers, the teaching of ESL was a “primary responsibility” of their jobs.

The results of the survey are useful for a number of purposes. First, they can serve an important normative function by providing national-level data that can serve as a frame of reference for results of similar surveys conducted at regional, state, and local levels. While factors such as general teacher supply and demand, state certification requirements, and other market conditions will affect employment characteristics for BE graduates in different geographical areas, information based on a large, representative sample provides a useful standard of comparison for interpreting the results of other surveys (see, for example, Clark and Milk 1983 and Day 1984).

The data regarding positions held by graduates and the responsibilities of those positions provide one source of information for evaluating the content of training programs. For example, a sizable
percentage of doctoral graduates secured positions involving teacher training. The analysis of the curricular content of doctoral programs conducted in the first phase of the study indicated that only about 13 percent of doctoral programs required a course on teacher training or supervision (Binkley, Johnson, Stewart, Abrica-Carrasco, Nava, and Thrope 1981). This situation is probably not unique to BE doctoral programs, however.

A second example relates to teacher graduates. While 70 percent of the BE teacher graduates reported that they taught ESL and about half considered the teaching of ESL to be one of their primary duties, data from the first phase of the study revealed that only about 61 percent of the bachelor’s programs required a course in teaching a second language. Many of the courses that were offered placed primary emphasis on methods designed for teaching adults rather than children. Because 82 percent of BE bachelor’s graduates and 70 percent of master’s graduates secured positions as elementary teachers, it would appear desirable to revamp many ESL methods courses to address the needs of children.

The survey results also indicate that students completing doctoral programs failed to secure positions in certain areas. For example, none of the doctoral graduates in the sample held positions as researchers or evaluators. Although the percentage may have increased since the survey data were collected, it is critical that BE doctoral programs prepare personnel who are qualified to conduct needed research and evaluation studies, including those mandated by law.

As programs to meet the needs of LEP students become increasingly widespread and institutionalized, and as more states pass legislation mandating programs for the growing population of LEP students, the importance of IHE programs designed to prepare BE personnel will continue to grow. Similarly, the collection and dissemination of data on the effects of such programs—in particular, the number of graduates produced and their subsequent contributions to the task of educating LEP students—will continue to be important. Such data can serve to document program effects, contribute to program improvement, and support or refute community beliefs about bilingual education.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
This research was sponsored by the Title VII, Part C, Research Agenda for Bilingual Education and performed under Contract No. 300-79-0040 with the Department of Education. The views and conclusions expressed in this article are the author’s and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Education.

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Because writing teachers invest so much time responding to student writing and because these responses reveal the assumptions teachers hold about writing, L1 writing researchers have investigated how composition teachers respond to their students’ texts. These investigations have revealed that teachers respond to most writing as if it were a final draft, thus reinforcing an extremely constricted notion of composing. Their comments often reflect the application of a single ideal standard rather than criteria that take into account how composing constraints can affect writing performance. Furthermore, teachers’ marks and comments usually take the form of abstract and vague prescriptions and directives that students find difficult to interpret.

A study was undertaken to examine ESL teachers’ responses to student writing. The findings suggest that ESL composition teachers make similar types of comments and are even more concerned with language-specific errors and problems. The marks and comments are often confusing, arbitrary, and inaccessible. In addition, ESL teachers, like their native-language counterparts, rarely seem to expect students to revise the text beyond the surface level. Such responses to texts give students a very limited and limiting notion of writing, for they fail to provide students with the understanding that writing involves producing a text that evolves over time. Teachers therefore need to develop more appropriate responses for commenting on student writing. They need to facilitate revision by responding to writing as work in progress rather than judging it as a finished product.

The following description, entitled “Portrait of the English Teacher as a Tired Dog,” appears in a recent reference work for teachers of writing:

It is a November midnight, Johnny Carson has just ended, and throughout the block the last lights flick off—all but one that is. A single orange light blooms in the darkness. It is the English teacher, weary-eyed, cramped of leg, hand, and brain, sifting listlessly, but doggedly through piles of themes, circling, marking, grading, commenting, guilt-
ridden because the students were promised that the papers would be
returned last week. The fifth cup of coffee grows cold and bitter. Just
one more paper. And then one more, And then . . . (Judy 1981:208).

That writing teachers spend a great deal of time responding to
their students’ papers is a truism. According to one estimate (Som-
ers 1982), teachers take at least 20 to 40 minutes to comment on an
individual paper. While little data of this sort exist for ESL teachers
of writing, anecdotal evidence suggests that we too invest a great
proportion of our instructional time responding to our students’
compositions.

TEACHERS’ RESPONSES TO STUDENT WRITING:
L1 SETTINGS

Given the fact that writing teachers believe, by virtue of the time
and effort invested, that their responses provide critical information
to students about their writing performance, it is interesting to note
that until very recently, little attention was paid to the nature of
these responses. Recently, however, attempts have been made to
describe and investigate teachers’ responses to student writing, since
these responses are believed to reflect underlying assumptions about
the nature and function of writing. As two researchers recently put
it:

The attitudes that teachers have toward writing strongly influence their
own teaching practices, particularly their evaluation of student writing.
Their beliefs . . . serve as filters that train their attention to qualities (or
lack thereof) in student writing (Beach and Bridwell 1984:312).

These investigations reveal that despite the findings of process-
oriented studies and their implications for the teaching of writing,
practice lags far behind research and theory (see, for example,
1983) and that this is especially the case for teachers’ responses.

Sommers’ (1982) study, for example, of teachers’ comments—
comments that were “intended to motivate revision”—indicates that
they “take students’ attention away from their own purposes in
writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers’
purpose in commenting” (149). According to Murray, “we want our
students to perform to the standards of other students, to study what
we plan for them to study and to learn from it what we or our
teachers learned” (1984:7). As a result, students revise according to
the changes that teachers impose on the text.

1 See, however, Cumming (1983), whose analysis of the think-aloud protocols of three ESL
teachers revealed that two of these teachers spent approximately 40 minutes responding to
an ESL text.
Other researchers have studied the ways in which teachers appropriate their students’ writing by establishing themselves as authorities. Teachers have been found to apply uniform, inflexible standards to their students’ texts and to respond according to the extent to which these texts conform to or deviate from these standards (Moran 1981). They have been found to pre-empt control of important decision-making processes, allowing their own “ideal texts to dictate choices that properly belong to writers” (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982:159). Students are thus given to understand that what they wanted to say is not as important as what their teachers wanted them to say. Furthermore, these “ideal texts” may interfere with the teachers’ ability to read and interpret texts, with the result that texts may be misread and comments and reactions may be inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate (Greenbaum and Taylor 1981, Sommers 1982). In the face of their teachers’ critical judgments, students are unlikely to make any effort to establish that their meaning has been misconstrued; “the writer avoids or alters meaning rather than risk [the teacher’s] disapproval” (Schwartz 1983:556).

When teachers appropriate writing in this way, they are obviously viewing texts as products to be judged and evaluated. Their responses, therefore, do not take into account “the writer’s intention and the actual playing out of that intention in the process of composing” or the “writer’s relation to audience in any full way” (M. Rose 1983:116). Thus, the changes and revisions that students incorporate not only may fail to clarify what they intended to communicate but may have little to do with what was originally intended (see, for example, Brannon and Knoblauch 1982, Freedman 1984, Ziv 1984).

That texts are viewed as fixed and final products is further corroborated by the overwhelming evidence that teachers attend to surface-level features in what should otherwise be considered first drafts (see, for example, Collins 1981, Moran 1981, Murray 1982, Sommers 1982). Teachers seemingly “find it difficult to respond to student writing unless they can respond to it as a final draft” (Butturff and Sommers 1980:99-100) and therefore focus on problems of mechanics, usage, and style. Responding in this way to local concerns creates in students a rather limited notion of composing and reinforces the understanding that these concerns must be dealt with at the outset. I use the word reinforces here because studies of revising strategies indicate that it is surface-level features of writing that inexperienced writers attend to (see, for example, Beach 1976, Sommers 1980, Faigley and Witte 1981, Rubin 1983, Witte 1983). As Flower and Hayes put it, these writers are “locked in by the myopia” of their “low level goals” (1981:379).
This is not to say that teachers in fact do not believe that certain features of writing are more important than others (see, for example, Griffin 1982), but that the impression their responses create is that local errors are either as important as, if not more important than, meaning-related concerns. And this is the impression that stays with students. For example, in a recent study by Schwartz (1984), students were asked to indicate which passage a professor would prefer: one that was clear but lifeless or one that was colorful and creative but flawed mechanically. Students chose the first, assuming that “grammatical errors are more powerful in effect than voice” (60).

Because teachers often address both minor infelicities and larger issues of rhetoric and content in the same version of a text, their responses are frequently contradictory; while interlinear comments address the text as a finished product to be edited, marginal comments view the text as still developing and evolving (Sommers 1982:151). For example, mechanical errors might be pinpointed at the same time that students are being asked to elaborate upon an idea or make it more interesting. Students who receive mixed messages of this kind may be confused because they have no way of knowing whether to focus on the meaning-level changes suggested or the local problems pinpointed. Furthermore, they may recognize—although the teacher seemingly does not—that additional clarification may obviate the necessity of making these local changes. But students typically do not have to resolve this conflict, for although instructors suggest revision, they paradoxically do not provide for further revision or require it (Johnson 1979). As one researcher has indicated, students may read the comments on their papers, but they rarely write “subsequent drafts in which they can act upon the comments, and thus the improvements desired by their teachers rarely occur” (Ziv 1984:362).

Students are further likely to be confused by the contradictory ways in which different teachers respond. Teachers apply very different and even conflicting standards, based on different experiences, orientations, expectations, preconceptions, and biases (see, for example, Griffin 1982, Siegel 1982, Purves 1984). This variation in teachers’ responses is confirmed by a number of investigations (Hake 1978, Harris 1979), Schwartz (1984) found that when two pieces of discourse are read by two different readers, the very text that pleases one reader may irritate the other. Another recent study (Freedman 1984) found that teachers’ expectations of and assumptions about student writing determine their responses to student writing. Even teachers’ anxiety about their own ability to write may be a contributing factor to the way teachers respond to students’ texts (Gere, Schuessler, and Abbott 1984). Williams’ (1981) study
of standards of evaluation indicates that conflicting and contradic-
tory standards are as evident in handbooks and grammar texts as
they are in teachers’ responses. Given the variation in teachers’ re-
sponses and the tendency of textbooks to reinforce or even promote
this variation, it is no wonder that teachers’ responses have been
found to be “idiosyncratic” and “arbitrary” (Sommers 1982:149).

Another major finding is that most teachers’ comments are not
“text-specific and could be interchanged from text to text” (Sommers
1982:152). Instead of specific strategies, questions, and suggestions
that might help students reshape their texts, students are given vague
prescriptive advice (see, for example, Butturff and Sommers 1980,
E. Miller 1982, G. Smith 1982, Winterowd 1983)—perhaps because,
as one trainer of writing teachers has suggested, teachers are not
capable of doing “accurate or creative diagnoses of student writing”
(Moran 1981:70). These vague prescriptions take the form of marks
and comments that represent “complex meanings . . . which remain
locked in [the teacher’s] head” (Butler 1980:270). While teachers
may assume that these prescriptions have “universally-accepted
definitions” that transmit the same “values” to their students, this is
not the case (Schwartz 1984). As one study (Ziv 1984) has indicated,
when cues remain implicit, whether at the conceptual, structural, or
sentential level, these responses are often misunderstood, misinter-
preted, and unhelpful to students in their efforts to rethink the prob-
lems being addressed.

TEACHERS’ RESPONSES TO STUDENT WRITING:
L2 SETTINGS

For the same reasons that researchers are exploring the ways in
which teachers respond to student writing in L1 settings—to discover
both the kinds of responses they make and the underlying assump-
tions about writing that these responses reflect—we should be inves-
tigating the responses of ESL writing teachers. Studies of teachers’
responses in L2 settings (of the sort carried out by Brannon and
practically nonexistent.

This is not to say, however, that ESL teachers have no guidelines
to follow when responding to student writing. On the contrary, a
descriptive survey (Cumming 1983) of responding procedures out-
lines the techniques and practices that have been recommended to
ESL professionals and that are “seemingly implemented on a regular
basis” (2) by these teachers. The following illustrates one such
recommendation:
Error correction is crucial for learning the writing skill, and correction techniques are essentially the same for controlled and free composition. Using a set list of correction symbols, teachers indicate student errors focusing on the teaching point and previously learned patterns (Bruder and Furey 1979:71).

It is obvious from the survey that despite the recent influence of process-oriented research (see, for example, Taylor 1981, Zamel 1982, 1983, Raimes 1983, Spack and Sadow 1983), teachers are still by and large concerned with the accuracy and correctness of surface-level features of writing and that error identification—the practice of searching for and calling attention to error—is still the most widely employed procedure for responding to ESL writing. Cumming offers the following rationale for this almost obsessive preoccupation with error:

Error-identification appears to be ingrained in the habitual practices of second language teachers who perhaps by reason of perceiving their role solely as instructors of the formal aspects of “language” therefore restrict their activities to operations exclusively within the domain of formal training rather than that of cognitive development (1983:6).

Current research tells us very little about ESL teachers’ responses to student writing. We know that teachers respond imprecisely and inconsistently to errors (Hendrickson 1980). Experimental studies have been undertaken to determine whether certain correction strategies seem to be more effective than others (see, for example, Cardelle and Corno 1981, Chaudron 1983, Cohen 1983, Robb, Ross, and Shortreed 1984). While studies of this sort help us explore the effects of certain feedback treatments, they clearly do not increase our understanding of what teachers actually do in response to their students’ written texts.

One investigation (Vann, Meyer, and Lorenz 1984) that attempted to determine how teachers respond to ESL writing examined the responses of university faculty from various academic disciplines. Unfortunately, the texts evaluated consisted of isolated sentences containing typical ESL errors rather than total units of discourse. Thus, while the findings of this study—particularly those that indicate that variables such as age and academic area seem to influence how faculty react to certain errors—are intriguing, responding to errors in sentences out of context is so unlike what professors typically do that the findings probably bear little relationship to real responding behavior. 2

2 My own exploratory examination of how university faculty respond to ESL writing raises additional questions about the Vann, Meyer, and Lorenz (1984) study and its findings. My analysis indicates that faculty do not react according to some hierarchy of error types. Rather, they apply certain modes of responding: reacting to all errors, reacting to very few.
One recent study (Cumming 1983) does provide insight into how ESL teachers respond to student writing. An examination of these teachers’ responses to the same student paper suggests that error identification is in fact the most widely employed technique, that teachers’ responses to the same text differ, and that the application of error-identification techniques varies considerably. Analysis of the think-aloud protocols of three of the teachers provides other interesting data. For example, particular responding techniques seem to affect how teachers view and react to the text. It is not surprising, given these differences, that these teachers “differ[ed] markedly in their assessments” (21) of the written text. This study certainly begins to ask the right question about ESL teachers’ responses and provides revealing data. However, as in other experimental studies, the teachers were responding within a context created by the researcher. They may have been influenced not only by what they thought the researcher was looking for, particularly as they thought aloud about their responding processes, but by the very act of responding aloud. Thus, the extent to which their responses represent their actual reactions to and comments about authentic texts in real instructional settings cannot be determined.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Given the limitations of previous studies of ESL teachers’ responses to student writing, I set out to investigate actual teacher responses. I examined the comments, reactions, and markings that appeared on compositions assigned and evaluated by teachers in their own university-level ESL writing classes. It should be noted that these compositions were originally collected to establish files of student writing, not to study teachers’ responses. Thus, it is unlikely that the teachers’ responses were influenced by the artificial conditions prevailing in an experimental situation.

The responding behaviors of 15 teachers were analyzed. In all but three cases, I was able to examine the way each of these teachers responded to three or more students, and in most cases there were at least two different papers for each student. Altogether, I studied 105 student texts, not including revisions of the same text. Since each teacher responded to different students and the different papers they each wrote, I was satisfied that the responses were in fact representative of these teachers’ responding behavior.

errors, or not reacting to any. Furthermore, whatever the level of response to error, these professors seemed to be mainly concerned with how well students presented their ideas about the content studied. It is important to note the problematical nature of the Vann, Meyer, and Lorenz investigation and to undertake further research on faculty responses within genuine writing contexts, since these responses may have implications for composition curricula.

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The findings are consistent with much of what has been found about the responses of L1 writing teachers. ESL writing teachers misread student texts, are inconsistent in their reactions, make arbitrary corrections, write contradictory comments, provide vague prescriptions, impose abstract rules and standards, respond to texts as fixed and final products, and rarely make content-specific comments or offer specific strategies for revising the text.

What is particularly striking about these ESL teachers’ responses, however, is that the teachers overwhelmingly view themselves as language teachers rather than writing teachers; they attend primarily to surface-level features of writing and seem to read and react to a text as a series of separate sentences or even clauses, rather than as a whole unit of discourse. They are in fact so distracted by language-related local problems that they often correct these without realizing that a much larger meaning-related problem has totally escaped their notice. Williams describes the phenomenon this way:

It is the difference between reading for typographical errors and reading for content. When we read for typos, letters constitute the field of attention; content becomes virtually inaccessible. When we read for content, semantic structures constitute the field of attention; letters—for the most part—recede from our consciousness (1981:154).

Let us now look at specific responses:

1. I work at a office. At work everyone try to do their job but we also socialize with each other. There are moments when you think everything is going wrong and nobody care about you. On those moments you are really sad down, but then the people you work with do some action that really surprises you. They really show a great deal of human love, charity and helping hands.

Note in particular the changes made in the fourth sentence of this text. The teacher has misread the text, for he has failed to recognize that does for this particular student is the graphic representation of those, a fact which I discovered when the student read the paper aloud. In addition to appropriating the text in this way, the incorporated changes make the text less coherent than the student’s own version. The student’s intention was to say “on those moments,” which refers directly to the preceding sentence.
In Example 2, we see a similar misinterpretation of a text:

2. I asked him why didn’t you return the extra change back to her. He said No. “Why should I?” I said because you should be honest. He answered honest for what? for money I said yes. He answered I’ll be honest for something else but not for money. I was so shocked and surprised by his answer that I didn’t tell him anything else. He kept his money and became my enemy that was a lesson to me. In a second, all I did was wish that my friends couldn’t act the same way in a similar situation.

Notice that the teacher in this case had some clue about the student’s intention. By looking at the student’s own crossed-out spelling in the parentheses in the third to the last line, one can see that he was trying to say, “It taught me.” But the teacher read the word thought and changed the surrounding context so that it would accommodate this misread word. As a result, the text becomes less coherent than it originally was.

When teachers misread the text, their recommendations or corrections are often imprecise or inaccurate:

3. Sharing the same concern, Phillips Strum in “Women at Work: Is Discrimination Real?” said that even there has been the Equal Rights Amendment, Discrimination Against women at work regardless of age still exists in the U.S.A.

4. But much of the American parents’ teachings was towards making their children become good Americans and believe in the value of work and build up their self-confidence in order for them in later years, to challenge different situations and to be successful. Especially, they wanted their children to understand that upward mobility was believed to be accomplished through an individual’s hard work.
In Example 3, rewording the underlined phrase does not deal appropriately with the grammatical problem. In Example 4, the addition of *if* establishes a different relationship between the last two sentences and creates a structural error.

In responding to student texts, teachers often attend to local concerns and are seemingly unaffected by the larger, meaning-related problems:

5. The result was that there was no significant differences among the groups on measures of emotional adjustment, delinquency, I. Q., visual-motor coordination, and academic performance. Not only no significant differences, but also the children who took stimula for many years, their heart rate increased and blood pressure, too.

6. I’m afraid of being immersed in water. For instance when I go to the beach I don’t go far away in the water. This is the way to describe my particular fear of water. However, essential and dangerous are two best words to describe how water is good for life and at the same time it is also dangerous. How could I explain to people that I am afraid of water since I was 5 years old.

Note how the teacher’s focus at the end of Example 5 results in his missing the illogical relationship between the two sentences. In Example 6, the teacher fails to address the problematical nature of this paragraph and focuses instead on issues of lesser concern.

Because teachers commonly respond to certain problems but not others, their reactions seem arbitrary and idiosyncratic. This indicates that some things catch the teacher’s attention while others do not or that errors most easily dealt with are the ones identified:

I am well aware of the argument that responses cannot be characterized as arbitrary without taking into account the context of the instruction and that these responses may have been deliberate and purposeful. However, an examination of students’ entire texts reveals such inconsistent reactions to the same types of problems in the same text that these responses appear far more arbitrary than intentional.
7. Television is very popular among children, and these days children cannot live without it. However, it is a big controversy that whether TV can have a good influence on children or not. Television can help to socialize children without any effort. They can learn from television what is good and what is bad from them to do. Also they can learn from television easily the things which they cannot see or touch directly. Those things are lives of animals and lives of different country's children. However, there are some arguments that television has a negative influence on children. Parents sometimes get television to children instead of playing with them as it is easier way to make children calm.

In this example, one is struck by both the language items corrected and those left uncorrected. Why, for example, is the verb changed from give to have, while the larger grammatical problem is not addressed? Does the sentence read better as a result of the changed verb? Do any of these corrections illustrate an underlying assumption that certain errors need attending to before others?

In addition to reacting idiosyncratically to textual problems, teachers often provide vague and abstract responses that do not enable students to revise their texts. Comments like "What do you mean?" "Word Form," "Wrong word," "Can you say this more concisely?" or "Be careful with run-ons" appear repeatedly; revisions of the same text, however, indicate that such comments are of little help to the student, as is readily apparent from Examples 8 to 11:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. There is a final step that the Bride has to make. She has to go back to visit her family three days after she get marry also must eat the rice cooked the day before.</td>
<td>There is a final step that the Bride has to make. She has to go back to visit her family three days after she get marry additional, she must eats the overnight rice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. All the apartments built with new styles were perfectly gorgeous and magnificent. It was unbelievable that when I visited New York City. It was in a terrible condition.

10. The foreman walked with a limp. He walked through the plant limping like a broken man over his prime. His face looked like it never seen laughter. He was big from head to toe. He looked like a bear.

11. At that time, I was baffled by the beautiful scenery helplessness with happiness yet in the firm grasp of some sustaining power because it seemed very short as a trip for only two days. I feel that I have a unique feeling of this significant holiday.

All the apartments built with new styles were perfectly gorgeous and magnificent. It was unbelievable that when I visited New York City. It was in a terrible condition.

The foreman walked with a limp. He walked through the plant limping. He looked like a sore loser.

At the time, I was baffled by the beautiful scenery which symbolize with happiness yet in my life. Although its a short holiday for only two days. I feel that I will always have a unique feeling of this significant holiday.
These examples are revealing, since the intent of these teachers’ responses is ostensibly to draw students’ attention to and help them understand their problems and how to revise their texts effectively.

While it is obvious that all of these examples illustrate teachers’ responses to shorter pieces of text, the responses in fact reflect how teachers respond to whole texts. ESL teachers, viewing their students as language learners rather than developing writers, treat students’ texts as final products to be edited.

This is not to say, however, that ESL teachers do not address issues of content and organization as well. Most of the texts that I examined indicate that they do. Since most first drafts were seemingly read as final drafts, however, students did not have to take responsibility for addressing these important features of writing. Furthermore, since teachers’ comments about these larger concerns were couched in the same sort of vague and abstract terms used for localized errors, it is unlikely that students could have made substantial revisions, even if they had been required to do so.

The following comments are typical of how teachers dealt with content-related and organizational problems:

Organization O.K. However, you did not understand the topic you were assigned. I cannot understand a lot of what you are saying.
What are your subtopics? Make them explicit in your introduction and make sure your paragraphs elaborate on them.
Although you have an introduction, developing sentences and conclusion, there’s no clear T. S., nor do individual sentences clearly relate.
This is a really excellent narrative but I do not really see any description here. You also have some other compositional changes to make in sentence, paragraph formation.
Well-organized and well-developed in most cases, but the last point isn’t well discussed.
Interesting examples and observations about people. A few unclear ideas and references, however.
Getting away from Topic
A few confusing parts
You need to support your opinion by giving details and you need to organize your thoughts a little better.
The argument remains a little superficial.
I’d like to see a general introduction, something to interest your reader.
This is well-organized, but some of your paragraphs need developing.
Some of your statements are so general that I don’t know what you mean.

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This last comment ironically underscores the fact that we are not very good models for our students, for while we fault them for being too general and imprecise, we are just as vague when we attempt to communicate with them.

Obviously, responses like these do not provide students with clear and explicit strategies for revising the text. They are not content-specific and could easily be appended to any student text. Rarely was a question asked or a suggestion made that gave students real direction. Rarely did a comment indicate a reaction to the actual ideas and content presented. When such comments did appear, they were perceptibly different and clearly demonstrated what happens when one reads and interacts with the text instead of evaluating it. For example, in response to a student’s unsuccessful attempt to explain the effects of the energy crisis, a teacher remarked:

The question is not “Are these energy sources decreasing?” but “How will the energy crisis change our modern lifestyle?” You will need to be a lot more specific in your composition. See if you can answer the following question: How will the energy crisis affect agricultural production, industry and personal comfort?

Or, in response to a student’s rather limited composition on the changing American family, this same teacher offered the following:

So far you have only told me your opinion; you haven’t told me why you believe what you do. You need to tell me what social, political and economic factors are putting pressure on the family to change. You stop just when it’s getting interesting!

It is obvious from these responses that the teacher expected these texts to be revised in a dramatic and substantial way. One should also note that the numerous surface-level errors in these texts were not dealt with at all; this challenges the belief, illustrated in the following response of another teacher, that meaning cannot or should not be addressed when texts show signs of faulty grammar:

If people can’t understand you, it doesn’t help to have some very intelligent or interesting ideas. I am not saying that you do not work hard enough—I know that you do—but rather to let you know you have a problem. When you rewrite this, I want you to concentrate on the language only. Don’t even try to change or improve the content. Try to learn from rewriting how you should express your ideas in clearer and more correct language.

Compared with the two previous responses, this teacher’s response communicates to the student a very different notion of what revising entails and what is important in writing.

The vague commentary of teachers often reflects the assumption that learning to write depends upon the application and mastery of
rules and prescriptions. One response in particular demonstrates the extent to which the application of these formulaic guidelines interferes with a genuine reading of student writing. Reacting to a student’s text, the teacher writes:

What is this? Is this free writing? If not, where is your free writing? If this is a paragraph, there should be five sentences here.

Furthermore, teachers’ responses reveal remarkable contradictions:

You show a deep theoretical understanding of the problem but you need more detail.
You explain this quite nicely. It’s clear why you liked it although you could have analyzed its appeal more deeply. 
Very well thought out and well-written although the first body paragraph is better than the other two.

While these comments illustrate messages that are internally contradictory, there are larger contradictions as well, similar to those that Sommers (1982) identified in her study. At the same time that teachers addressed major issues of content and development in the responses that sometimes appeared in the margin, but primarily at the end of a text, they worked at polishing the text by identifying, reacting to, or correcting errors. It has apparently not occurred to these teachers that the major revisions suggested and the interlinear responses are at odds with one another. In the face of these incongruous types of comments, students are not likely to know which type of response deserves a higher priority.

From the revisions that I examined, it is quite obvious that the marginal and end comments notwithstanding, students revise on the basis of local corrections and that teachers approve of and accept these superficially better texts. For example, in response to one student’s composition, a teacher suggested that one of the paragraphs be developed further and even provided some specific questions to consider. The revision, however, incorporated the teacher’s grammatical corrections and did not address the questions at all. The response to the second draft: “Good! Almost error-free! Very good in organization and development!”

Despite our best intentions, our responses communicate conflicting and constricting notions about the nature of writing.

This dilemma was captured well by one teacher, a student in one of my graduate courses, whom I encouraged to study her own responding behaviors:

Whenever ESL writing students have turned in their compositions to me, I have felt a rush of mixed emotions: excitement at the prospect of reading their ideas, but at the same time utter dread of the monumental
task of dealing with all those errors! I usually start out with good intentions of focusing primarily on the students’ message and attending to only the “most important” errors; but all too often, I end up plowing through each paper, systematically circling, crossing out, putting brackets around, and/or revising every usage error I find. A few days later, the students get back a paper “of a different color [ink] from what they originally wrote,” (according to my Vietnamese students). They read through the corrected paper once, (if I’m lucky), making mental note of the errors, (with or without understanding; to be filed in short-term memory), and then put away (or throw away?) that completed venture, ready to try their luck again at the next assignment.

She then poses the question, “Is anything really gained by the experience?” Her own answer to this question, after she examined both her responses and their effect on student writing, was an unqualified no. This corroborates the findings of other research, which makes clear the insignificant effects of teachers’ responses (see, for example, Butturff and Sommers 1980, Haswell 1983, Carroll 1984, Ziv 1984).

**IMPLICATIONS**

We all have the opportunity to study our own responding behaviors. Each of us can become a researcher, or more accurately, an ethnographer, and analyze the rich data available to us. For example, we can try to keep logs of the types of responses we make and the degree to which these responses are incorporated into student revisions. If we are not asking for revisions, this of course tells us something as well. Just as we ask students to reread their writing, we can reread our responses and see whether they make as much sense to us as they did when we wrote them. We can ask students to tell us whether or not they understand our responses and to indicate those that they do not. In this way we can better understand what we are asking students to do, what students are learning (both about the specific point addressed and about the writing process in general), and the extent to which this enterprise helps students develop as writers.

We are likely to discover, as a result of such self-exploration, that we need to change our responding behavior so that students can better understand how to revise their writing. We must recognize that students may not be able to use our comments and markings,

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4 In addition to investigating teachers’ responses and how these responses affect student writing within real instructional settings, we need to examine the context for these responses. In this way we can begin to understand how instruction and responses reinforce one another.
for our responses may represent very complex reactions which they are incapable of applying to their texts. Therefore, we need to replace vague commentary and references to abstract rules and principles with text-specific strategies, directions, guidelines, and recommendations. Responses of this sort reveal to the writer the confusion that the reader may have experienced and make obvious how to deal with these problems.

Offering text-specific comments and reactions means that instead of a single standard for evaluating a text, we must adopt a flexible standard that takes into account the constraints of the tasks. Rather than a concern with whether or not a particular form was applied to the construction of the text, the concern is with the communicative effectiveness of the text (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982, Siegel 1982). Thus, the questions that we raise in responding to a text can better address the crucial dimensions of composing: for example, the author’s intention and the audience.

Furthermore, applying a flexible rather than an absolute standard reminds us that the cognitive demands of a task determine what students produce on paper. Attempting to deal with intellectually complex and demanding writing assignments may result in breakdowns or setbacks that may not be evident in other kinds of writing (Clark 1980, Freedman and Pringle 1980, S. Miller 1980). To respond to these breakdowns and setbacks without taking into account the writing contexts undermines students’ efforts to deal with challenging composing tasks. Responding in such a way reflects the notion that composing is a matter of writing texts that conform to the models and paradigms imposed by the teacher or textbook. As a result of such responses, students are less likely to take the kinds of risks necessary for their development as writers.

It is not enough, however, to respond more specifically and substantively or to employ more flexible criteria. Students must be provided the time and opportunity to apply these criteria and incorporate these responses into their texts. They must be made to understand that texts evolve, that revision is to be taken literally as a process of re-seeing one’s text, and that this re-seeing is an integral and recursive aspect of writing. Thus, rather than responding to texts as fixed and final products, we should be leading students through the “cycles of revision” (Butturff and Summers 1980:103), for evaluating work while it may conceivably be changed “interferes with, or ends, any sense of work in progress” (S. Miller 1982: 181). By providing assistance before an essay is considered finished, we are facilitating more writing and reinforcing the idea that continual clarification and exploration may be necessary before one’s meaning becomes articulated. As Sommers puts it:

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We need to sabotage our students’ conviction that the drafts they have written are completed and coherent. Our comments need to offer students revision tasks, by forcing students back into chaos, back to the point where they are shaping and restructuring their meaning (1982:154).

Furthermore, we need to establish priorities in our responses to drafts and subsequent revisions and encourage students to address certain concerns before others. As Purves (1984) suggests, we need to play a whole range of roles as readers of student writing and adopt those that are appropriate for the various stages of a developing text. By probing, challenging, raising questions, and pinpointing ambiguities, we can help students understand that meaning-level issues are to be addressed first. This understanding is especially crucial in the ESL writing classroom, where students may be convinced that accuracy and correctness are of primary importance and where, because of their concern with language and their inexperience with writing, they may be trying to attend to all of the various demands of composing simultaneously.

We need to realize that what is true for language acquisition, as we understand it from Krashen (1982), also applies to learning to write: Monitoring student output while that output is in the process of developing may not only be unproductive, but may inhibit further development (Winterowd 1980, Pringle 1983). Thus, we need to refrain from reading texts the way most of us currently do. We should hold in abeyance our reflex-like reactions to surface-level concerns and give priority to meaning, for “by worrying about mistakes in writing before we have helped students with the more important problem of adequately representing meaning. . . we may be teaching students to do the same” (Collins 1981:202). By reading primarily for error, instead of responding to the substance of students’ writing, we create a situation in which genuine change even at the more superficial level is unlikely:

To insist only on technical propriety is to underestimate [the] power [of composing] as a heuristic . . . Conversely, to accentuate the role of composing in discovering new knowledge is to show students why their writing matters, therefore to increase their motivation to write, and therefore, ultimately, to increase the likelihood of improvement because they have become more aware of the purpose and value of making meaning (Knoblauch and Brannon 1983:468).

To respond by participating in the making of meaning means that we no longer present ourselves as authorities but act instead as consultants, assistants, and facilitators. Thus, rather than making assumptions about the text, taking control of it, and offering judgmental commentary that “unbalances the teacher-student equi-
librium in an authentic learning situation” (Haswell 1983:600), we need to establish a collaborative relationship with our students, drawing attention to problems, offering alternatives, and suggesting possibilities. In this sort of relationship, student and teacher can exchange information about what the writer is trying to communicate and the effect that this communication has had upon the reader and can “negotiate ways to bring actual effect as closely in line with desired intention as possible” (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982:162).

This dynamic interchange and negotiation is most likely to take place when writers and readers work together face-to-face (see, for example, Berthoff 1980, Beach 1982, Murray 1982, A. Rose 1982, Spear 1982). Instead of limiting our responses to written comments and reactions, which by their very nature are “disembodied remarks” (Sommers 1982:155) that proceed in only one direction, we should set up collaborative sessions and conferences during which important discoveries can be made by both reader and writer. The reader can discover the underlying meaning and logic of what may appear to be an incoherent text and instruct the writer how to reshape, modify, and transform the text; the writer can simultaneously discover what lies behind and motivates the complex reactions of the reader and help the reader understand a text that up to this point may have been ambiguous, elusive, or unintelligible.

In light of what we can learn from and teach each other during this reciprocal, dialectical process, we should all begin to re-examine our typical approaches to responding to writing and attempt to teach, as Murray puts it, “where the student is, not where the teacher wishes the student was” (1982: 144). We should consider how we can respond as genuine and interested readers rather than as judges and evaluators. We should try to respond not to secretaries, but to authors, a distinction that F. Smith (1983) draws between the act of proofreading transcriptions of our own texts and that of reading original texts created by others. What all of this means, then, is that we should respond not so much to student writing but to student writers.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the 18th Annual TESOL Convention in Houston, March 1984.

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An Exploratory Study of Learning Behaviors and Their Relationship to Gains in Linguistic and Communicative Competence

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A questionnaire relating to presumed good learning behaviors was administered to 37 students enrolled in an eight-week intensive course in English as a second language in preparation for graduate study in the United States. The answers to the self-report questionnaire were classified according to the students’ cultural background (Asian versus Hispanic) and field of specialization (professional engineering/science versus social science/humanities) and related to gains on four English language proficiency measures: linguistic competence; auditory comprehension; overall oral proficiency; and communicative competence, conceptualized here primarily as the ability to convey information. Analyses indicated that while the Asian subjects engaged in fewer of the assumed “good” learning behaviors than the Hispanics, they tended to make greater gains in linguistic competence and communicative competence. On the other hand, the Hispanic students made more progress in overall oral proficiency and in auditory comprehension. Examination of the relationships between specific behaviors and second language learning gains revealed an interesting split: Some behaviors were associated with conscious learning, while others were related to acquisition and gains in general communicative competence. Results indicate that caution in prescribing good learning behaviors is warranted. Considerable further research is needed to explain which behaviors are helpful for learners at various levels and to relate these behaviors to current second language learning theories.

This article reports on an exploratory study which was undertaken with non-native English-speaking graduate students who were enrolled in an eight-week intensive summer course in English as a
second language (ESL). The investigators set out to describe the students’ self-reported language learning behaviors and then to relate those reported behaviors to the students’ gains in language proficiency during the course.

The description of the learning strategies which good language learners use has been the focus of many recent studies (e.g., Rubin 1976, 1981, Hosenfeld 1977, Kovac 1978, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978), as well as of publications which advise students on how to go about learning a second language (Rubin and Thompson 1982). However, since most of this work originates in anecdotal reports, the recommendations made by these studies require empirical validation with different groups of students. To experiment with self-report questionnaires designed to probe students’ learning behaviors and then to attempt to validate the students’ responses against their gains in language proficiency are thus appropriate and logical next steps. Equally appropriate is an attempt to distinguish between linguistic and communicative gains, a contrast which has been the subject of considerable recent research (e.g., Savignon 1972, Canale and Swain 1980, Wiemann and Backlund 1980, Palmer, Groot, and Trosper 1981, Hellgren 1982, Politzer and McGroarty 1983). The present research was conducted to test some of the behaviors currently described and recommended in the second language learning literature and to see whether such behaviors might be differentially associated with the development of linguistic and communicative competence.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Subjects

The participants in this study were enrolled in an intensive eight-week ESL course specifically designed to prepare students who had already attained some English proficiency for graduate study in the United States. Most of the students enrolled in the course—32 out of 37—were male. Their ages ranged from 23 to 47; the mean number of years of previous English study was 8.5. Most of the students (23 out of 37) were about to enter graduate school in various branches of engineering. All in all, 27 of the 37 could be classified as either engineering or physical science students; the remaining 10 students were preparing to enter a variety of fields in the social sciences (including education) or the humanities. According to native language and national origin, the group was almost evenly split between Asians (18, mainly Japanese) and Hispanics (19, mainly Latin American Spanish speakers, with 1 from Spain).
Language Proficiency Tests and Testing Procedures

The students in the intensive language course were pre- and post-tested with three proficiency measures: The *Plaister Aural Comprehension Test* (PACT) (Plaister and Blatchford 1971); the *Comprehensive English Language Test for Speakers of English as a Second Language* (CELT) (Harris and Palmer 1970); and parallel versions of a communicative competence test (CC), which was developed by the senior author in conjunction with a special project designed to measure the language skills of students in bilingual programs (Politzer 1982). These three tests were used together to measure gains in listening comprehension, grammatical skill, and communicative ability.

The PACT is a widely used multiple-choice test (oral stimulus, choice of one of four visuals), which is designed to measure aural comprehension relevant to graduate professional study (Plaister and Blatchford 1971). Reliability for the specific test administration used in this study was not calculated, but test reliability for similar groups ranges from .80 to .90 on Cronbach’s alpha. The CELT is a written multiple-choice test of English grammar. It is a typical discrete-point test of linguistic competence involving a “monitoring” task (i.e., selection of the correct answer and rejection of three possible errors) and requiring no production. Reported reliabilities of the CELT test are high and are discussed in detail in the test manual (Harris and Palmer 1970).

The communicative competence test (CC) used in the study is an individually administered test based on responses elicited by pictures (see Politzer and McGroarty 1983 for further detail on the rationale for this test). Several pictures are used to elicit different types of communicative performance. While we wished to assess the ability to perform speech acts in English, the test as a whole was constructed mainly to measure the ability to convey information.

The first part of the test, the Descriptive section, includes three simple line drawings of objects, such as a tree, a bird, a ball, a rainbow, and a cloud, depicted in various spatial configurations. Students are asked to describe each picture so that it could be reproduced accurately by a person who cannot see the picture. The second part of the test, the Events/Action section, consists of a pair of pictures of a birthday party (the same two pictures are used in the pre- and post-tests). The pictures show the party scene, and students are asked to extend an invitation to the party, including all appropriate information, such as the time, place, and type of celebration. In the final part, the Speech Acts section, different pictures are used for the pretest and the post-test. The picture in the pretest shows a
pupil being blamed by an adult for having broken a window during baseball practice. The post-test picture shows a boy and girl disputing the use of an easel in an art class. Students are to identify the utterance probably made by the characters in the picture.

Student responses on the CC test are evaluated by two different methods: 1) a global rating scale, which assigns the student a score for the entire test (all three sections) on a 5-point scale ranging from 5, native-like, to 1, very minimal proficiency (inter-rater reliability for two independent raters was .92 for the test administration in this study), and 2) a discrete-point evaluation of content.

For the discrete-point evaluation, students were assigned three scores which corresponded to the tasks they were asked to perform: 1) a Descriptive score, 2) an Events/Action score, and 3) a Speech Acts score. Each of the scores was further broken down into two other scores: a fixed-response score and a supplementary score. The fixed-response score was based on whether the student mentioned a set number of items which, by agreement of the five individuals involved in the production of the test, are the most important. In the discrete-point scoring, the ability to convey information was evaluated quite separately and independently of the grammaticality of the response. A student thus received credit for any relevant information produced even if the information had been phrased in ungrammatical utterances. The fixed-response scores were a maximum of 54, 5, and 5 for the Descriptive, Events/Action, and Speech Acts sections, respectively. In addition, a student could also earn additional points (supplementary score) on each of the three sections by providing information which was relevant and comprehensible but which did not correspond to the essential items identified by the test makers.

The item scoring of the test thus involved a certain amount of subjective evaluation, but interscorer agreement for the test as a whole is generally about 95 percent (Politzer 1982). Test reliability for the specific administration used in this study was determined by first calculating the reliability of the longest part of the test, namely, the 54-point fixed-response score for the three pictures in the Descriptive section: Cronbach’s alpha was .66 and .74 for the pre- and post-tests, respectively. Then, the intercorrelations among the six subscores of the test (Descriptive, Events/Action, Speech Acts, Descriptive supplementary, Events/Action supplementary, Speech Acts supplementary) were calculated. These correlations ranged from .75 to .15, which indicates that these different parts of the test and scoring systems, while compatible, make independent contributions to the total score. The major contribution to the total score is, of course, made by the longest section, reflected in the “descriptive score” (maximum of 54 points). Correlations of the descriptive score
with the total, tests were .84 and .86 for the pre- and post-test administrations.

The Behavior Questionnaire

The language learning behavior questionnaire used in this study was developed primarily on the basis of a survey of the available literature on the behaviors and strategies of good language learners (mainly Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978 and Rubin 1981) and suggestions and ideas proposed by the senior author of this study and by colleagues. The questionnaire (see Appendix) divides learning behaviors and strategies into three categories, corresponding to scales, according to the setting in which they occur: Part A focuses on classroom study, Part B on individual study, and Part C on social interaction outside of the classroom.

Students were asked to respond to the questions with a yes or no answer. Although in most instances the yes answer identifies the behavior as positive, or good, behavior, for ten items (A7, A8, A13, B4, B8, B12, C10, C13, C15, and C18), the no answer indicates the good behavior. In such cases, the no was therefore treated statistically as a yes.

The behaviors included in the three parts of the questionnaire do not correspond to any unified psychological construct. They represent a collection of ideas put together from intuition and existing suggestions. The usual way to organize this kind of heuristic enterprise is to seek internal consistencies and patterns of interrelationship through procedures such as principal component or factor analysis. For several reasons—primarily the small number of subjects, the large number of behaviors, and constraints on time and space—such procedures could not be used here. Hence, to allow for efficient analysis we sought to combine items into scales, or measuring instruments which can be systematically applied to determine an individual’s possession of a quality or interest (Kerlinger 1964:480).

In order to treat the three parts of the questionnaire as heuristic constructs, the internal consistency of each scale was calculated by establishing its reliability with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. These internal reliability coefficients were relatively low (.45, .24, .23). This was not surprising because some of the individual items had negative correlations with the total scale of which they were a part. We then eliminated the 19 items which had negative biserial correlations with the total scale. (The deleted items are marked with asterisks in Table 1.) The new reduced scales demonstrated at least acceptable reliabilities (.52, .61, .63), which permitted statistical treatment of the scale scores as indicators of “good learning behaviors.” Thus, although the scale scores still do not reflect any unified
psychological construct, they do supply reasonable evidence of good language learning.

Mean scores for all items (including items deleted because of negative correlations), as well as original and reduced scale means, are shown in Table 1. Means were calculated by assigning a value of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of Behaviors and Behavior Scales</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale A</th>
<th>Scale B</th>
<th>Scale C</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Behaviors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individual Study Behaviors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interaction Behaviors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1*</td>
<td>.77</td>
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<td>6*</td>
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<td>.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8)*</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>.83</td>
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<td>.32</td>
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<td>20*</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21*</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22*</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Item not included in reduced scale

Note For items in parentheses, a no response was treated statistically as yes. The mean represents the actual no responses. For example, for Item A8, 54 percent of the subjects answered no.
1 to a yes response and 0 to a no response. For the ten items in which a no was treated statistically as a yes, each no response received a value of 1 and each yes a 0. Thus, for Item A3, for which the desirable behavior corresponds to a yes response, all of the subjects answered yes. For Item A8, for which the desirable behavior corresponds to a no response, 54 percent of the subjects answered no.

The means show that on the whole, the students tended to answer yes rather than no to the questions relating to good behaviors. Of a total of 51 behaviors, only 8 (A5, asking for confirmation; A9, correcting mistakes; B10, memorizing words by grouping them; B11, making vocabulary lists; B12, associating new words with native language forms; B13, practicing work missed in class; C10, remaining silent rather than risking a mistake; and C13, constructing utterances in the native language before transposing them into English) fall below the .50 (number of yes responses= number of no responses) mark.

The 19 deleted items do not show any obvious overall characteristics that distinguish them from the other presumed good learning behaviors, but some do share characteristics which allow speculation about why they do not fit into the overall response pattern. For 5 of these items (A8, using native language in class; B4, memorizing sentences without grammatical analysis; B8, looking up new words before reading a text; B12, associating new words with native language forms; and C10, remaining silent rather than risking a mistake), which belong to the group of 10 in which the response indicating the good behavior was no, the overall tendency to answer yes rather than no may have influenced the responses sufficiently to account for the negative correlation with the rest of the scale. Furthermore, most behaviors (especially those in Scales A and C) involved various types of overt social interaction, and these 5 did not. Some of the other “negatively correlated” behaviors did not refer to social interaction: A1 and A6 involve silent monitoring of others and self-monitoring, respectively, while C20, like the closely related B12, refers to bypassing the native language when speaking English.

It is important to note that in assigning positive or negative values to these behaviors, we made choices that may seem arbitrary in some cases. Indeed, because the behaviors included here do not arise from a unified theoretical perspective but rather from descriptive and anecdotal accounts from several sources, some inconsistencies may occur. To explain some of our choices, we have cited the references pertinent to the negative behaviors (those in which a no answer was considered positive) in the Appendix.
Furthermore, it should be noted that some behaviors which do not follow the overall positive pattern (whether the answer was yes or whether it was treated statistically as a yes) may still represent good learning strategies for students at levels other than intermediate. For the students in the intensive summer course, the use of the behaviors we investigated may imply (or at least could have been interpreted by the students as implying) a weakness in English proficiency rather than a positive learning behavior (e.g., B5—“Do you often look up words in the dictionary?”—is not a good question, since a yes answer may be associated in some students’ minds with the “bad” rather than the assiduous student). Similarly, B2, using general meanings in a text to compensate for lack of vocabulary; B13, spending extra time practicing materials missed in class; C1, asking for help; C2, having to rephrase; C7, falling back on memorized phrases; C8, guessing meaning from gestures; C11, keeping conversation going with prefabricated phrases; C14, using gestures; C21, starting a conversation to practice English; and C22, directing conversation to familiar topics, may all be good general strategies for language learning. At a given level of proficiency, however, it may be that successful language learners do not need to employ these strategies and thus do not report using them frequently or habitually.

RESULTS
Proficiency Gains and Their Relation to Student Characteristics

The scores achieved on the pre- and post-tests are shown in Table 2. As the table indicates, the gains made on the PACT and CELT tests were quite substantial. The gains on the CC test—whether scored by discrete-point or global evaluation—were relatively small. This may be due to the fact that—as was shown by simultaneous administration of the pre- and post-test in a previous experiment (Politzer 1982)—the post-test was probably somewhat more difficult than the pretest. It may also be that for intermediate-level students like these, great gains in communicative competence during a relatively short period such as the eight-week program under consideration here are unlikely. At any rate, subsequent analyses performed in the study used gain scores measured, not by the difference between pre- and post-test scores, but by the difference between the actual post-test score and a predicted post-test score (which would lie in the line of regression of post-test scores over pretest scores, with the mean gain score, or “residual score,” for any test being 0).
TABLE 2
Pretest, Post-Test, and Gain Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>N*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pretests</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>67.50</td>
<td>14.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>65.78</td>
<td>17.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrete-Point CC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.81</td>
<td>8.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global CC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Tests</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>77.22</td>
<td>13.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>74.67</td>
<td>15.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrete-Point CC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34.97</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global CC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gains</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrete-Point CC</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global CC</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The number of subjects tested varied between 36 and 37 because of student absences on test days.

The use of any type of gain score has been criticized by psychometrician (Cronbach and Furby 1970, Rogosa, Brandt, and Zimowski 1982), in particular because such scores may either be subject to systematic error or provide little information useful for making decisions regarding individual cases. However, in an exploratory study such as this one, the use of residual scores which exceed those predicted by the pretest gives some indication of group trends which might otherwise be obscured. Thus, while these residual scores would not be suitable in making individual diagnosis or placement decisions, they can yield valuable group data in preliminary studies.

Correlations within pretest and post-test administrations and gain scores are shown in Table 3. The highest correlation is the one between the PACT and CELT pretest scores. Correlations between the linguistic competence-oriented CELT measure and the CC evaluations are relatively low (nonsignificant for CELT pretest and discrete-point CC; nonsignificant for CELT post-test and global CC). There does not seem to be any association among the relative amounts of gain indicated by the four different evaluations. It is interesting to note, however, that the correlation between the post-tests of grammatical skill (the CELT) and aural comprehension (the PACT) is much lower than that of the pretests. This probably means that the grammar and comprehension scores were closely associated...
at the beginning of the program but that after the eight weeks of instruction, different kinds of growth in proficiency had occurred for different students within the program. The students who made substantial gains on the grammar measure did not necessarily make equally substantial gains in comprehension. Hence, the grammar and comprehension scores on the post-test, although still significantly linked, were not as closely related as before.

The learning behavior responses and gains made by the students were further analyzed according to two student characteristics: cultural background and field of specialization. The results of the analysis are summarized in Tables 4 and 5. Table 4 compares proficiency gains (that is, residual scores that exceed those predicted from the pretests) and mean number of yes responses in the reduced learning behavior questionnaire for Asian and Hispanic students. Table 5 does the same for the groupings engineering/physical science students and social science/humanities students. It must be pointed out, however, that the comparison by academic field partially overlaps the one done according to cultural background, since the majority of the engineering students were Asian and all the social science/humanities students came from the Hispanic group. Because cultural background and field of specialization were largely confounded, certain types of analysis, including analysis of variance, could not be employed.

As Table 4 indicates, the Hispanics as a group scored significantly higher, as measured by mean number of positive responses, than the
Asians on all three of the learning behavior scales. Evidently, many of the good learning behaviors (especially those in Scales A and C) represent certain types of social interactions which Asians are less likely to engage in than are Hispanics (and probably any other representatives of Western culture). Classroom behaviors such as correcting fellow students (A9), asking the teacher all kinds of questions (A4, A5, All, A12), any kind of volunteering (A13), several social interaction behaviors such as asking for help (Cl),
asking others to repeat (C5), and asking for confirmation (C3) are apparently more a part of the Western rather than the Asian learning behavior repertoire.

In addition, these behaviors may reflect the type of previous English instruction the subjects had received. In many Asian educational institutions, where the emphasis in language instruction is placed on rote memorization, translation of texts, or recognition of correct grammatical forms in reading, these interactive second language learning behaviors are not always likely to occur in classroom settings. Large class size may also make their use problematic. Both these factors characterize English instruction in Japan (see Koike, Matsuyama, Igarashi, and Suzuki 1978 and Kitao 1980), the country of origin of most of the Asian students. The situation in Taiwan is similar (Kaplan and Tse 1982). It is therefore possible that many of the good language learning behaviors currently discussed in the literature may be based on highly ethnocentric assumptions about language learning and teaching. For that reason, even if these behaviors should turn out to be valid, they may represent gratuitous advice for members of certain ethnic or cultural groups.

Interestingly enough, in spite of engaging in good learning behavior to a lesser degree, the Asians surpassed the Hispanics in average gains in linguistic competence (as measured by the CELT) and in gains on the discrete-point measure of communicative competence. On the latter test, the difference between Asians and Hispanics was statistically significant. The Hispanics, who had higher scores on the behavior scales, had a slight but nonsignificant edge over the Asians on gains on the PACT and in overall oral proficiency.

The engineering/physical science versus social science/humanities distinction (Table 5) is very similar to the Asian/Hispanic contrast, with which it largely overlaps. The social science/humanities students have higher scores on all behavior scales, with the differences on Scale B—learning behaviors during individual study—being significant at the .05 level.

### Learning Behaviors and Proficiency Gains

The results of the investigation relating learning behaviors to relative gains in English proficiency are summarized in Tables 6 and 7. Table 6 shows the correlations between the learning behavior scale scores and the gains on the four test measures. There is only one significant correlation between social interaction behaviors and gains on global evaluation of CC. In addition, there are also indications (not reaching the .05 level) of a relationship between the
social interaction behaviors and gains on the PACT test, between the individual study behaviors and the global evaluation of CC, and between classroom behaviors and the discrete-point measure of CC. By contrast, there is some indication of a negative relationship between gains on the CELT and individual study and classroom behaviors. As noted above, the Asian group had slightly greater CELT gains than the Hispanic group, but the Asian students had lower overall behavior scale scores as well.

The next step in identifying good learning behaviors was to examine the relationships between each of the 51 behaviors used and scores on the language tests. To determine which individual learning behaviors were significantly related to student gains, the mean gains of students indicating that they engaged in the supposedly good behavior were compared with those who said that they did not. The comparisons were made by conducting 204 t-tests (51 behaviors x 4 tests). Table 7 summarizes those which indicated a significant (p < .05) difference.

There were only ten behaviors which made a clear-cut difference. Of these, four (A1, A6, B12, and B13) were not included in the reduced scales because they had correlated negatively with scale totals; that is, answers to these four did not reflect the overall direction of the scale in question. We include them in our discussion here because they are mentioned in the literature on language learning strategies and thus merit attention.

Let us look at the ten specific behaviors which were strongly associated with learning outcomes. While most of the behaviors differentiated between higher and lower gainers in the expected direction, there were some negative associations, that is, differences in the unexpected direction. The following list summarizes findings in regard to each of the criterion measures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gains</th>
<th>Behavior Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A (Classroom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrete-Point CC</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global CC</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p = < .05
TABLE 7
Learning Behaviors Significantly (p < .05) Related to Language Gains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>A (Classroom)</th>
<th>B (Individual Study)</th>
<th>C (Interaction)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>1, *12 (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT</td>
<td></td>
<td>11, (12), <em>13</em></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrete-Point CC</td>
<td>4, 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global CC</td>
<td>6, <em>12 (1), 12, * (13)</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Item not included in reduced scale

Note: Parentheses around an item indicate that the behavior is negatively associated with gain.

1. Gains on the PACT, the aural comprehension test, had significant positive associations with A1 (saying correct forms to oneself when another student has made an error); A12 (asking the teacher when and by whom an expression may be used); and C3 (asking for confirmation of grammatical correctness). One behavior—B13 (spending extra time practicing words or constructions missed in class)—had a negative relationship to PACT gains. In other words, the extra practice seems associated with a lack of progress in auditory comprehension!

2. Gains on the CELT test, the measure of grammatical knowledge, were significantly associated with B11 (keeping track of vocabulary learned by vocabulary cards or lists); B13 (spending extra time in practicing words or constructions missed in class); and C17 (using in conversation words or constructions just learned in class). One behavior—B12 (avoiding direct association with the native language in the learning process)—correlated negatively with gains on the CELT. Students who reported relating words or phrases directly to their native language had greater CELT gains than those who did not.

3. Gains on the discrete-point evaluation of CC had significant positive correlations with two behaviors already mentioned in connection with aural comprehension gains: A12 (asking the teacher when and by whom an expression may be used) and C3 (asking for confirmation of grammatical correctness). Furthermore, gains on the discrete-point CC were significantly greater for students who answered yes to A4 (asking the teacher to repeat a phrase or word which the student has not understood).
4. Gains on the global evaluation of oral proficiency were positively related to A6 (interrupting oneself when noticing one’s mistake); A12 (asking the teacher when and by whom an expression may be used); B12 (avoiding association with the native language); and C3 (asking for confirmation of grammatical correctness). Gains on the global evaluation of oral proficiency had significant negative correlations with B1 (saying words or phrases aloud to oneself in the learning process) and B13 (spending extra time in practicing words or constructions learned in class).

An interesting pattern of relationships between behaviors and proficiency gains emerges from this analysis. Two behaviors requiring active inquiry concerning English use—A12 (asking the teacher about an expression) and C3 (asking for confirmation of correctness)—correlate positively with gains on three of the proficiency measures (PACT, discrete-point CC, and global CC) but not with gains on the CELT. Further evidence for a difference between the CELT and the other measures comes from the fact that two behaviors predicting CELT gains—B11 (keeping track of vocabulary) and C17 (using new words)—do not predict gains on other tests. Keeping track of vocabulary (B11) is a behavior showing assiduity. Using new words in conversation (C17), if understood as practicing new vocabulary items with which one has been presented, can also be interpreted as a reflection of assiduity. Another behavior associated with the CELT is also significantly related to gains on other tests, but in the reverse sense. B13 (spending extra time on constructions missed in class) is again an assiduity-related behavior; it relates positively to gains on the CELT, but negatively to gains in auditory comprehension and in general communication skills. There is thus some evidence that the kind of linguistic competence measured by the recognition or monitoring tasks required on the CELT are in a separate class from the functional abilities tapped by the other three proficiency measures.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of self-report questionnaires on language learning behaviors appears to be a useful and promising form of research. However, future research should be undertaken with the following points in mind:

1. There is still a need for a great deal of research leading to a precise formulation of the actual constructs implied by the various behaviors mentioned in current “good language learner” literature.
2. Self-report data concerning learning behaviors are subject to many of the suspicions which have been raised with regard to self-report data on motivation (Oller and Perkins 1978). They can reflect general intelligence, a desire to give the “right” answer or to please the teacher, and so on. Self-report data and the investigation of their relation to achievement should, whenever possible, include a check of the self-reports against actual observations of the type used in several recent studies (e.g., Wesche 1977, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978, Gliksman, Smythe, and Gardner 1982).

3. Good language learning behavior may, in the long run, be almost as elusive as good teaching behavior. Depending on the level of proficiency or the frequency with which a particular behavior is employed, the same learning strategy may be variously an intrinsically good learning behavior, a sign of lack of progress, an indication of assiduity, and so on. There is a great need to determine whether frequency of use makes a given behavior more or less effective for language learners. Future research might thus benefit from using a more precise measure—at the very least, a three-way distinction, such as “often/sometimes/never,” in place of the simpler yes/no choice used here. A recent study of college-level foreign language learners (Politzer 1983) used a 5-point frequency scale to good effect.

4. In addition, each of the good behaviors may be differentially appropriate for the various types of skills related to the purpose of second language study: Asking a teacher how an expression may be used may be associated with improved oral/aural skill (as it is in this study), but such improvement may not necessarily be a high priority for students whose main purpose for study is the reading of technical literature. In other words, the goal of English language study must be taken into account; the learning strategies required for and contributing to the acquisition of communicative competence may indeed be different from those involved in developing linguistic competence.

Some of the specific findings of this research indicate that there are indeed two different kinds of learning behaviors which can be accounted for rather neatly by the acquisition/learning distinction (see Krashen 1981), a distinction which has become popular in second language acquisition theory. In this study, learning, as tested by a monitoring task which measures linguistic competence on a discrete-point, multiple-choice test, is positively associated with behaviors quite distinct from those related to acquisition and an increase in functional skills, as measured by communicative competence-oriented instruments. In fact, there are some monitoring,
learning-oriented behaviors (such as falling back on the native language) which evidently get in the way of acquisition-related gains.

Another conclusion strongly suggested by the findings—and certainly no surprise to the ESL teacher—is that cultural background (and possibly professional specialization) has a great deal to do with the type of language learning behavior likely to be used by students. Some of the good language learning behaviors discussed in recent publications may indeed be ethnocentric, or at least lead to gratuitous advice that students, depending on personal characteristics and above all cultural background, may find difficult or impossible to follow. Even after good learning behaviors have been identified and validated, there will always be the challenge to teachers to match their teaching behaviors with the learning behaviors of their students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some of the research reported in this article was supported by a National Institute of Education project, NIE - G-79-0130. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the policy, position, or endorsement of the National Institute of Education. Our sincere thanks to Dr. Elana Shohamy for assistance in designing the study and the instruments used; to Cynthia Prince and Katherine Ramage for collecting, scoring, and coding the data; and to Stephen Gaies and Barry Taylor for editorial assistance.

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REFERENCES


APPENDIX

The Behavior Questionnaire

Scale A: Classroom Behaviors. (These questions refer to things you actually do or do not do in a language class.)

1. Do you say the correct form to yourself when you note that another student has made an error?
2. Do you usually say answers to yourself even if the teacher does not call on you?
3. Do you often guess the meaning of a sentence from the actions or expressions of the speaker?
4. Do you generally ask the teacher to repeat a phrase or word that you don’t understand?
5. Do you ask the teacher whether a sentence or phrase is an example of a rule that you have learned?
6. Do you interrupt yourself when you notice that you have made a mistake?
* 7. Do you often repeat or learn phrases which you don’t understand because asking for an explanation interrupts the class? (Rubin 1981)
9. Whenever it is permitted in class, do you correct fellow students’ mistakes?

* For these items, a no answer is counted as indicating a positive behavior.

LEARNING BEHAVIORS AND L2 COMPETENCE
10. Do you avoid making guesses about rules based on examples or your own observations?
11. Do you ask the teacher for an explanation if you note an exception to a rule?
12. Do you ask the teacher *when* and *by whom* an expression can be used?
13. Do you volunteer answers only if you are completely sure that you know the right answer? (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978)
14. Do you often guess the meaning of new words from the rest of the sentence in which they are used?

Scale B: Learning Behavior During Individual Study. (These questions refer to things you *do* or *do not do* when you are by yourself and study English.)

1. When learning words or phrases, do you say them out loud to yourself?
2. When doing a reading assignment, do you often try to get the general meaning of a sentence or paragraph before looking up the unfamiliar words?
3. Do you sometimes think about differences between English and your native language and—as a result—avoid making mistakes?
4. Do you try to memorize sentences as much as possible *without* analyzing them by grammar rules? (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978)
5. Do you often look up words in the dictionary?
6. When looking up words in the dictionary, do you always read the sample sentences which illustrate the use of the word?
7. When you look up a word in the dictionary, do you pronounce it aloud to yourself?
8. When reading a text, do you lookup all the unknown words first and write them in the text *before* attempting to read it? (Hosenfeld 1977)
9. Do you listen carefully to your own pronunciation and try to correct it?
10. Do you memorize words by putting them into groups either by meaning or form (sound)?
11. Do you keep track (e.g., by checking vocabulary lists or vocabulary cards) of words that you have learned?
12. When memorizing words or phrases, do you generally associate them with words or phrases in your native language rather than with other words or phrases in English or with pictures or actions? (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978)
13. Do you spend extra time practicing words or constructions which you missed in class or in conversations?
14. Do you sometimes talk to yourself in English?
15. Do you sometimes check whether you could describe actions you are performing or things you see in English?

Scale C: Interacting with Others Outside the Classroom. (These questions refer to things you *do* or *do not do* when you are *neither* in a regular classroom nor studying by yourself.)
1. When you don’t know how to express an idea, do you ask for help from anybody else (a fellow student, a native speaker of English)?
2. If you see that someone does not understand you, do you often try to rephrase what you are saying?
3. If you are not sure whether what you said is grammatically correct, do you ask for confirmation?
4. Do you sometimes correct yourself when you notice that you made a mistake?
5. If you do not understand someone, do you ask him or her to repeat?
6. Do you often pretend that you understand even if you don’t?
7. Do you often use sentences which you have memorized in conversations?
8. Can you often guess the meaning of what somebody said either from his/her expression or gestures?
9. In talking to others, do you sometimes notice that an expression or sentence fits a rule that you have learned?
*10. Are you sometimes in situations in which you feel it is better to keep silent than to risk making mistakes in English? (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978, Rubin 1981)
11. Do you sometimes use sentences that you have learned and memorized to keep a conversation going?
12. Do you sometimes notice that a phrase or sentence you are learning does not seem to fit a rule that you have already learned?
“13. When trying to say something in English, do you usually think of what you want to say first in your native language and then construct the English sentence from vocabulary equivalents and grammatical rules? (Rubin 1981)
14. If you can’t communicate what you want to say, do you use gestures?
*15. Do you sometimes avoid exposure to English because of the mental fatigue involved in dealing with a foreign language? (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978)
16. If someone does not understand your pronunciation, do you spell the words which were not understood?
17. In conversations do you often use words or constructions which you just learned in class?
19. Do you ever go to movies or listen to TV or radio primarily for the purpose of learning English?
20. When trying to say something in English, do you generally think first of a sentence you already know in English and then try to change it if necessary to fit the situation?
21. Do you ever start a conversation with someone primarily for the purpose of practicing English?
22. Do you ever try to direct a conversation to topics and expressions with which you are familiar?
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“Musing on the Lamp-Flame”: Teaching a Narrative Poem in a College-Level ESOL Class

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The intellect and emotions of teachers as well as students can be stimulated by sharing literary texts. In teaching a narrative poem, the logical place to start is with the story—the who, what, when, where, and, since poetry encapsulates human emotions and motivations, the how and why. Cultural references can be clarified through notes, pictures, and guiding questions. Once comfortable with the surface meaning of a poem, students will be ready to explore deeper layers of meaning by considering figurative language and other poetic strategies. In classes where composition is a focus, writing assignments that prompt rereading and reflection help students to extend their understanding and thus their literary pleasure.

Perhaps following the lead of our profession, most modern language teachers now agree that students should master basic conversation and reading skills before turning to a study of literature, Nevertheless, literary study—including a study of poetry—can play an important role in language classrooms at many levels.

The arguments most commonly presented to support the study of literature—arguments presented in an ESOL context by authors ranging from Povey (1967) and Marquardt (1968) to McKay (1982)—are that literary texts provide an eloquent model of linguistic forms and that the study of literature increases a reader’s awareness and understanding of the culture from which the literature derives. McKay suggests as a further benefit that enjoyment of literature leads to more reading, which ultimately increases reading proficiency.

Support of literary study for linguistic enrichment can be found in Arthur’s (1968:206-207) reminder that a literary experience is also a language learning experience, since “stories received as literary experience are repeatable” and “the language of literature is memorable.”
both because of rhythm and rhyme and because “people tend to remember best what interests them deeply rather than what they are told to remember or are consciously trying to remember.” This latter point is of course central to Stevick’s (1976) concept of “depth”—the learner’s degree of personal commitment and involvement—which Stevick sees as a primary factor in successful language learning and which he has even written poems to foster.

Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) identification of positive perception of the target culture as another important factor in language learning provides support for the role of literary study in increasing cultural awareness, since, as we will see, one aspect of understanding a work of literature depends on understanding the work’s cultural underpinning.

In great literature, however, we find words and grammatical structures that differ significantly from those of everyday speech. So why bother with something found only in books? As to culture, either a nonfiction cultural analysis or a translation of a literary work can provide easier access to the same factual information. Again, why bother with literature? Of course, the point of a literary text is not to illustrate either grammatical paradigms or patterns of social organization in the English-speaking world, but to show us something about ourselves and to test the limits of the power of language to create a new reality.

Widdowson proposed a study of literary works as “kinds of discourse” (1975:80), arguing that the unique forms of literary language can then be compared to conventional forms. The resulting increase in awareness of each form would be of value to the literary specialist and nonspecialist alike. In a plenary address at the 1981 TESOL Convention, he carried the argument further, eloquently and wittily contrasting the cardboard figures and wooden dialogues of language textbooks, where “meanings are made explicit [and are] carefully prepared for easy assimilation” (1982:212), with the language of literature, which stimulates readers to create meaning—to make sense of a text—by calling on their own experience, just as people do in learning and using language naturally.

Widdowson’s approach—like that of Povey, who has noted in support of using poetry in ESOL that “a combination of learning and pleasure in a single class carries its own convincing educational value” (1969:30)—is unfashionably remote from the English-for-a-specific-purpose trend of current language teaching. But a new trend may be in the making. I hope so, for literature has the potential of providing great sensual, emotional, and intellectual pleasure. By sharing such pleasure with our students, we can help them to extend their range of interests and feelings, to become truly educated men
and women. At the same time, we can nourish the emotional and intellectual reserves necessary for us to maintain our enthusiasm for teaching—and for life.

In other articles, I have used short poetry to exemplify ways in which literature may be presented in an elementary school (McConochie 1979) or high school or adult ESOL classroom (McConochie 1982, McConochie and Sage in press). In this article, again using poetry as my example, I would like to consider the situation of those college-level ESOL students who find themselves in a course in which English-language poetry is a required subject of study and of those ESOL teachers who find themselves in charge of such a class. Vaguely remembering freshman English lectures on simile, metaphor, and iambic pentameter, the ESOL teacher may wonder where to begin.

A BASIC APPROACH FOR TEACHING A NARRATIVE POEM TO AN ESOL CLASS

I would suggest the following seven-step approach to teaching a narrative poem to a college-level ESOL class:

1. Choose a poem that will lead students to deeper self-understanding.
2. Introduce the poem in class before asking students to read it at home.
3. Read the poem aloud in class.
4. In discussing the poem, start with the story.
5. Help students to understand, as far as possible, the underlying cultural assumptions of the poem.
6. Present the formal aspects of the poem last, treating them simply as means by which a poet works within and expands linguistic conventions.
7. Provide means by which the overall meaning of the poem can be reassembled.

With some adaptation—particularly of how much to read aloud—these steps might be applied to any literary work. Here, let us examine them as they apply to Robert Frost’s poetic narrative, “The Death of the Hired Man.”

1 Originally published in 1914, this poem, as well as others by Frost referred to in this article, can be found in The Poetry of Robert Frost (1979).
There are various contexts in which this poem might be used. In the large urban university where I teach, the department syllabus for English 101 (required of all undergraduates) mandates a study of not only composition but also literature in the form of essays and poetry. The ESOL sections of that course devote some 40 hours to a study of standard rhetorical categories—classification, comparison and contrast, and so on. Then, for the last 9 hours of the semester, ESOL students examine 11 poems illustrating comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and definition. While such a grouping is unrelated to any usual poetry categorization, it gives students an orientation and, for that reason, a sense of security. Among the poems illustrating cause and effect are Robert Frost’s “Dust of Snow” and “Mending Wall.” The former exemplifies both Frost’s use of nature imagery—snow, a hemlock tree, and a crow—and his preoccupation with death, as seen in those images. The latter introduces a New England farm setting similar to that in “The Death of the Hired Man,” which is the sole work in the third unit, “Poetry of Definition.”

Frost is a major poet whose name is familiar and whose language and ideas are generally accessible to students in a college-level ESOL class. Even more important, the poems selected meet the requirement of Step 1—to help students achieve a deeper self-understanding. The farm setting of “The Death of the Hired Man,” for example, is one that most students, from whatever continent, can recognize. The main characters—prodigal Silas, stern Warren, and compassionate Mary—are equally recognizable, perhaps because we all have elements of each of them in ourselves.

In introducing the poem before the students read it (Step 2), I offer a brief summary of the setting and situation: Mary and Warren are a middle-aged couple with a small and not very prosperous New England farm. In the course of the poem, they discuss what to do about Silas, the hired man who had worked for them off and on for a number of years and who has suddenly reappeared, apparently on the point of death. Through Mary and Warren’s conversation, the reader can learn something of what has drawn Silas back to them.

To conclude the introduction, I also give my students a handout

2 The other selections in the unit “Poetry of Cause and Effect” are “Homesick Blues” and “Harlem,” by Langston Hughes; “In a Station of the Metro,” by Ezra Pound; and “Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight,” by Vachel Lindsay. The first unit, “Poetry of Comparison and Contrast,” includes “I’m nobody—who are you?” by Emily Dickinson; “The Man He Killed,” by Thomas Hardy; “I Hear America Singing,” by Walt Whitman; and “I, too [sing America],” by Langston Hughes. Each unit begins with a biographical sketch of the poets included, focusing on their relationships to each other and to poetic tradition.

3 Some students initially see Silas as carefree, Warren as heartless, and Mary as weak. One point of the lesson is to help them come to a more accurate reading of Frost’s intent.
with definitions of uncommon words (e. g., muse and grudge as verbs) and phrases (e. g., show how much good something has done someone, said ironically), as well as comprehension and discussion questions and possible essay topics so that they can see in what formal ways I expect them to be able to respond to the poem.

To begin the first of the two 90-minute classes devoted to the poem, I provide visual clarification of its setting, using a *New Yorker* cover for a picture of a farmhouse porch and a flower-seed catalogue for a picture of a morning glory. While views of the New England countryside might also help to set the mood, I try to avoid the possible distraction of a literal visual presentation. This is also a convenient time to recall the Frost poems studied earlier and Frost’s reputation as a New England poet; everyone is then ready to see connections as they arise.

Step 3, oral presentation, comes next. Since poetry is meant to be heard, part of our responsibility in teaching a poem lies in giving students a chance to hear it read well. Many teachers enjoy reading aloud and are willing to spend time to rehearse a poetry reading. I am one who does. Other teachers may prefer to use commercial recordings or to prevail upon a colleague from the speech department to tape a reading.

After the reading, the class is ready for Step 4. We begin by considering questions from the handout which help to establish the surface meaning—the “story”—of the poem. As the following examples show, the questions designed for this purpose move sequentially through the text and include references to lines in which the answers can be found. In the “Hired Man” handout, the initial questions call for a factual, rather than interpretive, response:

1. At the beginning of the poem (lines 2-10), what words and gestures does Mary use in coaxing Warren to accept Silas’s return?

2. Why doesn’t Warren want to hire Silas again? He is most specific in lines 17-18, but his whole first speech (lines 11-30) gives his arguments.

In answering such questions, students often choose to read a few lines aloud, thus reinforcing both the previous oral presentation and the English rhetorical convention of presenting specific evidence to support a statement.

Other questions guide students in moving from fact to interpretation. For example:

3. From the evidence in lines 88-95, what one thing does Warren admire about Silas? What does that admiration tell you about Warren’s values?

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4 One excellent source is the Caedmon Spoken-Word Classics Series. For a current catalogue, write to Caedmon, 1995 Broadway, New York, New York 10023.
Through paired questions of this sort, students can learn to use specific facts to identify a character’s point of view. In so doing, they can also discover, and possibly come to understand, some of the cultural assumptions underlying the poem—the fifth, and most delicate, step in the approach offered here.

In “The Death of the Hired Man,” those assumptions include the validity of the Protestant work ethic and the possibility that a network of obligations may exist among adults who are not members of the same family. While such ideas may well seem bizarre to some readers, they are central to an understanding of the poem. Deciding whether a particular class could comfortably explore them is part of a teacher’s task in choosing a poem to present (Step 1).

To answer Question 3, students must recognize that Warren’s admiration for Silas’s ability to “build a load of hay” shows Warren’s acceptance of the Protestant work ethic, that is, that being a good worker qualifies a person for respect. (The theological extension—that work is essential for salvation—is a concept that I mention in passing but never dwell on.) Though he could not pay the regular wages that Silas longed for, Warren had offered him room and board, and a bit of cash from time to time, in exchange for his labor. Warren had also understood, though he disapproved of, Silas’s temptation to disappear at haying time—when every hand is vital—to work for other farmers who could afford to pay more. Perhaps because of his respect for Silas as a worker, perhaps because farm workers were hard to find, Warren had even continued to offer Silas the dignity of work (another cultural assumption) after the old man’s strength had begun to fail. But when Silas, having been warned of the consequences, once again left the farm at a crucial time, Warren seems to have felt that their unspoken contract of mutual respect and obligation had been broken, and he vowed never to hire Silas again.

What is Mary’s view? Two questions on the handout guide students to the answer:

4. In lines 99-102, Mary summarizes Silas’s life as she sees it. What is her conclusion?
5. How is Mary feeling when she tells Warren that Silas “has come home to die” (line 111)? What is the implication of her words?

The answer to Question 4 is that Mary views Silas’s physical and intellectual limitations as far less important than his willingness to help others. She remembers Silas’s frustrated hope of imparting some practical knowledge—how to find water with a hazel prong—to Harold Wilson, a self-assured college student who had also worked on Warren’s farm one summer. Mary is disappointed, not
with Silas's unreliability, but with the injustice of a world in which such a man can have neither pride in his past nor hope for his future. The answer to Question 5 is that Mary sorrowfully admits to herself that Silas is dying while unquestioningly accepting him as a member of the family.

Reading the poem aloud and discussing its surface meaning can easily fill a 90-minute period. It then remains for the next class period to take up Step 6 and to see how an examination of the formal characteristics of a poem can reveal its deeper layers of meaning.

With “The Death of the Hired Man,” a discussion of those characteristics can usefully focus on the most common figures of speech: simile (an explicit comparison) and metaphor (an implicit comparison). Having already encountered these terms in their previous study of essays and shorter poems, students enjoy testing their powers of recognition with a new text. At the same time, they discover Frost's subtle use of these poetic options.

The first metaphor, which appears more than halfway through the poem, is Warren’s humorously admiring description of the way Silas loads a hay wagon: “He bundles every forkful in its place, /And tags and numbers it for future reference.” “Tags and numbers it”—Silas works with the precision of a workman storing boards in a lumber-yard or a homemaker packing boxes before a move. Warren then remarks that Silas unloads the hay “in bunches like big birds’ nests,” a charming smile that, like the previous metaphor, is entirely plausible in the speech of a New England farmer.

A later image involves a complex cultural allusion. It takes a few minutes of class time to unravel, but that time is well spent, for the passage illustrates how poets build up layers of meaning. Warren challenges Mary’s suggestion that Silas has come “home” to die, saying:

“Silas has better claim on us you think
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.
Why didn’t he go there? His brother’s rich,
A somebody—director in the bank.”

“He never told us that.” [This is Mary’s response.]
“We know it though.”

“Thirteen little miles.” Why thirteen? Why not fourteen or fifteen? Because, as speakers of English know, thirteen is an unlucky number, pointing up the estrangement between the brothers. Moreover, it is thirteen miles “as the road winds,” an allusion to the

TEACHING A NARRATIVE POEM
proverbial expression “as the crow flies.” At first glance, the image
in the poem is simply a more accurate description—the country road
is not a straight one. But isn’t the spiritual road back to his family
also not a straight one for Silas?

There we have the first two layers of meaning. Beneath them lies a
third: the metaphorical association of the crow, the black bird, with
death, anticipating Frost’s use of the crow as a symbol of death in
“Dust of Snow.” That web of meaning deepens the unconscious
irony of Warren’s question, “ ‘Why didn’t he go there?’ ” The answer
is that Silas is not willing to meet his death in a place where he does
not feel at home.

These references to death are foreshadowed in the immediately
preceding lines, which are striking in their concentration of poetic
imagery. Mary sees the moon, or rather “part of a moon,” “falling
down the west,” that fragment of a heavenly body “dragging the
whole sky with it.” All of the heavens are withdrawing, yet the
moon’s light reaches Mary and “poured softly in her lap,” just as
grain—the staff of life—might pour from a basket. Mary welcomes
the light, “spread[ing] her apron to it.” Then she reaches out to the
“harp-like” strings on which morning glories are twining. The con-
nection with death is inescapable. The west is classically associated
with death;’harps are associated with angels; and the trumpet,
recalled by the shape of the morning glory flower, is associated with
the Angel Gabriel, whose trumpet blast will announce the end of the
world.

The moon is mentioned again some 60 lines later, at the end of
the poem, when Warren goes into the house to speak with Silas. Mary
remains on the porch, watching a “small sailing cloud” to see
whether it “will hit or miss the moon.” On Warren’s unexpectedly
quick return, Mary realizes that the collision of the drifting cloud
with the sharp-pointed moon has marked the death of the hired
man.

Having discovered the richness of these seemingly homespun
similes and metaphors, the reader is alerted to a possible significane
in the characters’ names. Most Western readers will recognize that
Mary shares the most common woman’s name in Christendom,
suggesting her likeness to all women and, of course, to the all-
compassionate Mary, mother of Christ. For students from other
cultural backgrounds, the connotation can be explained. In either
case, the name is a useful example of how poets rely on cultural
resonance to enhance meaning.

The derivation of the men’s names is perhaps less obvious. I

5 In “ ‘Out, Out— ,’ ” Frost again uses the west in this way, echoing the belief of the ancient
Egyptians and Greeks.
provide the information for my students, but the names could equally well serve as a stimulus for library research in such reference books as *The Oxford English Dictionary* and *Webster’s Dictionary of Proper Names*.

The Old English root of Warren—waer—means “watchful” or “wary.” Warren is indeed wary of Silas’s motives, just as he is watchful of the well-being of his home. Harold Wilson perhaps heralds a new era, in his pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and in his rejection of folk wisdom. As the “son of Wil[liam],” his name also reminds us of the Norman duke who conquered England in 1066, just as Harold has made a professional conquest of sorts in becoming a teacher in the college where he once studied.

That leaves Silas. His name, like Mary’s, is biblical. St. Silas was an early Christian missionary and martyr who is known only from two brief references in the New Testament (in Acts and Thessalonians). In her novel *Silas Marner* (1861), George Eliot used the same name for her embittered rural hero. That might be connection enough, but there are other layers of possible meaning here as well. First, Silas is the Anglicized version of Silvanus, the name of the Roman god of forest, fields, and herding, as the adjective sylvan recalls. Then, going in a different direction, in Silas there is an echo of silo, a shed where the fruit of the harvest is stored for later use. In all of these possible derivations, there are hints of Silas’s isolation and of his being most comfortable working on a farm.

Students often ask how anyone can be sure about such symbolic meanings. The answer is that educated guesses (all that anyone can really claim to be making) are based on knowledge of cultural and literary tradition and of a poet’s other work and that for those who enjoy such guesswork, exploring symbolism is part of the pleasure of reading literature.

After decoding the symbolic content of “The Death of the Hired Man,” it is relatively easy (though of limited interest to nonspecialists) to analyze its metrical pattern. As we have seen, the complex figures of speech are concentrated in the second half of the poem, and there is no obvious rhyme scheme. Students are therefore likely to assume that the poem is simply conversation set out as Whitmanesque free verse. But if that were so, it would be difficult to justify the spacing of lines like those cited earlier:

“He never told us that.”

“We know it though.”

By counting syllables in several lines of the poem, students can discover the prevalence of a ten-syllable line; combining short lines like those above makes a regular pattern.
What about the stress pattern? “'He NEVer TOLD us THAT.' “
“'We KNOW it THOUGH.'” This alternation of unstressed and
stressed syllables is also regular throughout the poem. Once students
have discovered this, I provide some technical information: 1) An
unstressed-stressed pair of syllables is called an iamb, or iambic
foot; 2) verse with five iambic feet to a line is said to be written in
iambic pentameter (lines with an extra unstressed syllable at the end
are still considered iambic pentameter); and 3) when the ends of the
lines do not rhyme, a work is said to be written in unrhymed iambic
pentameter, or blank verse.

As some students may already know, blank verse is the form used
by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Why should a twentieth-
century American poet, writing about a New England farm, use a
poetic form best known as the language of sixteenth-century epics
and dramas? This is an opening for discussing the relation between
form and content. It may well be that Frost intends us to see the
hired man's story as a modern tragedy, though the protagonists rule
no kingdoms and command no armies.

After separating a poem into its poetic parts, the careful reader
reassembles it. In the classroom approach described here, this is
Step 7. With “The Death of the Hired Man,” one way to do this is to
return to Warren's and Mary’s contrasting definitions of home,
which come just before the “thirteen little miles” passage. “'Home,'”
says Warren, “'is the place where, when you have to go there, /They
have to take you in.'” Mary responds softly, “'I should have called
it/Something you somehow haven't to deserve.'”

What does each of them mean? How else might home be defined?
A dictionary of quotations and students’ own definitions can provide
ample material not only for discussion but also for an essay
assignment, either as a comparison and contrast of Mary’s and
Warren’s views or as a student’s own definition of home. In either
case, the writing assignment is based on poetry without requiring
the kind of sophisticated literary analysis that too often confounds
the students and disappoints the teacher.

CONCLUSION

Teachers who wish to experiment with this approach should
choose a poem—long or short—that they think is worthwhile and
share their pleasure in it with their students. For those teachers who
have the time to do so, reading several critical analyses of the poem
can help solidify their own grasp of it and refine their own instincts.
For other ideas on presenting poetry in an ESOL classroom,
teachers may wish to consult Moody (1971), Widdowson (1975),
Emanuel (1983), and Gabriel (1983). While each differs in his approach, all have something to offer.

The very activity of searching out and presenting poems is a sure source of additional ideas. If this seven-step approach is unsuccessful on a particular occasion, it might be tried with another class or a different poem. Teachers may even wish to return to an abandoned poem and present it again with a new approach.

Whatever effort is made will be more than amply rewarded by student responses. One semester, my reward came when a young man from the Philippines said after class, “You know, I’ve never enjoyed reading poetry, even in my own language, but I’ve been thinking all week about that Emily Dickinson poem we read. I just can’t get it out of my mind.”

Like Mary at the beginning of Frost’s poem, my student Ramon had been musing on a lamp flame, discovering the pleasures that a floodlight would obscure.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An earlier version of this article, which has been strengthened by Karla Jay’s insightful comments, was presented at the 17th Annual TESOL Convention in Toronto, March 1983. A videotape of that presentation, which includes a reading of much of “The Death of the Hired Man,” is in the lending collection of the TESOL Central Office.

The thoughtful critical comments and suggestions of two anonymous readers for the TESOL Quarterly have also helped to shape this version of my discussion.

THE AUTHOR

Jean McConochie, Pace University/New York, was Program Chair for TESOL ‘85 and has contributed, as author and editor, to a variety of professional publications.

REFERENCES


TEACHING A NARRATIVE POEM

135
Measuring Passage Contribution in ESL Reading Comprehension

KYLE PERKINS and BARBARA JONES
Southern Illinois University

Reading comprehension items are valid to the extent that they measure what subjects have understood of the stimulus material. This article reports an empirical analysis of two administrations of two reading tests: the first time, without the reading passages, and the second time, with the passages. Data from the two administrations were used to calculate the passage dependency of each test, that is, the extent to which questions can be answered without reading the texts upon which the questions are based. The two tests in this research, Davis Reading Test (Davis and Davis 1956) and Cooperative English Tests (Educational Testing Service 1960), exhibited little passage dependency. The stability of item types across the two presentation conditions is discussed, and a hierarchy of item-type difficulty is established using latent trait measurement logits of difficulty. The results of this study suggest that classroom teachers should examine commercially available tests carefully for passage dependency. Furthermore, in constructing reading tests, teachers should avoid writing items that test general knowledge. Instead, teachers should strive to write items that test memory organization and that reveal whether or not inferences have been drawn.

INTRODUCTION

Preknowledge, or background knowledge, of the topic of a reading passage on which comprehension questions are based is essential to the comprehension process, as Weber (1976:97) notes:

For comprehension to take place, the meaning of individual words must be remembered and integrated into the grammatical and semantic organization of a text, and the results related to a general knowledge about the world and specific knowledge at hand.

Researchers who have investigated the effects of background knowledge on reading comprehension have generally followed two different approaches: 1) manipulating background knowledge as an independent variable and noting its effects on subjects’ recall of the
test passages and 2) determining the extent to which subjects can identify correct answers to test items on the basis of information other than that provided by the test passages.

Examples of ESL studies that have taken the first approach are those by Johnson (1981, 1982). Johnson (1981) studied the effects of syntactic and semantic complexity and the effects of the cultural origin of prose on intermediate/advanced ESL subjects’ reading comprehension. She found that “the cultural origin of a story had more effect on the comprehension of the ESL students than the level of syntactic and semantic complexity” (169). In a subsequent study which investigated the effects of building background knowledge on reading comprehension, Johnson (1982) reported that “statistical analysis of the recall of the passage and of the sentence recognition task indicated that prior cultural experience prepared readers for comprehension of the familiar information about Halloween in the passage” (503).

Research based on the second approach mentioned above—determining the extent to which subjects can identify correct answers to test items on the basis of information other than that provided by the test passages—stems from the following observation: What a subject learns from reading a stimulus passage cannot be separated from the subject’s previous knowledge if a reading comprehension test is administered after the reading is completed. As Rankin and Dale (1969:17) explain:

Normal methods of measuring reading comprehension utilize a test administered after reading is completed. Since different individuals approach the reading situation with varying amounts of preknowledge concerning the topic of a printed message, the results of a comprehension test administered after reading reflect a combination of knowledge possessed before reading plus information gained while reading.

The fact that the results of a comprehension test reflect two kinds of knowledge has led to considerable research on subjects’ ability to answer comprehension questions without the aid of texts from which the questions were derived. Such studies provide crucial information about the validity of reading comprehension items; as Farr and Smith (1970:123) point out, “in a reading comprehension test the knowledge that examinees display is of interest only as it is a valid measure of how much a student learned from reading or comprehending a stimulus paragraph.”

To ascertain whether subjects can correctly answer reading comprehension items without reading the passages from which the questions were derived, one must administer the test items without the stimulus paragraphs (passage-out condition) and then at a later
time readminister the test under normal procedures in which the subjects have access to the stimulus paragraphs and the questions (passage-in condition). From the sets of responses from each of the two administrations, one can compute passage dependency indexes, which indicate the probability of a subject pool’s answering questions correctly without reading the texts upon which the questions are based. As Tuinman (1973-1974:221) notes, “everything else being equal, the test with the most items with the highest degree of passage dependency offers the largest guarantee against invalidity due to responding to items without prior reading of the passage on which the item is based.”

Administering test questions under the passage-out and passage-in conditions generates four performance possibilities for each examinee on any single item:

A student can get an item correct under both testing conditions (RR); he can get an item wrong both times (WW); he can get an item wrong the first time and right the second time (WR); or he can get the item right and then wrong (RW) (Farr and Smith 1970:123).

Research using the passage-out and passage-in conditions has been conducted by Weaver and Bickley (1967) and Connor and Read (1978). Weaver and Bickley reported that “the Ss who had no reading passage to aid in answering the items, nevertheless, correctly completed 67% as many items as Ss with all the reading passage” (294). Connor and Read measured the passage dependency of the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) reading comprehension subtest and reported that “the mean PDI [passage dependency index] for our MTELP (.59) seems large” (155).

In our review of the literature on empirical studies of passage contribution, we found only one study (Connor and Read 1978) in which an ESL population had been employed as the subject pool. In view of the importance of passage dependency to an understanding of ESL reading comprehension and in view of the lack of ESL studies which examine passage dependency, this investigation was undertaken. The purposes of this study were 1) to determine whether there would be a significant difference in our subjects’ responses to different reading comprehension item types under the passage-out and passage-in presentation conditions, 2) to measure the passage dependency of the elicitation instruments, 3) to determine whether item difficulty was stable across the two presentation conditions, and 4) to determine a difficulty order of reading.

1 Computation and interpretation of the PDI are explained in the Results and Discussion section of this article.
comprehension item types in the passage-in condition. Our research hypothesis was that the mean scores for both tests under the passage-in condition would be significantly higher than the mean scores under the passage-out condition.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Forty-four full-time undergraduate foreign students enrolled at Southern Illinois University served as unpaid volunteers for the project. The subjects were either freshmen or sophomores. Their native languages included Arabic, Balinese, Chinese, Kadazan, Malay, Korean, Spanish, Tamil, Greek, and Urdu.

To be admitted for full-time undergraduate study at Southern Illinois University, a foreign student must meet one of the following criteria: 1) have a TOEFL score of 525 or higher, 2) pass the proficiency examination (a score of 70 or higher on the MTELP and Aural Comprehension Test) and reading and writing examinations of the Center for English as a Second Language, or 3) have completed 60 semester hours of collegiate training in an accredited United States college or university. Our assumption was that these entrance requirements ensure that foreign students admitted to full-time study as undergraduates can read and write the English language on a par with native speakers.²

Instrumentation

Two reading comprehension tests were employed in this research: Davis and Davis’ (1956) Davis Reading Test (DRT), Series 1, for high school and college students, and Educational Testing Service’s (1960) Cooperative English Tests—Reading Comprehension (CET-RC), Form 1A, for college freshmen and sophomores.

We classified each item from both tests as a measure of one of the common reading skills, using Rosenshine’s (1980) taxonomy of skill hierarchies:³

²Scant research data were available on this subject pool. We therefore cannot ascertain which subjects were placed (transferred from another school) and which were continuing-system subjects (entered the course after passing the proficiency examination). Brown’s (1981) research has shown that there can be significant differences in the attained second language proficiency of placed and system students. We cannot guarantee that our placed and system subjects had homogeneous proficiency, but this issue is not germane to the research questions addressed in this article.

³Rosenshine’s taxonomy is a summary compilation from five sources: 1) Science Research Associates (Shub, Friedman, Kaplan, Katien, and Scroggin 1973), 2) National Assessment of Educational Progress (1972), 3) Scott Foresman (Aaron, Artley, Goodman, Jenkins, Manning, Monroe, Pyle, Robinson, Schiller, Smith, Sullivan, Weintraub, and Wepman 1976), 4) Harris and Smith (1976), and 5) Otto and Askov (1974).
1. Locating details
   a. Recognition
   b. Paraphrase and/or matching

2. Simple inferential skills
   a. Understanding words in context
   b. Recognizing the sequence of events
   c. Recognizing cause and effect
   d. Comparing and contrasting

3. Complex inferential skills
   a. Recognizing the main idea/title/topic
   b. Drawing conclusions
   c. Predicting outcomes

The DRT yielded six item types; the CET-RC, seven item types (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Types</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DRT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase and/or matching</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Inferential Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding words in context</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing the sequence of events</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing cause and effect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex Inferential Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing the main idea/title/topic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing conclusions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data were gathered by administering the reading comprehension items without the passages (passage-out condition); then, following a three-week interval, the same items were administered again, this time with the passages (passage-in condition).

The following directions were given during the passage-out administration:

The following is a test which is being administered to get information on tests and test items. The results will not be reported to your teacher. Read each question and circle the letter for that answer. If you feel quite unsure about an answer, you should guess. Do not skip any questions.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Passage Dependency

Means, standard deviations, and estimates of reliability are reported in Table 2. Table 3 displays the extent to which the scores under the passage-out condition exceeded chance scores.

An inspection of the means for both conditions for both tests (Table 2) indicates that the tests were difficult for this subject pool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test (Condition)</th>
<th>No. of Subjects</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>Observed KR-20</th>
<th>100-Item Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRT (Passage-Out)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRT (Passage-In)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CET-RC (Passage-Out)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>16.68</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CET-RC (Passage-In)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19.23</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The means in Table 2 will doubtlessly provoke the questions, Why did you administer a reading comprehension test designed for native speakers to a foreign student population, and is that a valid use of such tests? Our answer to the second question is yes, and that response is based on our answer to the first question: We assume that foreign students who successfully complete the prescribed curricula of intensive English centers—and thereby satisfy the criteria for admission to full-time undergraduate study, that is, a TOEFL score of 525 or better or successful completion of 60 semester hours of collegiate work in an accredited U.S. college or university—are ready to compete with native speakers of English in traditional language skills and have the requisite language skills to perform in a university context. In other words, we see nothing untoward about administering an L1 reading test designed for high school students, for example, the DRT, to L1 or L2 college freshmen.

The chance score for each test (Table 3) is determined by dividing the number of items by the number of alternatives: The DRT has 40 items with 5 options each (40/5=8); the CET-RC has 60 items with 4 options each (60/4=15). The chance score for the DRT is 8, and the score actually obtained (X=8.23) under the passage-out condition was not significantly higher. On the other hand, the
chance score for the CET-RC is 15 and the score actually obtained under the passage-out condition \( (\bar{X}=16.68) \) was significantly higher than the chance score \( (p < .05) \). As column 4 indicates, the subjects answered 21 percent of the DRT items correctly without having read the passage and 28 percent of the CET-RC items correctly without having read the passage. Column 5 presents more startling information. On the DRT, subjects without access to the passages obtained a mean score 75 percent as high as the mean score in the passage-in condition. On the CET-RC, the percentage was even higher: 87. What this means is that for this subject pool, not reading the passages resulted in a performance loss of only 25 percent for the DRT and 13 percent for the CET-RC.

To determine whether there was a significant difference in our subjects’ responses to each test under the different presentation conditions and to determine whether the responses differed significantly according to item type, we submitted the data to two-way analysis of variance with one entry per cell with a repeated-measurements design. The data were averaged for each cell. In other words, we used analysis of variance procedure to determine whether there was a significant difference 1) between the passage-out and passage-in means and 2) between the means for the different item types. The ANOVA data for each test are presented in Tables 4 and 5. For both tests, no significant differences were noted between the passage-out and passage-in means and between the means for the different item types. Our research hypothesis that there would be a significant difference between the mean scores for the two presentation conditions was not confirmed.

The principal research question in this investigation concerned the extent to which ESL readers must avail themselves of reading passages to answer the reading comprehension items based on those passages. For an empirical measure of the passage contribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>( \bar{X}_{\text{Passage-In}} )</th>
<th>( \bar{X}_{\text{Passage-Out}} )</th>
<th>Chance Score</th>
<th>( \bar{X}_{\text{Passage-Out as Percent of No. of Items}} )</th>
<th>( \frac{\bar{X}<em>{\text{Passage-Out}}}{\bar{X}</em>{\text{Passage-In}}} )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRT</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CET-RC</td>
<td>19.23</td>
<td>16.68</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3
Means Under the Passage-Out Condition Expressed as Percentages of Number of Test Items and as Percentages of Means Obtained Under the Passage-In Condition
required to answer the reading comprehension questions employed in this research, we used Tuinman’s (1973-1974) passage dependency index (PDI). Tuinman’s PDI is defined as

$$\text{PDI} = 1 - \left( \frac{d_{np}}{d_p} \right),$$

where $d_{np}$ is the proportion of correct responses to item i under the passage-out condition and $d_p$ is the proportion of correct responses to item i under the passage-in condition.

A PDI coefficient is calculated for each test item. Consider the following example of 50 subjects’ performance on an item j. Twenty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Types</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage-Out</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage-In</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the PDI for item j is .5 (1-.4/.8 = 1-.5 = .5). Let us consider another example of 50 subjects’ performance on an item k.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Types</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage-Out</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage-In</td>
<td>X = 25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hypothesis of equal row means was confirmed, $F = .75$, df 1/5.

The hypothesis of equal column means was confirmed, $F = .41$, df 5/5.

1 Item Types: 1 = Locating details—recognition

2 = Locating details—paraphrase and/or matching

3 = Simple inferential—understanding words

4 = Simple inferential—recognizing sequence

5 = Complex inferential—recognizing main idea

6 = Complex inferential—drawing conclusions

Compared to the
amount of information contributed by the passage for item j, the passage for item k contributed very little information.

Tuinman’s index was chosen because it takes item difficulty into account by comparing the proportion of correct item responses (item difficulty) from subjects who have read the test passage (passage-in condition) with the proportion of correct item responses (item difficulty) from subjects who have not read the passage (passage-out condition). The PDI can range in value from -1.00 to 1.00; according to Tuinman, “the larger the PDI, the better the item in terms of passage dependency” (219).

### TABLE 5
Analysis of Variance for the CET-RC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation Conditions</th>
<th>Item Types 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</th>
<th>Effect of Presentation Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage-Out</td>
<td>20 28 25 36 13 27 30</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 27$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage-In</td>
<td>42 35 42 25 30 34 25</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 32$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of Item Types</td>
<td>$\bar{X} = 31$ 32 33 30 21 31 27</td>
<td>$\bar{X}_p = 29$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The hypothesis of equal row means was confirmed, $F = 1.43$, df 1/6.

2 Item Types: 1 = Locating details—recognition
2 = Locating details—paraphrase and/or matching
3 = Simple inferential—understanding words
4 = Simple inferential—recognizing sequence
5 = Simple inferential—recognizing cause/effect
6 = Complex inferential—recognizing main idea
7 = Complex inferential—drawing conclusions

The mean PDI for the DRT is -.05; for the CET-RC, -.09. For this subject pool, neither the DRT nor the CET-RC items were very passage-dependent. For no item in either test was there an indication of the passage making a maximum contribution; collectively, the items on each test exhibited remarkably little passage dependence. Although the mean PDI for the DRT was slightly higher, both mean PDI values were negative, and the difference between them was negligible. By way of contrast, Connor and Read (1978:155) state that “most of the MTELP reading comprehension items are
highly passage-dependent, but that the range is wide and a few items are probably not sufficiently passage-dependent.” They reported a mean PDI of .59 for the MTELP items.

Consider the following examples of items from our research which had 10 w passage dependency:

DRT Item 14 (PDI = .18):
His mood has been one of
a. discouragement.
b. hopefulness.
c. anger.
d. fear.
e. disgust. [correct answer = a]

CET-RC Item 21 (PDI = .16):
Which of the following touches all four quadrants?
a. The Pacific Ocean
b. The Atlantic Ocean
c. The Ross Sea
d. The South Pole [correct answer = d]

By contrast, consider the following items which had high passage dependency:

DRT Item 25 (PDI = .93):
It is clear from the passage that
a. Poe died in 1850.
b. Poe died in 1849.
c. Chivers died a few years after Poe.
d. Chivers lived to be a much older man than Poe.
e. Chivers was alive in 1853. [correct answer = e]

CET-RC Item 35 (PDI = .90):
The first aniline dye to be discovered was
a. Turkey red.
b. indigo,
c. mauve.
d. alizarin. [correct answer = c]

We are aware that the PDI is not the most useful passage dependency index, because $d_{pa}$, the proportion of correct responses under the passage-out condition, can be high because of background knowledge and/or correct guessing. In other words, the PDI is not corrected for guessing; the $d_{pa}$ coefficient is an amalgam of the proportion of correct responses based on guessing and the proportion of correct responses based on background knowledge. However, there is a solution to this dilemma. According to Tuinman

4 CET-RC items are reprinted by permission of Educational Testing Service, the copyright owner. DRT items are reproduced by permission from the Davis Reading Test. Copyright © 1956, by The psychological Corporation. All rights reserved.
(1973-1974), it is possible to estimate the proportion of responses based on guessing ($d_i$) for each item by using the formula

$$d_i = \frac{(1 - d_i)}{(k - 1)},$$

where $d_i$ is the proportion of correct responses for item $i$ and $k$ is the number of response alternatives.

We calculated the proportion of responses based on guessing for each item and then estimated the maximum contribution of the passage for each item, using the formula

$$P_{\text{max}} = d_i - d_{sl} \quad \text{or} \quad P_{\text{max}} = \frac{k(d_i) - 1}{(k - 1)}.$$

The $P_{\text{max}}$ index can range from 0 to 1.00. Tuinman states that “the maximum contribution of the passage occurs only when the students do not utilize any extrinsic information when answering the items” (220). The mean $P_{\text{max}}$ for both the DRT and the CET-RC was 0.09—another empirical measure indicating that the items had remarkably little passage dependence.

These two reading tests were difficult for this subject pool; the distribution of scores in both presentation conditions was positively skewed—that is, many, if not most, of the scores were clustered near the zero point of the scoring continuum. We are not sure to what extent positive skew may affect the dependency indexes; however, for this subject pool and these tests, there is evidence that the passages did not contribute very much information to the reading process. In other words, the majority of items were assessing background knowledge which was not gleaned via the reading process.

**Latent Trait Measurement**

Since the score distributions were positively skewed, we submitted the data to latent trait measurement (also referred to as item response theory). We used the Rasch one-parameter latent trait model, which Henning (1984:3) describes as follows:

The Rasch model is concerned with a single ability —difficulty—parameter, while the other [latent trait] models incorporate additional parameters of discriminability plus guessing, respectively. What this family of analytical procedures has in common is the attempt to construct performance expectancy models based on inferences drawn from group performance patterns. These are probabilistic models inasmuch as they purport to evaluate items and persons, not only in classical terms of difficulty/ability, variance and discriminability, but also in terms of quantifiable deviations from predicted response patterns by means of likelihood estimation.
To determine whether item difficulty was stable across the two presentation conditions and to establish a difficulty order of reading comprehension item types under the passage-in condition, we used the logits of difficulty from the Rasch analysis. The Rasch logits of difficulty employ a true interval scale with mean item difficulty set at zero; the logits of difficulty are adjusted for sample ability spread to eliminate boundary effects and skewing. In the Rasch framework, positive logits of difficulty represent high-difficulty items, and negative logits of difficulty represent low-difficulty items. Our rationale for using item response theory (IRT) procedures in this research is based on Wainer’s (1983:12, 14) observations:

IRT. . . uses a function of the difficulty of the items answered correctly as an estimate of ability. . . the most fundamental concept of IRT is the functional relationship between the ability of a person and the difficulty of an item.

Since item types can exhibit high or low difficulty and since there were two presentation conditions, we have four possible outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Passage-Out</th>
<th>Passage-In</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>high difficulty</td>
<td>high difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>high difficulty</td>
<td>low difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>low difficulty</td>
<td>low difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>low difficulty</td>
<td>high difficulty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 are to be expected. In the first case, the subjects probably did not understand the question and could not answer it with the aid of the text. Items belonging in this category have little passage dependency because they exhibit high difficulty even under the passage-in condition. Outcome 2 items have high passage dependency. With the reading passages accessible, the majority of subjects were able to identify the correct answers. Outcome 3 items probably test general knowledge and do not exhibit any degree of passage dependency. The majority of subjects were able to identify the correct answers without benefit of the stimulus passages.

Outcome 4 items represent the unexpected: items that were easy under the passage-out condition but difficult under the passage-in condition. We can offer two explanations for such a response pattern: First, some aspect(s) of the texts confused or misled the subjects, and second, the subjects guessed.

Tables 6 and 7 display the percentages of item types that occurred for the four different possibilities related to item difficulty. What generalizations can be drawn from these tables is unclear for the following reason: Under each outcome for both tests, complex inferential skills—drawing conclusions and/or locating details—
TABLE 6
Stability of Item Difficulty for the DRT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Types</th>
<th>Outcome*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase and/or matching</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Inferential Skills</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding words in context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing the sequence of events</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex Inferential Skills</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing the main idea/title/topic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Outcome 1: 11 items (27.5 percent of total)
Outcome 2: 8 items (20.0 percent of total)
Outcome 3: 13 items (32.5 percent of total)
Outcome 4: 8 items (20.0 percent of total)

TABLE 7
Stability of Item Difficulty for the CET-RC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Types</th>
<th>Outcome*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase and/or matching</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Inferential Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding words in context</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing the sequence of events</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing cause and effect</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex Inferential Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing the main idea/title/topic</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Outcome 1: 21 items (35.0 percent of total)
Outcome 2: 12 items (20.0 percent of total)
Outcome 3: 16 items (27.0 percent of total)
Outcome 4: 11 items (18.0 percent of total)

We believe that this finding is related to the high number of such items in the two tests (see Table 1).

The data in Table 8, however, are more meaningful and useful. In both tests, items that tested complex inferential skills—drawing conclusions exhibited high item difficulty. In the DRT, items paraphrase predominately.
assessing locating details—paraphrase and/or matching were difficult. And in the CET-RC, items testing simple inferential skills—recognizing the sequence of events and simple inferential skills—recognizing cause and effect exhibited high difficulty. What makes these item types difficult? A direct answer is that they are not as simple as they appear: Each item type entails complex processing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Logit of Difficulty*</th>
<th>Item Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>DRT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>+ .81</td>
<td>Locating details—paraphrase and/or matching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ .12</td>
<td>Complex inferential—drawing conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>- .08</td>
<td>Simple inferential—recognizing sequence of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>- .17</td>
<td>Locating details—recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- .76</td>
<td>Simple inferential—understanding words in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-2.49</td>
<td>Complex inferential—recognizing main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CET-RC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>+ .75</td>
<td>Complex inferential—drawing conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+ .49</td>
<td>Simple inferential—recognizing sequence of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ .24</td>
<td>Simple inferential—recognizing cause and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>- .32</td>
<td>Complex inferential—recognizing main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- .43</td>
<td>Locating details—paraphrase and/or matching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
<td>Locating details—recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
<td>Simple inferential—understanding words in context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Corrected for the effect of sample spread.

Let us consider what is involved when a reader draws a conclusion or makes an inference. First, a reader uses past experience, which is represented as a set of generalizations from which to make inferences. If an L2 reader’s target language exposure and experience are limited (compared with a native speaker’s), then the L2 reader will be handicapped. Second, to make inferences, a reader must find meaningful relations between the different propositions in the text. And third, in making inferences, the reader seeks to recover or fill in the missing connections between the text fragments in the surface structure of the text by using text-structural information, context, and general knowledge.

Two important aspects are involved in paraphrasing or matching propositions: a syntactic aspect and a semantic one. In the
terminology of transformational grammar, two sentences or propositions which have different surface structures but the same deep structure can be equivalent. Sentences 1 and 2 are therefore paraphrases:

1. The police arrested the man because he was a voyer.
2. The man was arrested by the police because he was a voyer.

Two sentences which contain semantically equivalent words can also be paraphrases.

3. The police caught the voyer in the act.
4. The police caught the peeping tom in the act.

Recognizing the sequence of events can be affected by “how these [time] relations are stated, in particular how they are cued, and whether or not the order of presentation matches the order of occurrence” (Pearson and Johnson 1978:117).

The components of the ability to recognize cause and effect are also complex for several reasons, according to Pearson and Johnson (1978). First, some causal relationships have no overt signal—for example, The soil was too sandy to farm. The farmers left Green Valley. Second, a simple coordinating conjunction may connect causally related propositions, as in Mary broke the lamp, and her mother spanked her. Finally, causal relationships may be disguised as time relationships, as in After Susan took out the garbage, her mother gave her a sweet.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

We believe that the classroom ESL reading teacher should carefully examine reading tests for passage dependency. If students’ scores under the passage-out condition are significantly higher than chance scores, then it cannot be claimed that comprehension is being measured. How can there be comprehension when there are no passages?

In constructing reading tests, teachers should strive to avoid writing items which can be answered on the basis of general knowledge, which provide information for answering neighboring items, which contain superficial similarities between the correct answers and stems, or which have inordinately long correct answers.

On the other hand, we must point out that the construction of passage-dependent items is difficult, save for the locating details—recognition and paraphrase and/or matching items. Furthermore, the content validity of the test must be satisfied. Some items, if not all, should be dependent to some degree on preknowledge because it is generally believed that integrating new information with old is
crucial in the reading comprehension process. Our research indicates that questions which reveal whether or not inferences have been made and questions which test memory organization are quite effective for testing comprehension, and we therefore recommend the construction of such items. Finally, we suggest that during the preparation of classroom reading tests, teachers circulate the proposed items among colleagues. This might help prevent the inclusion of items that test general knowledge (and consequently could be answered without reference to the test passage) as well as items with stems and/or options which provide the answers for neighboring items.

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REFERENCES


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Cross-cultural Skills

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ISSN 0289-1239
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Edited by VIVIAN ZAMEL
University of Massachusetts/Boston

Research Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics

The field of second language acquisition (SLA) is rapidly maturing. This can be seen in the changing nature of the experimental work in the field. Early work was of necessity exploratory and predominantly descriptive in nature. Current work, by contrast, building upon results of this earlier work, has become more empirical and explanatory. As a result, research designs have become more complex, and the statistical instruments used to measure experimental effects and interactions are more sophisticated. This growth has meant that those engaged in such research and those who want to understand it must have and maintain a basic literacy in research design and statistical concepts. In addition, to ensure continued growth in the field, our students must be given the experimental background essential for effective participation in research at today’s sophisticated level.

To accomplish this, we have usually either sent our students to research design and statistics classes in other departments—such as business or psychology—or have tried to adapt existing texts to fit their needs. One major problem with this state of affairs is that examples used to illustrate statistical concepts differ considerably from field to field. Since those concepts can be both alien and intimidating to new students, the use of relevant examples can be particularly important in helping students integrate this new knowledge into their work. What has been needed for a long time is a clear, comprehensive introductory statistics textbook which students in the field can use as a primary text.

Research Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics (RDSAL) accomplishes this task. Its purpose is to provide the field of applied...
linguistics with a statistics text that is readable, comprehensive, and easy to follow:

One of our major goals in preparing this book has been to dispel the aura of mystery that surrounds statistics so that you can use the procedures with ease. To help rather than hinder your understanding of the basic concepts of research design and statistics, we have kept the style as close as possible to that of informal, colloquial speech . . .

A second goal is to make the procedures as easy to do as possible (iii). Written for use as a beginning text rather than as a reference work, RDSAL assumes no prior knowledge of research design and statistics on the part of the learner. It is designed to take students, step by step, from an understanding of the basic assumptions underlying research projects, through the development of a suitable research design, and finally to an understanding of statistical procedures and the choice of particular procedures for analyzing different sets of data.

The book is divided into 18 chapters, each of which follows the same format: text, with examples, discussion, and systematic development of the concept, followed by problems and questions for the student to answer. Examples of chapter titles are What is Research? (1), What is a Variable? (2), Constructing Research Designs (3), Describing the Data (6), Probability and Hypothesis Testing (8), t-Tests—Comparing Two Means (10), Factorial Designs and A NOVA (12), Simple Linear Regression (16), Reliability and Validity (17), and Factor Analysis (18). An additional feature of the text is the introductory pretest. For those readers who have some background in statistics and who may want either to review or supplement their knowledge, this test serves as a quick check of their understanding of basic statistical concepts. The book also includes a glossary of symbols, a list of formulas not always available in every statistics text, and the standard tables—for example, critical values of 5 and \( X^2 \)—expected in any statistics text.

RDSAL is clear, readable, and in general comprehensive, avoiding both superficiality and oversimplification. Its principal strength derives from the authors’ use of examples from the SLA literature to illustrate the various statistical concepts presented. For instance, the examples which the authors have chosen to illustrate the differences between ordinal and interval variable scales make the distinction easy for students to understand. Hatch and Farhady point out, for example, that no ruler or thermometer can measure culture shock or a person’s reaction to Suggestopedia. On an ordinal scale, a person’s performance in English can be rated as poor, fair, good, or excellent (13). On an interval scale—and the authors point out that test scores are generally treated as interval scales—the measurement can be
described; units can be added or subtracted. “You can’t do that with ordinal measurement. You can’t say ‘fair + fair = good,’ not even if you’ve assigned numbers to fair and to good” (14). Similarly, the concepts underlying hypothesis testing are made immediately comprehensible by including in the discussion an example of SLA data collected from 30 Thai students of ESL, as is the explanation of analysis of variance (ANOVA) through a discussion of ESL level and first language background as possible factors in an ANOVA design. At long last, researchers and students will experience the “Aha” effect which comes from understanding something previously incomprehensible.

Also contributing to the value of this book are suggestions for effective and often ingenious research designs for SLA. These suggestions, which appear throughout the book in discussions and problem sets, range from the use of unobtrusive measures, such as “count[ing] the scuff marks on the floor tiles to measure boredom in the labs” (xvi), to more conventional ones, such as analyzing differences in standardized test scores to evaluate the effectiveness of different methods for teaching basic language skills (see Chapter 11). References at the end of each chapter provide useful avenues for further exploration of particular topics.

RDSAL, though not simplistic, is more basic than some texts already on the market (see, for example, Winkler and Hays 1975) in terms of the breadth and depth of coverage of various statistical procedures. Reading can be assigned with the confidence that students will not get lost in detail, but the concepts must then be developed in greater detail in class. For example, I have found that students will generally need more explanation of and work with probability theory if they are to understand the basic sense of statistical tests. In addition, more work is needed on regression, ANOVA, and analysis of covariance, as well as on the types of errors one can make in performing certain statistical tests. For an instructor with a strong background in statistics, this should pose few problems. In fact, the text provides the basis for developing a strong coherent syllabus.

Although RDSAL does represent a considerable achievement, it has several shortcomings. To begin with, the book might be more appropriately entitled Research Design and Statistics for Second Language Acquisition Research, since the majority of the examples in the text deal exclusively with this specific area in the larger field of applied linguistics. While the field of applied linguistics is somewhat amorphous and while individuals differ on what areas applied linguistics covers, almost all would agree that it consists of more than just second language acquisition research. For this reason,
the title of the book is a misnomer, as at least one other reviewer (Lett 1983) has pointed out. Second, although I think I understand the rationale for discussing only card format for computer work—presumably it is more readily available throughout the world—some discussion of the use of an interactive computer for such work would have been useful. Third, I do not agree with the authors’ assertion that quasi-experimental designs are the best experimental designs currently available in the field (24). In light of more interesting work that has come out since the publication of RDSAL, I do not share the authors’ pessimism about the field in terms of its development along these lines. Recent sophisticated research (for examples of this type of work, see many of the studies reported in Gass and Selinker 1983 and Eckman, Bell, and Nelson, 1984) is evidence of current theoretical and methodological advances in the field.

Finally, I have two minor criticisms. The chapter on preparing a research paper, which appears in the middle of the text, would have been less disruptive if it had been included as an appendix at the end of the book. Also, the answers to the problems at the end of each chapter should be included, if not in the text, then in a separate teacher’s manual.

These reservations notwithstanding, RDSAL is a solid introductory text for students in our field and an invaluable reference resource for researchers. Publication of this kind of book is long overdue, and all who use it are likely to benefit from its clear and coherent presentation.

REFERENCES


SUZANNE FLYNN

*Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
Why review a publication unavailable to most of us? Part of the answer is that we in the West have few opportunities to learn how our counterparts in the USSR execute their art, and an examination of this text provides one such opportunity. A further reason is simply that Rogova has written a remarkable book.

The teaching of EFL in the USSR goes back as far as the mid-eighteenth century, at which time the principal need was in military affairs; the earliest courses were designed for royal cadets in St. Petersburg (Howatt 1984). Today, all students enrolled in the Soviet high school system are expected to complete five years of a second language; of these, more than half elect to take English. Additionally, the academic year lasts between 210 and 230 days, making it the longest in the world (King 1973). The teaching of English in the Soviet Union is—if I may borrow an inoffensive capitalist expression—"big business," and there is clearly a market for a methods book.

The author is on the faculty of Moscow State University, the country's largest (30,000 students) and most prestigious institute of higher education. This primer is designed for use as a course book at that university's Pedagogical Institute (Pedinstitute) for trainees planning careers in the nation's secondary schools. MoscoW's Pedinstitute, established in 1930, is but one of many training institutions. However, while other texts may be in use in other Soviet institutes, we can safely assume Rogova's to be fairly representative because she speaks again and again of "approved" techniques and methods. Indeed, there appears to be a great deal of homogeneity in classroom materials and methods, as might be expected from a political system characterized by central planning. This being the case, it would be difficult to overstate the degree to which Rogova's work offers insight into the current state of foreign language instruction in the USSR.

The author has divided her manual of 17 chapters into three parts covering 1) aims, content, and principles of foreign language teaching; 2) approaches to the teaching of various language skills, including translation; and 3) curriculum and structure of the school system. Except for the brief preface, the bibliography, and an occasional sprinkling of quotations in Cyrillic script, the eye meets only English throughout.

In choosing to write entirely in English rather than in her native tongue, Rogova committed herself to quite an ambitious undertaking.
The product reveals an admirable and extensive understanding of English usage. In choosing to put so much between two covers, Rogova almost seems to be challenging the reviewer to equal her undertaking. Unfortunately, this review will examine only a very few of the many points that the author makes.

A chronology of English language teaching in this century is presented early on, and though the litany of milestones and profiles rings largely familiar to these ears, pages are also dotted with such names as Moskalskaya, Folomkina, and Klimentenko. Much attention is justifiably accorded to Harold Palmer and Michael West. Palmer’s work on methodology and his stress on oral mastery, along with West’s research on reading and controlled vocabulary, have left their mark on the Soviet curriculum effort. Charles Fries is fleetingly introduced as the structuralist who tried to wed linguistic research and classroom materials; this is followed without comment by the notation that structural linguistics “was not accepted by Soviet methods” (47).

Inexplicably, little is mentioned about the many noteworthy developments in linguistics and allied fields made outside of the Soviet Union in the past few decades. Instead, there is a section entitled “The Soviet Method of Foreign Language Teaching,” the perimeters of which the author baldly states:

The philosophy of Marxism-Leninism is the ground of Soviet Methods as a science; therefore the interpretation of the theory of teaching and learning a foreign language in the Methods course is given from the standpoint of this philosophy (5).

The point needs elaborating. As two noted historians of education exhort: “One cardinal fact must be in our minds. All education takes place within the framework of the Marxist philosophy” (Curtis and Boulwood 1965:625). But what can this mean? In what ways do the tenets of this philosophy speak directly to the content of high school curricula?

Perhaps the most celebrated illustration of this relationship comes from the field of biology. From the 1930s through the 1960s, the study of classical genetics was denounced in open debate and came to be generally viewed as “bourgeois” and as contrary to the principles of dialectical materialism. The assault was led by Trofim

1 There are a number of curious lapses. In one instance, we are alerted to those verbs which “must” be used in answering questions with modals: May I go home? No, you mustn’t. May I take your pen? Yes, you may. Must I do it? No, you needn’t. Elsewhere, we are reminded that the correct pronoun for moon is she and for sun is he. (Oscar Wilde is quoted for support: “It is pleasant to watch the sun in his chariot of gold and the moon in her Chariot of pearl.”) We are cautioned to use the simple past with yesterday and the present perfect with today: I saw her yesterday; I have seen her today. No allowance is made for I saw her today.
Lysenko, who later headed the powerful V.I. Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences. Research in and the study of classical genetics were largely abandoned, and the content of scientific texts was changed to make them conform to “Lysenkoism,” the central ideas of which greatly exaggerated the role that environment plays in agriculture. Unable to deliver the more rapid and less costly increases in crop yields that he had promised, Lysenko was discredited in 1964, following Khrushchev’s ouster. A revision of texts soon followed, and classical genetics was resurrected. What is interesting is that this “new” interpretation of science, like Lysenkoism, claimed to be grounded in Marxism. Adams (1980:174) notes that

[because] both Lysenko’s “Michurinist biology” and its nemesis, “classical genetics,” have, at various times, been articulated and legitimated in the same ideological terms, it is in some sense pointless to ask which one “really” is derivative of, or consistent with, Marxist philosophy.

Today, many Western observers all too often assume that simply because the claim is made that such and such is grounded in Marxist theory, it is. The “Marxism” label is routinely and pragmatically applied to support various intellectual stances, and though Adams gingerly admonishes that Soviet ideology is not “infinitely malleable” (174), we see that it can be open to many interpretations—even irreconcilable ones. The question concerning us here is, What method of foreign language instruction is now sanctioned?

According to Rogova, current approved methodology stresses the primacy of speaking and the importance of reading; it aims at cognitive understanding by the learner through the explicit teaching of language algorithms, followed by supporting exercises to develop habits. Dubbed the Conscious-Practical Approach (where practical stems from practice) by the Soviet psychologist B. V. Belyaev, this method sounds much like Carroll’s (1971) proposal for a meaningful synthesis of audiolingual habit and cognitive code learning.

Richards (1984) points out that all schools of this or that method tirelessly lay claim to greater effectiveness than all competing schools but that they largely lack an empirical basis for doing so. In this regard, the Conscious-Practical Approach appears to be no exception. For instance, Rogova advocates teaching grammar rules explicitly and using extensive, supporting drill work; Krashen (1982) would counter that neither is necessary. Elsewhere, while underscoring the need to develop communicative abilities in students, Rogova recommends without elaboration the teaching of “literary” pronunciation only (give me and not gimme); the teaching of reduced forms for purposes of recognition is not endorsed or acknowledged as valuable. In the absence of exhaustive research pointing to conclusive and unambiguous findings, teachers in the United States have
often become suspicious of anyone’s claiming to have found “the best way” to learn a language. We have made it fashionable (perhaps because it is safe?) to embrace “technical eclecticism.”

Into this atmosphere of skepticism comes Rogova’s text, confidently yet arbitrarily offering advice that many of us are unlikely to accept uncritically.

The model textbook is given a great deal of attention—not only in terms of content, but even in terms of format and appearance. Rogova argues that material should be an authentic representation of the language or culture of the target country, that it should extend the student’s educational horizon, and that it must arouse interest and excite curiosity. At the same time, texts are called upon to

inculcate in pupils the scientific outlook and communist morality, prepare the young people for an active participation in production and other types of socially useful activities. According to Lenin the social function of public education consists in developing and strengthening the creative abilities of the working people to transform society in the direction of communism (41).

And elsewhere:

The content of texts, their ideological and political spirit influence pupils. We must develop in Soviet pupils such qualities as honesty, devotion to and love for our people and the working people of other countries (199).

This is quite a tall order. Rogova is pressing for nothing less than foreign language study as an instrument for furthering domestic political policy. Such a proposal would cause comment if not controversy in the United States, where support for a national curriculum policy is weak, in large part because of the fear that the issues would be politicized (Fund and Wooster 1984). This is not to imply that texts used in U.S. classrooms are ideologically neutral—or, for that matter, that teachers are. Authors, publishers, and teachers all manage to espouse their views in ways both subtle and highly visible. The difference is that there is no governmental policy directing that texts or teachers promote one particular political or economic viewpoint.

All text material is very carefully screened. Writing on his tenure at Kiev State University, Choseed (1977) reports that the newest textbooks make use of current U.S. and British literary and newspaper

2 I am grateful to psychologist Nathaniel Branden for drawing a distinction between “technical” and “fundamental” eclectics. The former are those who merely borrow effective strategies and procedures from various schools of thought and who may or may not be committed to one particular philosophy. The latter are those who are intellectually committed to eclecticism as a philosophy.
sources, “often, understandably, from ‘progressive’ publications” (92). A footnote explains that these “progressive” publications are the daily newspapers of the Communist parties of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. King (1973) notes that Soviet texts will often contain references to national production, to important political or sociological developments in the Soviet Union, and to Lenin and his life. He doubtless would not be surprised to learn that Rogova promotes classroom discussions on “How V.I. Lenin Studied Foreign Languages” and “V.I. Lenin Abroad,” holding them up as activities which cannot “but encourage the pupils to study languages” (293). She includes a role-playing activity, the script for which follows:

Teacher: We are present at a press conference organized by the Ministry of Culture of the USSR. Some American correspondents have been invited to this conference.
Chairman: This press conference is dedicated to Rockwell Kent. My task is to announce the news of his gift to the Soviet people. The famous American artist and author R. Kent was a great fighter for peace, a great friend of the Soviet Union. He died on March 12, 1971 at the age of 88. Long before his death R. Kent presented a large collection of his paintings, drawings, and books to the Soviet Union.
Secretary: Some years ago there was an exhibition of R. Kent’s paintings in the Soviet Union. The pictures were exhibited in many cities and everywhere the people showed great interest in them.
Participant #1: For R. Kent, painting was a means of communication, a form of speech. He met understanding and friendship in our country. R. Kent said, “Art belongs to those who love it most, and I want the Soviet people to have all my life’s work.”
Participant #2: Why has R. Kent not presented his paintings to the American people?
A Progressive American Correspondent: Several years ago he asked the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland to take his collection. The director of the museum said they would be glad to receive such a wonderful collection. But soon after that R. Kent was asked to Washington by the McCarthy Committee where he was questioned about his political views. He refused to answer the questions. Immediately after this event the museum refused to take his pictures.
Chairman: Why did the American museum refuse to take R. Kent’s collection?
A Reactionary American Correspondent: I am a correspondent of the New York Times. I express the opinion of the ruling classes of our country. R. Kent visited the Soviet Union and found many friends there. He supported the communist ideology. He has presented many paintings to Soviet Russia. But who cares?
Chairman: A correspondent of the progressive magazine New World Review wants to answer your question, Mr. Green.
The Correspondent: The fact is that people in America do care. People who are tired of the Cold War and who want peace and friendship, understand the purpose of R. Kent’s gift and are happy about it (293-295).

The reader of this review should not be left with the impression that the typical Soviet student receives only a narrow and tendentious exposure to the West. Hechinger (1967), an education editor for the “reactionary” New York Times who was invited to talk with a group of fourteen-year-old Soviet students, discovered that their favorite book in English was Catcher in the Rye and that there was at least one Beatles fan present. The teaching of culture in the USSR is viewed as an important yet ancillary component of foreign language instruction, but Rogova gives us no reason to assume that the likes of either Salinger or our Liverpudlian friends will find a place in her syllabus. On their behalf, it might be said that at least some cultural understanding is imparted by reading popular novels and examining the lyrics of contemporary music. If, as a whole, art eloquently reveals a society’s values and attitudes, then the study of it as a part of the total foreign language experience can serve to foster “new attitudes to ideas and peoples” and increase understanding and “sympathy for peoples of other cultures and languages” (Rivers 1976:226). This new awareness is seen by many not only as a positive consequence of foreign language study, but often as a justification for it. By stating that students should be acquainted only with “progressive” traditions, customs, and values of the people whose language is studied and by promoting the use of activities such as the role play above, Rogova leaves herself open to the possible charge of taking a less-than-evenhanded approach in selecting the content of the target culture.

Much, much more could and should be written—both about Rogova’s text and about a number of larger issues raised by it and only partially addressed in this review. A close and critical look at comparative foreign language education will help us not only to know what path others are taking, but also to check how firm the footing is on our own road. This review is but one small step in that direction.

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Hispanic Linguistics
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Chinese EFL Students’ Learning Strategies for Oral Communication

HUANG XIAO-HUA
Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute
People’s Republic of China

An investigation of the learning strategies employed by Chinese EFL students for oral communication was conducted. The study attempted to identify the general strategies and specific techniques used by Chinese learners of English to improve their oral proficiency and to assess the effects of some of these. In addition, the study explored learner characteristics which are believed to affect learning strategies and techniques.

A three-part questionnaire was administered to 60 graduating English majors at Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute. Subjects were asked to specify and describe personal foreign language learning strategies (adapted from Reiss 1981); to respond to 22 items (derived from Rubin 1975 and Stern 1975) relating to their use of learning strategies and techniques; and to respond to three language learning situations. Each of the subjects also had an oral interview; this interview, modeled on the Test of Oral Interaction (a part of the Communicative Use of English as a Foreign Language examination series developed by the Royal Society of Arts Examination Board), was designed to evaluate ability in open-ended communicative tasks. To obtain more detailed information about the learners—in particular, their personal insights about their learning processes and strategies—the questionnaire was supplemented by interviews with the ten highest and nine lowest achievers on the oral interview.

The investigation identified a large number of learning strategies and techniques of a function 1 or formal nature, such as talking to oneself and memorizing lists of words. Statistical analyses (including t-tests, simple and multiple regression, and intercorrelations) demonstrated that certain strategies and techniques are critical for improvement in oral proficiency. Particularly prominent were functional strategies such as thinking in English; speaking English with other students, with teachers, and with native speakers, when available; participating actively in group oral
communication activities; and reading extensively out of class. These findings confirm recommendations made by several studies (Rubin 1975, Stern 1975, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978) of the learning strategies of good language learners. The findings also indicate that good learners, especially those at intermediate and advanced stages, exhibit a high level of independence and that motivation plays a very important role. In addition, the findings show that good language learners in China are in many respects similar to good language learners elsewhere.

The interviews revealed a number of interesting similarities and differences in language learning behavior. While good language learners did not all use the same techniques, those they used were all functional in nature and directed at meaning. Also, while these learners were all highly motivated, the reasons for their motivation to learn English varied, as did their language learning histories. For the poorer learners, the cause of low motivation was generally the same—for example, failure to pass the examinations for science majors, followed by a change to an English major—but the learning techniques they used differed considerably. One student reported trying to use strategies employed by a good language learner and finding them unsuitable. This and other findings suggest the complexity and sometimes idiosyncratic character of foreign language learning processes. (M.A. Thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1984)

REFERENCES


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The Effect of Multiple Drafts on Structural Accuracy in Writing

SUSAN DICKER and KEN SHEPPARD
LaGuardia Community College, CUNY

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of multiple drafts on the structural accuracy of ESL students’ written compositions. The progress of 36 upper-intermediate college students was examined over a period of five weeks. The students were Hispanic (72 percent), Chinese,
Vietnamese, Haitian, and Ethiopian. The experimental group (N= 18) wrote three drafts of compositions on each of two topics; the control group (N= 18) wrote four compositions on four different topics. The topics were typical of those assigned in ESL composition courses, for example, "describe your best/worst experience at school." The drafts written by the experimental group were evaluated in terms of richness of supporting detail, organization, correctness of verb forms, and punctuation. The control group received immediate and comprehensive feedback on surface-level errors only. Thus, what the experimental group received was a modified Garrison sequence of procedures (Simmons 1979, Krashen 1984); feedback to the control group was closer to the type of teacher feedback typically given in composition courses.

Diagnostic compositions written by the students before the course began were compared with midterm compositions (written after the five-week treatment period) to determine the effect of the experimental treatment. Three dependent variables were examined:

1. The percentage of correct verb forms (Person, tense, aspect, and context were taken into account; the correctness of negating devices was ignored.)

2. The percentage of correct sentence boundary markers (Periods, semicolons, and question marks were considered equivalent; fragments were ignored.)

3. The ratio of subordinations to the total number of sentences (Adjectival clauses with who, which, and that and subordinate clauses with because, when, while, and so on were counted; errors were ignored.)

The first two measures were selected because teachers commonly use them, consciously or unconsciously, in evaluating students' written work; the third was chosen as a general measure of structural sophistication.

Pretest/post-test and intergroup comparisons were made. As Table 1 shows, two-tailed t-tests revealed that neither group improved on the verb measure; correctness of verb forms actually declined for both groups. Both

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control (N = 18)</th>
<th>Experimental (N = 18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Boundary Markers</td>
<td>1.90*</td>
<td>1.83*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinations</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>-4.10*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

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groups improved significantly in their use of sentence boundary markers. On the subordination measure, both groups performed more poorly on the post-test, the experimental group significantly so.

There were significant differences between the two groups on all three measures. As Table 2 shows, the experimental group performed significantly less well on the variables of verbs and subordinations but significantly better with sentence boundary markers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>–3.52*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Boundary Markers</td>
<td>2.50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinations</td>
<td>–9.73*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p <.05

The results suggest that teachers cannot expect that having students write drafts will contribute to greater structural accuracy. The improvement of the experimental group in the use of sentence boundary markers suggests a more developed notion of what a sentence is, and this possibility would seem worthy of further investigation. However, the poorer post-test performance of both groups on the other two measures suggests that variables such as the topics assigned or teaching behaviors may have influenced student performance and should be more tightly controlled.

Further study is needed on the effects of process-oriented teaching procedures on written composition. It is not clear to what extent, if any, process-oriented composition teaching affects the structural accuracy and sophistication of ESL student writing.

REFERENCES

Authors' Address: Department of ESL, LaGuardia Community College, Long Island City, NY 11101
Comments on Roberta G. Abraham’s “Patterns in the Use of the Present Tense Third Person Singular -s by University-Level ESL Speakers”

Two Readers React. . .

PEGGY RODRIGUEZ and ROBIN SABINO
College of the Virgin Islands

Roberta G. Abraham’s article in the TESOL Quarterly (Vol. 18, No. 1, March 1984), in which she discusses the use of the third person singular -s by university-level ESL speakers, offers useful insight into how learners construct interlanguage systems. She identifies tendencies in two groups of learners: low-level learners whose self-monitoring promotes random distribution of -s and more advanced learners whose non-random -s distribution appears to be lexically determined.

Abraham’s results are interesting because they suggest that 1) acquisition of third person singular -s proceeds lexically rather than by internalization of a grammatical rule and 2) attention to self-monitoring for third person singular -s (and perhaps for other target language structures) should be continued through advanced levels of an ESL curriculum.

However, as Abraham herself states, the amount of data in her study was such that she was unable to test the significance of the distribution of the -s morpheme for individual students. Even when data for those students with the least random distribution of the -s morpheme were pooled, Abraham found that comparisons among verb forms, except the first and last, were nonsignificant (see Table 6, reproduced below as Table 1). This indicates a need for an expanded study, which might disclose a greater number of significant differences within the difficulty index.

Abraham describes the order of the verbs in the middle of the table as problematic, suggesting that idiomatic use of the forms may
play a role in acquisition of –s. A second mechanism is also required to account for the relative positioning of seems and eats, where acoustic intensity and “difficulties of pronunciation” are invoked as possible explanations.

We suggest that consideration of phonotactic patterning may provide a straightforward way to account for ordering in the difficulty index, should further research indeed find the differences in ordering to be significant. Regarding eats, we queried a small sample of speakers of American English (N= 25) and found that the ts was frequently voiced: 83 percent of the time in the environment /— [+ voice], that is, when the segment was followed by a voiced segment, as in eats up, and 80 percent of the time in the environment /— [– voice], that is, when the segment was followed by a voiceless segment, as in eats frankfurters. If the third person singular allomorph in eats is commonly voiced, it is less likely to be perceived and produced than the voiceless allomorph in looks, wakes, and takes. Thus, the relative position of eats in the difficulty index is not so surprising.

Referring again to Table 1, we can then group the items according to the voicing of the -s morpheme, Go and take remain problematic. However, the difference between these items is small, and the verbs are in the middle of the table, where differences were not significant. Furthermore, in examining the phonotactics of Abraham’s idioms, we found that syllable boundaries were assigned to [wek#s##ap] (wakes up) and [lok#s##laik] (looks like) to produce [wek##sap] and [lok##slaik], while [sim#z##tu] (seems to) remained [simz##tu]. In idioms as elsewhere, difficulty in perception and production of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Mean Percentage of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>look</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wake</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seem</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1
Difficulty Index
Non-Random Error Group
(Abraham 1984, Table 6, p. 64)
-s morpheme may be influenced by the phonotactics of pronunciation across word and syllable boundaries.

Because we do not have Abraham’s stimulus sentences, it is not possible to comment further on the overall validity of this solution. However, a phonotactical analysis, by accounting for the distribution of the -s morpheme in terms of acoustic intensity, explains the higher frequency of errors in voiced environments. It may thus be useful to consider phonotactics as a factor in future research.

The Author Responds. . .

ROBERTA G. ABRAHAM
Iowa State University

I am happy to respond to Peggy Rodriguez and Robin Sabino’s comments on my study. Before taking up the substance of their remarks, however, I would like to correct their summary of my conclusions. First, I identified four groups of learners, not two: Both lower-level and advanced learners demonstrated the two patterns of use of the third person singular -s I discussed—random, suggesting self-monitoring, and non-random, suggesting the preferential use of -s with certain verbs. However, a chi-square test on the distribution of morpheme use by the two groups indicated that the lower-level subjects demonstrated more random use and the upper-level subjects less random use than one would expect by chance. One interpretation of these findings is that some students (from both the lower and higher levels) were in the process of acquiring the third person singular -s verb by verb, while others had learned a grammatical rule which they were applying in a more or less random fashion, that is, they were monitoring this structure. If this interpretation is correct, we can say that lower-level students monitored the use of this particular morpheme more frequently than more advanced students, although both patterns of use were observed in both groups.

That said, we can turn to the difficulty index for the non-random users. First of all, I agree that an expanded study of the order of verbs in the index is needed. Nevertheless, even if further research corroborates the order I found, I do not think that consideration of phonotactic patterning will “provide a straightforward
added] way to account for ordering in the difficulty index.” I have several reasons for believing this.

One of these is based on further examination of my data, which I undertook in an attempt to extend Rodriguez and Sabino’s useful analysis of the phonotactics of my idioms. Rodriguez and Sabino suggest that while native speakers reassign the [s] in wakes up and looks like to initial position of the following word, they do not do so with the [z] in seems to, presumably because to do so would require speakers to form a consonant cluster which does not occur word-initially in English. They imply that such reassignment of [s] causes it to be more readily perceived and therefore more frequently produced by speakers who are acquiring this morpheme. Because, in these idioms, [s] is the only allomorph that is reassigned, Rodriguez and Sabino appear to conclude that it is the only one that can be reassigned; thus, in their closing paragraph, they suggest that the higher observed frequency of errors in using the morpheme in voiced environments may be explained in terms of phonotactic considerations.

However, they have neglected to note that it is possible for the [z] allomorph to be reassigned when the following word begins with a vowel, as in goes over or reads all. Thus, phonotactics would provide an explanation for the order in the difficulty index only if the verbs with the voiced allomorph [z] were followed in the stimulus sentences by words beginning with consonants.

As it turns out, most of my sentences for verbs taking the [z] allomorph did provide environments in which native speakers would be unlikely to reassign the allomorph. For that reason, if we look only at comparisons in the use of -s among the different verbs in my study, Rodriguez and Sabino’s explanation may be valid. However, each of the non-idiom verbs which take the voiced allomorph [z] —goes, reads, and eats (the latter is included, since, as Rodriguez and Sabino have suggested and as my own follow-up investigations, reported below, have to some extent confirmed, ts in this verb is often voiced) —was presented in at least one sentence in which the word following the verb began with a vowel. Thus, the opportunity exists to test further the claim discussed above. The following stimulus sentences illustrate the contrasts in environments for the three verbs:

**goes**

Each afternoon he goes downtown to drink coffee with his friends. Each day at five he goes over to the gym to play handball.

**reads**

Occasionally she reads magazines such as Time. Every morning he reads all the business reports.
In the summer she eats fresh green vegetables from her garden. When he’s at home, he eats an orange or an apple for lunch.

For each of these verbs, I tallied the “with -s” and “without -s” responses of the non-random users for the verb presented in each environment and performed chi-square tests on the three distributions. The results are shown in Tables 1-3.

### TABLE 1
**Go**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/___ #C</th>
<th>/___ #V</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produced With -s</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produced Without -s</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = .125
p = .72

Note: /___ #C = presented before a word beginning with a consonant; /___ #V = presented before a word beginning with a vowel.

### TABLE 2
**Read**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/___ #C</th>
<th>/___ #V</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produced With -s</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produced Without -s</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = .237
p = .63
TABLE 3
Eat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/__#C</th>
<th>/__#V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produced With -s</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produced Without -s</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 0.016 \]
\[ p = .90 \]

It can be seen that for none of the verbs is there a significant relationship between the use of -s and environment. We must thus question an explanation based solely on phonotactics and look for other factors which at least interact with environment. It would seem, as I suggested in my article (66), that frequency of use by native speakers of fixed expressions such as looks like and wakes up and the greater acoustic intensity of the voiceless segment, wherever it may be assigned, may also increase the chances of the non-native speaker’s perceiving and subsequently producing the -s.

Rodriguez and Sabino also suggest that difficulties in producing the -s (presumably for speakers who know it should be used) may also be attributable to “the phonotactics of pronunciation across word and syllable boundaries.” This explanation is again probably too limited. Here, there seems to be an assumption that non-native speakers use the strategy of reassignment of -s across word boundaries in the same way that native speakers do—as an important means of simplifying pronunciation of certain consonant sequences. I do not believe that this assumption is valid.

While reassignment may sometimes occur, non-native speakers of English frequently simplify consonant sequences in ways which are not commonly employed by native speakers (see, for example, work with native speakers of Chinese and Arabic reported in Anderson 1983a), including deletion of one or more consonants, epenthesis, and substitution of one sound for another. If a speaker happens to choose deletion or substitution, rather than reassignment of -s, as a means of dealing with difficulty in pronunciation, the result could very well be omission of the morpheme, even though the speaker knows it should be used. If this occurs, the resulting
pattern of -s use will be quite different from that observed if reassignment is the only simplification strategy employed. How simplification is done by particular speakers (and with what results) may very well be related to first language background, although it may to some extent be idiosyncratic. Further research is clearly needed, however.

Finally, regarding acoustic intensity, Rodriguez and Sabino’s observation that the /s/ in *eats* is often voiced (so that the -s is not as salient as in *looks*, *wakes*, and *takes*, in which the voiceless allomorph is used) is interesting. This voicing phenomenon, however, does not seem to result from the operation of phonotactic rules, at least not of the type discussed above. To investigate this question further, I did an informal survey of eight native speakers of English in my department. The eight speakers were asked to complete the following sentences:

1. She reads all the sports news ___________
2. She eats all the chocolate ___________
3. He reads Frank’s reports rather than __________
4. He eats frankfurters every day __________

(The completion technique was used to distract speakers from the sounds I was interested in.) I found that the /s/ was indeed voiced to some degree in both Sentences 2 and 4 by a majority of speakers. However, there was typically less voicing of the /s/ in *eats* than of the /s/ in *reads*; this finding supports my original claim that the position of *eats* in the difficulty index is not consistent with an explanation based exclusively on voicing and acoustic intensity. One possible explanation here is that alveolar clusters are generally harder than other clusters to pronounce (see Anderson 1983b) and that this difficulty overrides other factors. Another is that the vowel which precedes the final consonant or consonant cluster in the verb may influence pronunciation of the -s. Further research with *eats/reads* and other contrasting verb pairs is needed to test these hypotheses.

Thus, while phonotactic considerations may partially explain the ordering in the difficulty index, it would seem that they do not provide a complete or straightforward answer. The situation is in all likelihood complex, with several factors interacting with each other. Perhaps the ones I have mentioned play a role; it is likely that there are others. I appreciate the suggestions made by Rodriguez and Sabino, and I hope they will provide data from their subjects that will illuminate this question.

THE FORUM
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Ghassan Haddad for his help in the phonological analysis reported in this response.

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*Comments on Nancy Rennau Tumposky’s “Behavioral Objectives, the Cult of Efficiency, and Foreign Language Learning: Are They Compatible?”*

*REINHOLD SCHLIEPER*

*Institute of Public Administration*
*Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*

Though probably not the staunchest advocate of the use of behavioral objectives in second language learning, I am nonetheless somewhat reluctant to accept Nancy Rennau Tumposky’s discussion (Vol. 18, No. 2, June 1984) in the *TESOL Quarterly*. For one thing, Tumposky equates behavioral objectives, performance objectives, instructional objectives, and terminal behavior objectives. I will not quibble over the first three, but the last is clearly different from them.

In ESP courses, for instance, one can clearly delineate a universe of discourse in which the student needs to be firm. Most second language learners—particularly those who have studied the target language in the country where it is spoken—would affirm that they mastered different universes of discourse at different times. Living with a family, for example, entails mastery of an inventory of kitchen and household lexical items first. Imperatives probably play a more important role than future perfect passive or optatives. Likewise, in ESP courses, the universe of discourse can be delimited. Computer science students need lexical items different from those...
taught in a survival English course. Their need for grammatical structures can also be delineated. Imperatives, simple past, simple present, and passives play dominant roles. Reading, for the budding computer programmer, is far more prominent than speaking or listening skills.

Knowing these characteristics of the “target universe of discourse”—as opposed to the “target language”—allows the teacher to formulate an overall target, or “terminal objective.” For example, by the end of the course, students must be able to read a sample of a reference manual, demonstrating their understanding of it by answering comprehension items with at least 70 percent accuracy. This, then, is a terminal objective. Similar terminal behavior objectives might describe the extent of the student’s competency in understanding—for example, the ability to provide the equivalents, in ordinary language, of statements written in high-level programming languages or the ability to understand oral presentations on technical subjects. The term terminal objective, however, clearly does not have the same meaning as the term instructional objective. A terminal objective is an instructional objective of a certain type, one which focuses the teacher’s efforts. Terminal objectives are particularly necessary in an ESP program, in which the teacher is more often than not an ESL generalist with previously different teaching goals and experiences.

So, yes, the use of terminal objectives does help to clarify and thus facilitate instruction and evaluation. The latter is not merely a matter of accountability, since evaluation of student performance is part of the pedagogical process. I will not debate whether students do better or worse with the terminal objectives in hand, but I have observed that the clear statement of a learning objective does reduce anxiety levels; after all, test content has thus been made clear a priori.

Tumposky argues against limiting the domain of teaching and testing to only the measurable. This argument would apply not to behavioral objectives exclusively, but to assessment in general. After all, what teachers in their right mind would attempt to test the non-measurable or ignore the particular level of students’ skill development in designing a test, and what teachers (unless their sense of ethics is seriously flawed) would not give their students at least some idea of what they are going to be tested on? If vocal expression is difficult to score, then the least one should do is try to formulate aesthetic criteria for performing such difficult scoring. Once these criteria have been formulated, the teacher should not hesitate to make them a matter of public record—for whatever purpose.
There is certainly much in the learning process that involves covert behavior on the part of learners, but as long as we develop syllabi, courses, and tests and as long as we issue course grades, we must state as clearly as possible what we will teach, what we hope to achieve in a given period of time, and what we will use to measure that achievement. The answer, then, is not to teach what is easiest to measure or to rely on guesses, but to try to be as precise as possible about what we must measure.

Finally, behavioral objectives are unavoidable in an individualized-learning or a CAI environment—environments which are recommended for many ESP courses in which the primary objective is the development of reading comprehension. Because students must have the experience of progress, clear milestones must be set. An open-ended, individualized or CAI learning environment would, precisely because of its endlessness, lead to frustration and in that way be self-defeating.

The Author Responds...

NANCY RENNAU TUMPOSKY  
State University of New York at Albany

In saying that behavioral objectives are “also known as performance objectives, instructional objectives, or terminal behavior objectives” (295), I did not intend to imply that I take them to be the same phenomenon. Indeed, I do not, and I simply wished to point out that in the literature, the terms are used inconsistently and without careful definition, so that it is often difficult to ascertain exactly what is being talked about. It was these inconsistencies that I wanted to highlight. I apologize for any lack of clarity there may have been on this point.

Schlieper clearly believes that terminal behavior objectives have a place in ESP courses because “one can clearly delineate a universe of discourse in which the student needs to be firm”—specifically, the grammar, lexis, and distribution of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). I agree that it is often possible to specify in advance the lexical items which will be most useful to ESP students, but I strongly disagree with the claim that grammatical structure, language functions, or the relative importance of the four skills can be so easily categorized. The budding computer programmer may have
a compelling need at the moment to be able to read in English, but is it not foreseeable that that student may someday also want to write a paper, attend a conference, or meet with colleagues from another country? It is relatively easy to predict what will probably be useful but much more difficult to state with certainty (and exclude from the curriculum) what will definitely not be useful. Furthermore, focus on one skill to the exclusion of the others ignores the interrelatedness of the four skills and can lead to a highly artificial (not to mention monotonous) classroom use of language.

Schlieper’s understanding of the purpose of ESP instruction has a decidedly short-term emphasis, as if students learn English only to read a particular book or article (in which case it would be far more sensible to pay someone to do a translation), rather than to acquire a skill which could augment their professional and personal growth for many years to come. Such an interpretation of the goals of ESP study disregards what Widdowson (1981) sees as a crucial aspect of ESP courses: the definition of learner needs in terms of both goal orientation and process orientation. This distinction gives equal weight to the selection of appropriate language content and to the transitional behaviors of learners (that is, the way in which the content is learned) so as to enable them to continue learning effectively even after the course of instruction is completed. Widdowson’s point, if I am not mistaken, is that a description of the language to be acquired is by itself inadequate for the design of an ESP curriculum. Thus, process and goal orientations can be seen as complementary functions, similar to process and product evaluations (Long 1984).

Another objection of Schlieper’s is that while student performance may or may not be improved by the use of terminal behavior objectives, such objectives do, in his opinion, reduce anxiety levels. I agree that the reduction of anxiety is an important factor to consider in choosing an instructional method, but the literature is not at all conclusive about the purported cause-effect relationship between behavioral objectives and anxiety reduction (see Melton 1978). Learners with certain personality characteristics or a particular cognitive style may actually react adversely to prespecified objectives. Moreover, the creation of misleading expectations about what it means to learn a foreign language could be counterproductive in the long run.

As for the arguments concerning testing, the problem here is surely not one of failing to take the level of the students into account or of surprising students with tests unrelated to the goals of the course. Even though no “teachers in their right mind would attempt to test the non-measurable,” we should nonetheless be teaching it. If our teaching is defined only by what we can test, we may be giving short shrift to some of the most important aspects of communication.
Finally, it is a myth that “behavioral objectives are unavoidable in an individualized-learning or a CAI environment.” For example, Bloom (1984) has found that on achievement measures, students who participated in one-to-one tutoring scored two standard deviations above the mean of control group classes which had conventional instruction. This one-to-one tutoring, while clearly individualized (and effective), was not based on behavioral objectives. Likewise, CAI can have many different formats and functions, ranging from drill to creative problem solving or programming. Smith (1984) has pointed out some of these creative and interactive possibilities for computers in foreign language learning—uses which again do not involve behavioral objectives. We should of course provide our students with means by which they can measure their progress; even better, we should involve students in the process of developing such measures. The behavioral objectives approach, however, is for many teachers and students a restricting and uncomfortable way of doing this.

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