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Executive Assistant: CAROL M. LeCLAIR, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
Editor’s Note

In February of 1985, Barry Taylor, on a leave of absence from the editorship of the *TESOL Quarterly*, informed the Executive Board of TESOL that he would not be able to resume the position when his leave ended in July. In his letter to the Board, Barry expressed his disappointment and deep regret at resigning before the completion of his term, but explained that the circumstances surrounding his position at San Francisco State University would not permit him the time which he felt was required to continue to edit the Quarterly in the manner in which he previously had.

Following a thorough policy review, the Executive Board of TESOL invited me to assume the editorship of the *TESOL Quarterly*, effective from the end of the TESOL Convention in New York, through December 31, 1987, the end of the five-year term to which Barry Taylor had been appointed. I was pleased to accept this opportunity to serve TESOL and the *TESOL Quarterly* readership, and I look forward to contributing to the growth and vitality of the Quarterly.

In This Issue

The contributors to this issue of the *TESOL Quarterly* offer perspectives on a number of issues and ESOL settings: ESL in the public schools, survival English, and the teaching of English to adults are all considered, as are methods of vocabulary instruction, the development of listening ability, problems in academic writing, the teaching of learning strategies, and testing. For those interested in these specific areas and in broad trends in our field, the articles in this issue provide valuable insight into the nature and diversity of current work.

- Scott Enright and Mary Lou McCloskey examine the “double challenge” facing ESL teachers, bilingual educators, and other ESL professionals in the public school setting “to maximize their own language instruction
and also to make instructional recommendations, based on what is known about children’s second language acquisition, to other educators who have been charged with meeting LES students’ needs.” The authors describe and discuss the communicative language teaching model and its potential for organizing classroom interaction and the physical environment in which learning takes place. In comparing the traditional and communicative classroom, they argue that “the former is primarily concerned with teachers (and their ease, comfort, interests, and goals) in mind and the latter is organized with children (and their ease, comfort, interests, and goals) in mind.”

Linda Seright reports on a study which explored the relationship between age and short-term development in aural comprehension ability in adults. In two samples, each comprised of 18 pairs of older (aged 25 to 41) and younger (aged 17 to 24) subjects who were matched on the variables of informal exposure, pretest score, nonverbal IQ, education, and previous ESL instruction, the mean gain was greater for younger subjects than for older subjects. These results suggest that among adult L2 learners in a formal setting, significant differences in rate of attainment may be found within a fairly narrow range of age.” Seright discusses the implications of these findings for instructional programs and offers an agenda for further research.

Elsa Roberts Auerbach and Denise Burgess examine survival materials designed for newly arrived adults. In line with calls by sociologists of curriculum for critical analysis of the sociopolitical implications of adult education curricula, the authors evaluate these materials “in terms of both how accurately they reflect the immigrants’ reality and the extent to which they may shape that reality.” To what extent are current materials in this genre situationally realistic? To what extent do they treat adult learners with dignity and assist their transition into the new culture? The authors argue that answering these questions is a necessary step toward adopting Freire’s (1981) problem-posing view of education, which they recommend as an “empowering” orientation for curriculum and materials development in this area.

John Crow and June Quigley report the results of an experimental comparison of a traditional approach to vocabulary instruction and a semantic field approach (the latter based on the association between a keyword and five related words). An intact-group design involving 42 subjects was used to measure the short-term and longer-term effects of each treatment. Results suggested that a semantic field approach, for which subjects indicated a strong preference, is a “more effective and efficient builder of passive vocabulary.” The study also provided evidence that “the learning that occurred through formal exposure was significantly better than whatever incidental vocabulary learning may have occurred during intensive English and university studies.”
Bernard Mohan and Winnie Au-Yeung Lo investigate the role of transfer and developmental factors in Chinese students’ problems with written academic discourse in English. Their examination of classical texts in Chinese and modern works on Chinese composition “found no support for claims that the organizational pattern of Chinese writing differs markedly from that of English.” A comparison of aims, teaching practices, and evaluation in English composition teaching in Hong Kong and British Columbia, together with interviews of 30 Chinese students who had studied English composition in Hong Kong and were taking English composition classes in Vancouver, suggested that difficulties appeared to have more to do with developmental factors; “ability in rhetorical organization develops late, even among writers who are native speakers, and because this ability is derived from formal education, previous educational experience may facilitate or retard the development of academic writing ability.”

Lyle Bachman describes a set of procedures for constructing cloze tests based on rational deletions and argues that “these procedures can result in tests that are comparable in reliability and validity to fixed-ratio cloze tests.” Bachman’s study, which received the inaugural TESOL Research Interest Section/Newbury House Distinguished Research Award at the 1985 TESOL Convention, suggests that a rational deletion procedure allows test developers greater flexibility in designing and revising items to test a range of textual relationships and thus makes possible more precise judgments regarding the content validity of such tests.

J. Michael O’Malley, Anna Chamot, Gloria Stewner-Manzanares, Rocco Russo, and Lisa Kupper report the findings of a two-phase study of learning strategies used by high school-level ESL students. The first phase of the study involved interviews with ESL students and their teachers to identify strategies used in a variety of tasks typically found in ESL classrooms and other settings. In the second phase of the study, the effect of training in selected metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective learning strategies was investigated. While results varied according to the learning strategy and task involved, the authors argue that in general, “classroom instruction on learning strategies with integrative language skills can facilitate learning.”

Also in this issue:

- Reviews
- Brief Reports and Summaries

- The Forum: Mary Finocchiaro reacts to Margie S. Berns’s review of Finocchiaro and Brumfit’s The Functional-Notional Approach: From Theory to Practice, and Berns responds; and Robert Kaplan comments on Mark Clarke’s article, “On the Nature of Technique: What Do We Owe the Gurus?”
Recent research into the processes of children’s first and second language development has yielded a number of insights which have been combined to create the communicative language teaching model. This model should be useful to English as a second language (ESL) teachers, both in planning their own instruction and in advising the increasing numbers of regular classroom teachers with limited English-speaking (LES) students in their classes. This article summarizes the central assumptions of the communicative language teaching model and specifies the potential difficulties that regular classroom teachers may face in adopting it. It then presents seven criteria to be used in organizing communicative classrooms and describes specific applications of these criteria to decisions about organizing classroom interaction and the physical environment.

INTRODUCTION

Limited English-speaking children have long been a part of the educational scene in English-speaking countries around the world, but only in the last 15 to 20 years has a clear national awareness evolved in the United States regarding the specific learning needs of these students. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, U.S. legislative and judicial mandates dealing with the rights of public school LES students to equal educational opportunity led to the creation of bilingual education programs specifically designed for LES students. Until very recently, the federal legislation authorizing and funding these programs has required some form of instruction in two languages (the students’ native language and English). Money for bilingual education programs has gone primarily to programs and classrooms with concentrations of students from a single language background (e.g., Spanish/English programs in Texas, Vietnamese/English programs in New York and California). With some notable
exceptions (e.g., the Culver City, California, Spanish immersion program and the Fairfax County, Virginia, ESL program), second language instruction in these programs has been organized as a curricular subcomponent of the larger dual-language instructional model and has mainly consisted of formal, small-group instruction in the vocabulary and syntax of English (Alatis and Twaddell 1976, Donoghue and Kunkle 1979, Legarreta 1979).

In 1985, the demography, politics, and pedagogy of bilingual education in the United States are changing. Department of Education census projections (Oxford, Pol, Lopez, Stupp, Peng, and Gendell 1981) indicate that the number of LES students in the American population between the ages of 5 and 14 will continue to rise dramatically for at least the remainder of this century. No longer are LES students concentrated in a very few states; rather, linguistic minority households are now found in communities across the country, in places where such differences have never existed or have been able to be ignored in the past. This trend has resulted in a much wider and a much more diverse distribution of LES students in the public schools than ever before, with more and more school systems each year facing the enrollment of LES students from several different language backgrounds in various grade levels and schools.

As the numbers of LES students and the schools receiving them are increasing in the United States, educational programs in general are being trimmed. The prevailing federal as well as local philosophy appears to be to “mainstream” (to place in the regular school program) students with “special needs,” including LES students. With regard to bilingual education, the 1984 federal legislation reauthorizing the funding of bilingual programs was amended to give local school systems much wider discretion in their choice of permissible instructional techniques, including those not making use of the students’ native languages. Under these revised regulations, programs placing LES students in regular school classrooms with instructional aides or resource teachers available to assist the regular classroom teachers are eligible for federal bilingual education assistance.

Together, these developments present ever-increasing numbers of regular classroom teachers and other public school personnel, who have little special training and few programs and materials, with the challenge of meeting the educational needs of LES students. ESL teachers, bilingual educators, and other ESL professionals are thus presented with a double challenge: to maximize their own language instruction and also to make instructional recommendations, based on what is known about children’s second language acquisition, to other educators who have been charged with meeting
LES students’ needs. This article has been written to assist ESL professionals in meeting this double challenge.

THE GOOD NEWS: THE COMMUNICATIVE TEACHING MODEL

Fortunately, the recent literature examining the processes of language development (L1 and L2) has yielded a number of new insights which have the potential for being transformed into instructional practices for assisting LES students in both the ESL and regular classroom. Beginning in the late 1960s, researchers studying the language development of both young L1 learners (e.g., Snow 1972, Clark 1973, Shatz and Gelman 1973, Wells 1974, Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz 1976) and young L2 learners (e.g., Fantini 1976, Fillmore 1976, Genishi 1976, Cummins 1979) began to shift the primary focus of research from the syntactic dimensions of linguistic performance to the semantic and social/contextual dimensions of language comprehension and performance. As several writers (e.g., Berko-Gleason and Weintraub 1978 for L1 development and Lindfors 1980 for L2 development) have already noted, this shift has resulted in a substantial reconceptualization of how children (and perhaps all language learners) approach the language learning task. Earlier theories of children’s language development were either strongly nativist (i.e., children acquire language through mere exposure and through the activation of an innate “language acquisition device”) or strongly behaviorist (i.e., children develop language by having their verbal behavior conditioned and shaped by parents and other adult teachers). Increasing evidence from recent multidimensional, qualitative studies suggests that children’s language development is a strongly interactive process, one which relies not only on specific (and perhaps innate) cognitive and linguistic mechanisms, but also on the child’s active participation in a linguistic environment attuned to the child’s communicative needs.

This interactive, communicative view of language development is expressed in a number of different forms today, ranging from those (like the social-interactive theories of Snow 1977 and Wells 1981) which place slightly more emphasis on linguistic input and what children take from their linguistic environment and the communicative encounter to those (like the “creative construction” theory of Dulay and Burt 1974) which place slightly more emphasis on cognitive/linguistic mechanisms and on what children bring to the linguistic environment and the communicative encounter. This view of language development has in turn been accompanied by a substantial reconceptualization of the whole notion of linguistic competence and language proficiency, with “language proficiency”
being replaced by the wider construct of “communicative competence” in both the theoretical and popular literature.

As Savignon (1983) and others have pointed out, an interactive, communicative (“one learns to communicate by communicating”) view of the language learning process has been around for centuries. Several instructional applications of the communicative view have been proposed for adult and child L2 learners, for example, Curran’s (1976) Counseling-Learning, Lozanov’s (1979) Suggestopedia, and the Natural Approach (Terrell 1982, Krashen and Terrell 1983). Discussions of the theoretical assumptions and the teaching practices of a communicative model of language instruction abound in the current professional literature, including the pages of this journal (e.g., Taylor 1983, Nattinger 1984, Richards 1984). Without attempting to present a comprehensive review of those discussions or to resolve any ongoing theoretical and methodological controversies, this article summarizes the assumptions of the general communicative model of language development and language instruction that most directly apply to promoting L2 development in elementary school classrooms. These assumptions then provide the theoretical framework for various practical recommendations.

The key assumptions of the communicative language teaching model for elementary classrooms are as follows:

1. Children learn language as a medium of communication rather than as a curriculum subject with sets of isolated topics, facts, or skills; thus language is viewed as a verb (doing language, or communicating) rather than as a noun (knowledge of a language). Similarly, language proficiency is defined as speakers’ successful accomplishment of their communicative intentions across a wide variety of social settings. This is often referred to as communicative competence.

2. “Successful” communication, as used above to define language proficiency, includes taking one’s respondents into account, both as a sender and as a receiver of a message. Wells (1981) refers to this important dimension of language proficiency, or communicative competence, as “establishing intersubjectivity.” As he explains:

   Any act of linguistic communication involves the establishment of a triangular relationship between the sender, the receiver and the context or situation. The sender intends that, as a result of his communication, the receiver should come to attend to the same situation as himself and construe it in the same way. For the communication to be successful,
therefore, it is necessary (a) that the receiver should come to attend to the situation as intended by the sender; (b) that the sender should know that the receiver is so doing; and (c) that the receiver should know that the sender knows that this is the case. That is to say they need to establish *intersubjectivity* about the situation to which the communication refers (1981:47).

Wells also maintains that successful communication can involve written as well as oral collaboration, the writer being the sender and the reader being the receiver. Thus for many proponents of the communicative teaching model, becoming a successful communicator in the L2 is synonymous with becoming “literate” in the L2. These theorists also view the processes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as best developed simultaneously (e.g., Goodman, Goodman, and Flores 1979, Searfoss, Smith, and Bean 1981, Hudelson 1984).

3. Children learn language (i.e., how to communicate successfully) through purposeful interaction with the L2 environment. This purposeful interaction involves exposure to language as communication as well as opportunities to practice language as communication in a wide variety of contexts.

4. The language as communication (or input) that children are exposed to in the L2 environment will be most useful to them in learning to be successful L2 communicators if it is meaningful and interesting, or, as Urzúa (1985) might refer to these two qualities in combination, if it is “real.” Real input is language as communication that a) is largely able to be understood by children—what Krashen and his colleagues call “comprehensible input” (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen 1982, Krashen and Terrell 1983); b) is closely tied to objects and enterprises in the children’s world that they may simultaneously and subsequently use to express their own meaning intentions—what Brown (1973) calls the “here and now”; c) is adjusted to take into account children’s previous linguistic experience (i.e., what and how they can communicate in their native languages as well as what and how they are presently able to communicate in the L2); and d) takes into account children’s previous cognitive, social, and cultural experiences.

5. As the last point implies, children bring a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences to the L2 encounter. These lead them to use different socioaffective as well as cognitive approaches to the L2 development task. At present, none of these approaches may be deemed inherently superior to the rest, although each may have different implications for instruction.
6. Children’s L2 development is a holistic process; that is, children use all of their available resources—linguistic and nonlinguistic, internal (cognitive, affective) and external (social, environmental)—to become successful L2 communicators.

7. Children’s L2 development is facilitated by a comfortable classroom atmosphere, that is, one which encourages and celebrates efforts at communicating, one which focuses on the meaning of utterances rather than on their form, and one which treats errors as a normal part of the L2 acquisition process.

THE BAD NEWS THE DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNICATIVE MODEL

Calling communicative teaching a model implies that its assumptions encompass a comprehensive new method rather than only a new syllabus or adjustments in the old one (Yalden 1982). Unlike many teaching approaches or curriculum packages, the communicative teaching model does not require large purchases of special textbooks and equipment or the setting aside of special blocks of class time to “teach” it to segregated groups of students. What it does often require is an extensive reconceptualization of the overall instructional process by the teachers who put the model into operation and by the parents, administrators, and others who support them. Thus, the appeal of the communicative teaching model is diminished by the potential difficulty of its implementation and at the same time enhanced by the potential economy of its implementation.

The largest difficulty facing teachers attempting to adopt a communicative framework for their overall instruction is that they must deliberately overturn an enduring, stereotypical image of what a “good” U.S. public school classroom should be, an image realized in most U.S. schoolrooms today (Sirotnik 1983). Even those teachers who become totally convinced that the communicative teaching model is the right thing to use in their classrooms will probably find it necessary to alter other equally strong and well-developed teaching beliefs and teaching patterns emanating from the stereotype of the “good classroom.” They will also have to explain the changes dictated by this “new” model to others.

“No Talking”

A recent U.S. television commercial illustrates the pervasiveness of this stereotype and its unwritten conventions as well as the various difficulties teachers face in attempting to alter it. The advertisement is for an electronic teaching-aid toy called “Speak ‘n
Math," and in this particular commercial the comedian/actor Bill Cosby is the company’s spokesman.

Now, one would surmise that the company that introduced Speak 'n Math (and its counterpart “Speak 'n Spell”) was quite thorough in designing and developing the toy. The toy’s primary function appears to be based on two well-grounded, cognitive-developmental principles, which are also a part of the communicative teaching model 1) that learning is interactive and 2) that concepts and language are best learned in direct combination. Thus, in the case of Speak 'n Math, as the child taps out the components of an arithmetic problem, they appear on a tiny screen accompanied by an electronic voice naming them (e.g., “three,” “plus,” “two,” and so on), and the child’s answer to the problem is also orally evaluated by the electronic voice (“Correct; very good” or “Incorrect; try again”).

But now let us examine the scenario in which this communicative toy is presented. The commercial opens on Cosby sitting at what appears to be the rear of an elementary school classroom, with his back to the children and the teacher, who are all busily engaged in what children and teachers do. How is this classroom scene arranged? (Readers might wish to imagine the scene for themselves before proceeding. ) The students are all sitting at their own private desks, and the desks are all arranged in rows facing what appears to be the front of the classroom. There, awaiting their undivided attention, is the teacher, positioned at a large blackboard. Who is the teacher? The teacher is a woman, advancing in years, with spectacles and white hair arranged in a bun, and with a pointer and chalk in her hands. What does the teacher do? She commands the continued attention of the students by writing bits of information on the blackboard and by calling on a succession of students with upraised hands who take turns responding to her questions and other solicitations.

In this setting, Cosby begins his message about the wonders of Speak 'n Math. In a voice barely above a conspiratorial whisper, he explains how the small machine operates and promises that it will make learning math facts easier and more fun. After the commercial cuts away to provide specific product information, the scene returns to Cosby delightedly trying out the Speak 'n Math toy, pushing the buttons and listening to the electronic voice. Temporarily forgetting his whereabouts, Cosby raises his voice excitedly to urge us to buy this “neat” toy and try it out! At that very moment the commercial ends with a shot of the stern visage of the teacher, poking Cosby’s shoulder and firmly intoning (much to the children’s merriment and to Cosby’s consternation) the sacred injunction of the U.S. public school classroom: “No talking!”

ORGANIZING THE CLASSROOM TO PROMOTE SLA
“The Way It Is” and “The Way It Spozed to Be”

The extraordinary irony of the Speak ‘n Math commercial, and the premise on which its humor depends, is that its scenario directly contradicts the essence of the product it champions. In principle, the toy and the classroom share the same goal: to educate. The “joke” is that the classroom is the one place where the use of this educational toy is clearly forbidden.

Why is this contradiction so seemingly plausible that it appears in a message broadcast to millions of North American homes? Probably because the commercial is a reasonable depiction of life in schools (or at a minimum, in U.S. public schools) as it exists today: “the way it is.” In this respect, it is an embodiment of the continuing misalignment of theory (in this case, the product) and practice (in this case, the classroom scenario) that exists in most U.S. schools. Certainly it may be doubted that most teachers today wear their hair in a bun, but it is much harder to doubt the practices depicted in the commercial, particularly the furniture arrangement, materials, and organization of interaction it portrays. We shall deal with these classroom components later.

Our fear is that this same commercial might also be a reasonable depiction of life in the school as most people today believe it ought to be: “the way it spozed to be” (Herndon 1965). In that respect it represents the considerable challenge facing those teachers who hope to use the principles bound up in the Speak ‘n Math toy to organize their entire classroom. If our fear is well-grounded, deciding to adopt a communicative framework will not only require thinking in new ways about how classrooms are supposed to be, it will also mean working to develop understanding outside the classroom for why they are supposed to be that way. Although both enterprises are crucial and present their own difficulties, in our limited space we can only deal in a preliminary way with the former.

ORGANIZING THE COMMUNICATIVE CLASSROOM

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the organization of the social environment of the classroom is under the control of the teacher and has important effects on the language development of students (Cathcart, Strong, and Fillmore 1980, Fillmore 1982, Johnson 1983, Enright 1984, Wells and Wells 1984). This is evident when the classroom depicted in the Speak ‘n Math commercial is contrasted with classrooms where the communicative teaching model is being implemented (called hereafter “communicative” classrooms).
Communicative classrooms look different from other classrooms—they are filled with pictures and posters and interesting junk (otherwise known as realia and concrete referents). Often, communicative classrooms smell different from other classrooms—if, for example, a cookie-baking experiment has succeeded or a sulfurous science experiment has failed. Above all, communicative classrooms sound different from other classrooms—at one time reverberating with a panoply of different voices and conversations, at another time echoing with the combination of many voices into a single, larger one.

The primary reason for this contrast between communicative and other classrooms is that teachers who have adopted a communicative framework for their overall instruction make continual, conscious use of the double learning potential of every event in the daily life of the classroom. In accepting the first assumption of the communicative teaching model that language is best learned as a medium of communication rather than as a subject, teachers in communicative classrooms also accept the notion that second language instruction may be extended to the overall processes of classroom interaction. Thus, in communicative classrooms, the cleaning up at the end of a messy art project is viewed as having much the same language-learning potential as the art project itself in that both events require some use of language and interaction to exchange information and to accomplish specific goals. Teachers in communicative classrooms then organize and conduct these two very different events (and all other classroom events) with an eye toward exploiting their language-learning potential in addition to accomplishing their original purposes. In short, these teachers make communication a central goal and operating principle in their classrooms, even if doing so means relegating certain other goals and principles (e.g., tidiness, quiet) to less central positions.

As the previous discussion suggests, the transformation of any given classroom into a communicative classroom involves making changes in the way the classroom is organized before the students arrive for class as well as making changes within classroom events as they are being conducted when students are present. The remainder of this article is devoted to a discussion of the former organizational changes, beginning with some organizational criteria.

Criteria for Organizing the Communicative Classroom

The key theoretical assumptions of the communicative language teaching model may be translated into seven criteria for organizing
instruction across the curriculum. We will briefly outline these seven criteria and then examine their application to organizing classroom interaction and arranging materials and the physical environment.

Criterion 1: Organize for collaboration. If language is thought of as a medium of communication and is learned through purposeful interaction and exposure to real input, then teachers must organize their classrooms to facilitate collaboration. Collaboration signifies two-way classroom experiences in which learning takes place through the participation of teachers and students together. In the more ubiquitous one-way classroom experience, learning takes place through teacher exposition. Collaboration also signifies students’ learning and interacting with other students as well as with adult instructors. What may be “cheating” in the regular classroom is “helping” and “working together” in the communicative classroom. Finally, organizing for collaboration means providing more opportunities for children to practice and achieve the intersubjectivity that is an integral part of successful communication. As just one illustration of this criterion, rather than merely providing a full-group lecture on mammals and reptiles, teachers might have groups of students discuss and categorize sets of animal photos and explain their groupings to the rest of the class.

Criterion 2: Organize for purpose. If children learn language through collaborating with others in purposeful activity, then teachers must organize classroom activities that have specific purposes. Activities in the communicative classroom get something done: They result in a play performance or a bean harvest or the right-sized gerbil pen, in contrast to a report on the components of theater, a choral science reading, or a dittoed sheet of measurement problems. None of these latter activities is in itself inappropriate for use in the communicative classroom, as long as it is embedded in a larger unit or plan. Using this criterion, teachers must also plan tasks that have distinct purposes rather than creating extrinsic reasons for the completion of tasks, such as distant goals and rewards (“You’ll need this for high school”) or fear of adult authority (“You’ll do this because I say you will”).

Criterion 3: Organize for student interest. If the experiences and the input provided to children are more useful when they are interesting, then teachers must organize their classrooms with students’ interests in mind. In the communicative classroom, it is not enough to plan the school year around adults’ goals and interests, although these certainly need not be sacrificed to incorporate students’ interests into the curriculum. Teachers must also plan activities that engage students fully in their own learning. This criterion should be paired with
Criterion 2 (organize for purpose); both the topics and the purposes teachers choose for their classroom activities should be ones of interest to their students. Using Criteria 1 and 2, it would seem that having pairs of young students measure the heights of various schoolroom objects would be better than having students complete measurement worksheets. Using Criteria 1, 2, and 3, it would seem that also having young students guess their own and a partner’s height and then measure each other to see how close their guesses were would be even better.

Criterion 4: Organize for previous experience. If children apply diverse linguistic, social, and cultural experiences to the language learning enterprise, then teachers must organize their classrooms to facilitate students’ use of these experiences. Instead of waiting for students to adapt themselves as best they can to the new linguistic and cultural environment, teachers incommunicative classrooms must adjust their own communication patterns and environment to permit the “bridging” (Ventriglia 1982) of the two worlds. At a simple level, teachers mindful of this criterion would use maps of every child’s home country during a unit on maps. At a more complex level, teachers applying this criterion during a reading-group session would adjust their turn-taking patterns and other elements of participation to accommodate those patterns that LES children are accustomed to following (e.g., Au and Jordan 1981). In this way, teachers could introduce new language and ways of communicating while introducing new content.

Criterion 5: Organize for holism. If children use all their available resources to learn language, then teachers must use integrated rather than segmented curricula and learning activities in their classrooms. Teachers in communicative classrooms speak of developing “literacy” and “communicative competence” rather than of teaching “reading,” “writing,” and “language arts.” Targeted learning goals, whether the development of skills such as composition and measurement or the development of knowledge such as the forms of punctuation and the kinds of measuring devices, should be taught in combination with one another. Children in communicative classrooms might hear a fairy tale about measuring; see a teacher demonstration of measuring; talk about, try out, and record a measuring project; and read about and do more measuring on their own—all as part of fulfilling a school-district objective concerning measurement in yards and meters.

Criterion 6: Organize for support. If children learn language in a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere, then teachers must organize their classrooms to support children’s development of communication. This means that teachers must clearly indicate the value they place on
children’s efforts to communicate. They must provide multiple opportunities for children to succeed in their communicative efforts and make sure that public (i.e., in front of the entire class) requests for communication are comfortably within their students’ communicative repertoires. Teachers must also provide multiple opportunities for children to fail in their communicative efforts. These opportunities should be limited, however, to more private and functional situations, where failures, whether grammatical errors or socially inappropriate utterances, can be given prompt feedback as a natural and necessary part of the situation. It is one thing for LES children to feel the need to clarify their pronunciation because their partner at the other end of a walkie-talkie cannot quite understand them; it is quite another for them to feel the need to clarify their pronunciation because the entire class is listening and giggling as they recite the poem of the day.

**Criterion 7: Organize for variety.** If having a second language is defined as being able to communicate successfully across a wide variety of common social settings and if children learn language through exposure to and practice of communication in diverse settings, then teachers must organize their classrooms with a variety of materials, purposes, topics, activities, and ways of interacting in mind. In communicative classrooms, this criterion is applied in combination with the other six. For example, teachers organize activities with a variety of forms of collaboration; they organize several activities with different purposes appealing to diverse student experiences; and they organize a range of familiar and novel experiences in order to utilize and augment their children’s previous cultural experiences. The classroom illustrations in this section are but a small sample of the multitude of activities that might be found in the communicative classroom.

**Applying the Seven Criteria to Organizing a Communicative Classroom**

In applying the seven criteria to their own situations, teachers may find it helpful to begin by looking at their organization of interaction across the regular curriculum. They can then proceed to making decisions about materials and the arrangement of the physical environment that will complement that organization. It is imperative that in doing this, teachers examine and adjust their decisions about what the general rules governing classroom interaction should be as well as decisions about what the classroom events operating under those rules should be (Enright 1984).

Classroom rules: Yes, talking! All teachers have a set of rules for structuring classroom interaction in general. These rules are usually
determined before students enter the classroom and are then adjusted slightly during the first few weeks of the school year to take into account specific group characteristics. The rules are quickly internalized by students and become tacit regulators of interaction for both the teacher and the students for the rest of the year.

We have seen that in the classrooms represented by the Speak ‘n Math commercial, the primary rule governing classroom interaction is “No talking.” For teachers who wish to apply the seven criteria to their classroom rules, just the opposite primary rule must be adopted: “Yes, talking,” or, in the terminology of the criteria, “Yes, collaboration.” Teachers who wish to use the communicative teaching model must not only permit talking and other forms of collaborating in their classrooms; they must dynamically encourage all forms of collaboration in daily classroom life. By mandating collaboration as a classroom behavior, teachers will progress significantly toward making the regular classroom a useful place for LES children to learn language.

Other classroom rules may be similarly adapted to support the criteria for organizing the communicative classroom. Whereas the rules “Don’t get out of your seat” and “Do your own work” violate the seven criteria, the rules “Help each other without bothering each other” and “Use everything you can to learn” support them. We are not suggesting here that individualized work and silent activities are inappropriate for the communicative classroom. “All talking” would be as problematic for LES students as “no talking.” Nor are we suggesting that one perfect rule or set of rules exists for governing interaction across all classrooms. Teachers must develop rules that best suit themselves and their particular classroom situations. What we do suggest is that teachers should carefully examine their implicit, interactive expectations, as expressed in general classroom rules, and adjust them in light of the organizational criteria we have provided.

Classroom events. Classroom events are the segments of the interaction that teachers use to carry out their daily classroom agendas. These events are defined by their grouping (who is to participate), their tasks (what is to be done and learned), their participant structures (how students are to interact), their materials, their physical arrangement, and their locale. Most teachers have a specific array of events that they repeatedly use throughout the entire school year, and they give names to the events they use most often (e.g., seat work, reading group, free time, class meeting).

Once again, it appears that in U.S. classrooms of today (and, we suspect, in classrooms everywhere), the events used to organize interaction do more to repress than facilitate the practice and development of communication. Sirotnik (1983) identifies “teacher explaining, lecturing, and reading aloud” as the most common activity
in U.S. public school classrooms, closely followed by “working on written assignments” and “preparation for assignments/instructions/cleanup” (24). Several investigators (Bellack, Kliebard, Hyman, and Smith 1966, Flanders 1970, Mehan 1979) have also identified the “lesson” as a predominant classroom activity or event. In general, a lesson consists of a teacher lecture followed by a series of turn-taking sequences involving teacher solicitations, student replies, and teacher evaluations of those replies. This is the classroom event that was depicted in the Speak ‘n Math commercial. All of these events require an extensive amount of passive student participation, with uniformly small amounts of collaboration, individualization (including use of students’ previous experiences), intrinsic purposes, use of the whole environment, maintenance of student interest, and support. By definition, the use of only two or three events to organize interaction throughout an entire year violates the organizational criterion of variety.

Teachers adopting the communicative language teaching model can manipulate all the various features of classroom events—grouping, tasks, participant structures, materials, and physical arrangement—to fulfill the seven organizational criteria of the communicative classroom. Let us illustrate this for just the first criterion, collaboration. Teachers can use the grouping attribute of the classroom event to have students occasionally develop full- and small-group reports, projects, and written assignments in place of individual activities. Placing five students together to write a play will provide opportunities for collaboration (and thus for language learning) that assigning an individual composition will not. Similarly, the teacher’s joining an activity as one of the participants will markedly change the communicative requisites and the tenor of the discourse. (For a dramatic example of this, see Ventriglia’s [1982] description of a teacher joining a tea party in progress).

The task of a given instructional event can also be manipulated so that collaboration is unavoidable; we call this “must” language. Imagine the collaboration and the language use that might occur if LES children were privately taught how to make a holiday art project and were then guided as instructional leaders to complete the projects with small groups of classmates! In like manner, asking the whole class or small groups of students to reach a consensus regarding the main cause of World War II and then to write essays on this topic would create “must” language that having the class write individual essays on the same topic would not.

The participant structures of an event can be adapted to require varying forms of collaboration. Contrast a teacher supervising pairs
of students who are asking each other sets of study guide questions with a teacher asking those questions to a whole class and then calling on student volunteers. Even the participant structures of routine procedural events can be varied to create different forms of interaction and collaboration; for example, the usual one-way, full-group dismissal ("It's 3:30, so class is dismissed!") could occasionally be altered to require that each student provide a politeness formula (May I be excused?) or a patterned response to the same relevant question (e.g., What book did you check out today? or What do you want to start tomorrow?). (For further discussions and illustrations of participant structures, see Erickson and Shultz 1981 and Enright 1984).

The materials of an event can be used to create collaboration. Having only one pair of scissors for a group of four students working on a cut-and-paste activity creates “must” language all by itself.

Finally, the physical arrangement of an event can foster collaboration. Having children sit on the carpet and face the teacher, standing at a blackboard, creates a different set of communicative contingencies than having children sit in a circle with the teacher.

Once again, we are not implying that one single set of classroom events will magically meet all English-speaking and LES children's needs. Teachers must organize a set of events to meet their students' particular needs within the constraints of their particular curriculum. Indeed, it should be noted that curriculum objectives are not listed as one of the features of events that must be changed to make the classroom more communicative and useful to LES students. It is not what students study but how they study it that must be re-evaluated and adjusted in organizing events for the communicative classroom. We have merely provided some organizational criteria to guide those evaluation and adjustment endeavors.

The physical environment. As we have suggested, classrooms where the communicative language teaching model is being implemented will of necessity look different from other classrooms. Just as the classroom environment in the Speak 'n Math commercial is organized to support specific instructional assumptions and forms of interaction, so too must the communicative classroom environment be organized to support the assumptions and desired forms of interaction of the communicative language teaching model. This may be accomplished by applying the seven organizational criteria to decisions about how the classroom should be arranged and what it should contain. Figures 1 and 2 present diagrams of two communicative classrooms. Let us examine the differences between the communicative classroom environment and other classroom environments by contrasting these figures with the Speak 'n Math commercial’s classroom.
FIGURE 1
One Possible Communicative Classroom Environment
FIGURE 2
Another Possible Communicative Classroom Environment

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First, communicative classrooms are more flexible than other classrooms. In the Speak ‘n Math classroom, desks are more or less permanently arranged in rows, and the teacher’s desk and the blackboard are placed at the front of these rows. This arrangement facilitates the organization of the rules and events previously described by focusing students’ attention away from each other and toward the teacher or their private seat work. In contrast, the communicative classroom is potentially many interactive environments in one. Space and furniture are arranged to create opportunities for a single event to occur or for many events to occur at the same time in an orderly manner with minimal distraction. In addition, the various areas of the classroom are organized so that their usual purposes and the forms of collaboration that are to be used in them are clear (Enright and Gomez in press). Most communicative classrooms have signs around the room marking different areas, and teachers supply rules for how interaction may take place in these areas (e.g., in Figure 2, permissible drama/puppet theater interaction is different from permissible reading-area interaction). The furniture and materials of communicative classrooms are also movable so that new events and interaction can take place. Lighter, smaller furniture is preferred over heavy, unwieldy items. Also, much of the furniture and materials in communicative classrooms can be used by more than one person at the same time in order to permit the collaboration so necessary for language development. Thus in Figures 1 and 2, tables replace desks, or desks are moved together to create group work surfaces.

Communicative classrooms are also more functional environments than most other classrooms. In the Speak ‘n Math classroom, the only materials present are textbooks, workbooks, pencils, and paper. Any other materials used in the classroom (such as art materials) are stored out of children’s reach and are only immediately accessible to the teacher. In contrast, communicative classroom environments provide easy access to materials that can be used to accomplish a wide variety of tasks and purposes. For example, in the classrooms depicted in Figures 1 and 2, art materials are given their own prominent area because of their diversity of uses: to create puppet shows (language arts), dioramas (social studies), rocket and jet models (science and math), in addition to being used to create works of art. Most materials in communicative classrooms are stored openly, near where they are to be used (e.g., in Figure 1, supplies of paper, pencils, pens, and binding materials would be placed in the writing area; in Figure 2, headphones would be anchored to the listening-center table).

In addition to being more flexible and more functional, communicative classrooms also tend to be more enticing places for students...
to be. In the Speak ‘n Math classroom, where teacher exposition and student seat work prevail, the walls tend to be unadorned, and materials are stored out of the children’s sight to keep them from being “distracted” from the teacher and their work. Communicative classrooms are also organized to accommodate the use of teacher exposition (see the meeting areas in Figures 1 and 2) and student seat work (see the independent/group work stations in Figure 1 and the independent work carrels in Figure 2), but they are not organized exclusively for these kinds of events. As Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, many of the materials used in communicative classrooms are displayed and stored openly to encourage their use by children. Different kinds of enticing objects that encourage interaction are displayed and used in communicative classrooms, from games, cooking implements, and musical instruments (see Figure 1), to filmstrips, blocks, and items from the natural environment (see Figure 2). The walls of communicative classrooms—covered with posters, displays of students’ work, directions for learning centers, and other signs—are similarly used to entice students into collaborating and learning. In short, there is a lot of interesting stuff to talk about in communicative classrooms, and classroom rules and events direct the ways in which to talk about that stuff.

Finally, communicative classroom environments tend to be more student-owned than other classroom environments. As the previous discussion illustrates, teachers in communicative classrooms involve children in every way they can in the pursuit of the adult instructional agenda. Materials in communicative classrooms are chosen and arranged to be accessible to students as well as to teachers, to be used by students as well as teachers, and to be used to accomplish students’ ideas and purposes as well as teachers’. Many of the materials and displays in communicative classrooms are student-created, in the same way that many of the events in communicative classrooms involve students’ direct participation. If any single generalization can contrast the Speak ‘n Math classroom with the communicative classroom, it is that the former is primarily organized with teachers (and their ease, comfort, interests, and goals) in mind and the latter are organized with children (and their ease, comfort, interests, and goals) in mind.

CONCLUSION

In this article we have summarized some of the key assumptions of the communicative language teaching model and described some of the implications of those assumptions for organizing both the ESL
and the regular classroom to assist the language development of LES children. Our work in this area is far from complete, and the discussion may have raised as many questions in readers’ minds as it has answered. This may not necessarily be a bad state of affairs, however, if one accepts the notion that continual questioning and reflecting upon instruction are as beneficial to the teaching enterprise as adoption of any one particular model or another.

In organizing any classroom, communicative or otherwise, it is important for teachers to have a coherent set of assumptions about how teaching and learning proceed. In studying classrooms, it is equally important for researchers to take into consideration the specific implications of their discoveries for future educational practice. All too often in our specialized professional worlds, one or the other of these enterprises is neglected, to the detriment of students. If we are to continue to strive to improve instruction, then efforts to relate research and practice, however tentative or incomplete, must be given the same value and careful consideration that are presently dedicated to the two enterprises separately. We will be satisfied if this article has contributed in a small way to these efforts.

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Age and Aural Comprehension Achievement in Francophone Adults Learning English

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The study reported in this article examined the relationship between age and second language (L2) achievement of adults in an instructional setting. Older (aged 25 to 41) and younger (aged 17 to 24) learners were compared with respect to short-term development in aural comprehension. The adult subjects, native speakers of Quebec French with limited L2 proficiency, were military personnel learning English in an intensive program. A pretest/post-test procedure was used to assess gains made by subjects in listening and to compare groups. In analyzing gains, two matched-pair samples were used, each comprised of 18 pairs of older and younger subjects matched on five variables: informal exposure, pretest score, nonverbal IQ, education, and previous ESL instruction. In both samples, the mean gain was significantly greater for younger subjects than for older subjects. In addition, stepwise regression analysis showed age, along with pretest score, to be an important predictor of post-test (achievement) score; other variables were not significant. The study suggests that in adult L2 learners, rate of achievement in aural comprehension decreases with increasing age. Implications of this finding for adult L2 instruction are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between age and the ability to learn a second language has attracted a great deal of attention, particularly in recent years. It has been a recurring theme in the literature, where reports of empirical studies and theories seeking to account for age differences have frequently appeared. In addressing the age question, this study (Seright 1984) focused specifically upon the adult learner and was
designed to assess possible effects of age on second language acquisition. 

The issue examined—the relationship between age and L2 attainment in adults—has both theoretical and practical importance. Its theoretical importance derives from the current interest in the effect of age on linguistic attainment and the notion of sensitive periods for second language acquisition. By considering the age variable in relation to adults only—little of the existing research has done so—this study may yield new findings in these areas of interest. The issue is also a matter of practical importance, since it carries implications for adult language learning, which, given the present number of learners and training programs, is a major concern, particularly in Canada, where this study was conducted.

In Canada, a bilingual country, a great many adults learn a second language, either out of necessity or by personal choice. Provincial and/or federally sponsored language programs help adult immigrants to acquire enough English or French to survive in the country. Many universities provide students, both native Canadian and foreign-born, with language instruction in preparation for academic study or employment in professional fields. In a country where bilingual competence is often a job requirement, thousands of public servants and members of the Armed Forces undergo training every year in one of the two official languages so as to be able to work effectively in that language. In 1983, approximately 3000 military personnel received language training—2500 of them on an intensive basis for periods of up to one year. Figures for public servants were considerably higher. Some private industries, as well, encourage or require employees to gain a functional command of the other official language. In addition, many adults elect to enroll in language courses for personal reasons. The situation just described is certainly not unique to Canada. In the United States and many other countries, adults are learning second languages in similar numbers, under similar conditions, and for the same reasons.

While previous studies have shown a relationship between age and L2 achievement, the findings relate, for the most part, to child/adult or to older/younger child differences. Some researchers (e.g., Seliger, Krashen, and Ladefoged 1975, Oyama 1976, 1978, Scovel 1978, Patkowski 1980) have compared the eventual attainment of prepuberty

1Some researchers (e.g., Krashen 1981) distinguish between acquisition (a subconscious process) and learning (a conscious process whereby meta-awareness of linguistic rules is gained). In this study, no such distinction is made. Rather, the terms acquisition and learning are used synonymously.
and postpuberty L2 beginners and found that the former tend ultimately to achieve a higher, and often native-like, level of proficiency than the latter, who rarely develop native-like ability. A larger number of researchers (e.g., Asher and Price 1967, Olson and Samuels 1973, Fathman 1975, Ekstrand 1976, Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle 1978) have examined differences in rate of acquisition in either formal or informal settings. The results of their studies suggest a faster initial rate of L2 development for older learners (i.e., teenagers and adults) than for younger learners (i.e., young children) in most aspects of language competence assessed. As time progresses, however, the rate appears to reverse, with the younger learners overtaking the older ones (Krashen, Long, and Scarcella 1979).

Few researchers have attempted to determine whether, within groups of adults, differential achievement might be related to learner age. Those who have done so report that age differences do affect SL development. In Thorndike’s (1928) experiments on the learning of Esperanto, the greatest gain occurred in the youngest group of adults, and groups differed most in listening comprehension. D’Anglejan, Renaud, Arseneault, and Lortie (1981), who studied Canadian immigrants learning French in an intensive program, found that age was an important predictor of success, with older students making less progress than younger ones. In a study of adults in an eight-week intensive ESL course, Halladay (1970) found that students in their 30s and 40s did not make the same gains in aural comprehension that younger students did. Klein and Dittmar (1979) found that for foreign workers acquiring German through the social context, there was a strong inverse relationship between age at the time of immigration and oral syntactic ability in German. The most fluent speakers were about 20 years old when they immigrated, while those immigrating at age 40 or over had low ratings. Age, however, appeared to co-vary with exposure, since younger adults had more contact with Germans. Finally, Brown (1983) reported that younger adults (aged 19 to 23) scored significantly higher than older adults (aged 55 and above) on a measure of speaking proficiency obtained after eight weeks of intensive training in Spanish. Thus, the few studies which have dealt with adults exclusively suggest that differential attainment—particularly oral attainment—could well be related to age.

Considering the large numbers of adult L2 learners and the variety of programs organized for them, it is surprising that the possibility of age constraints upon L2 achievement has received so little attention. Questions such as the following are rarely if ever raised: Is it reasonable to expect the 40-year-old, or even the 30-year-old, to attain the same level of proficiency as the 20-year-old in the same time span and
through the same instructional procedure? In Canada, program administrators often establish terminal proficiency requirements for L2 learners, based on the jobs they will be assuming, and learners, regardless of age or even initial proficiency, are expected to attain the required level after a specified amount of language training in a certain program. Similar situations undoubtedly exist elsewhere. If, however, L2 acquisition becomes increasingly more difficult throughout adult life, it may not be reasonable to expect the older adult to acquire as much as the younger adult in the same time or through the same instructional procedure. Such a finding would have definite implications for policy makers and program designers, as well as for teachers and learners themselves.

METHODS

This study was undertaken to investigate whether L2 attainment in adults changes with increasing age. One area of performance—listening comprehension—was examined. The following question was addressed: Do older adults differ significantly from younger adults in the rate at which they develop L2 listening proficiency, and if so, how does this difference relate to age?

Research Design

The intended focus of the investigation was global comprehension of language rather than comprehension of individual lexical items or linguistic structures. Aural comprehension ability was roughly defined as ability to process connected speech, to deal with a series of related sentences and arrive at some understanding of the general situation or main idea(s). The measure used in this study was designed to tap this type of comprehension.

A pretest/Post-test procedure was used to assess and compare gains made in listening comprehension by two groups—one older (aged 25 to 41) and one younger (aged 17 to 24)—after 12 weeks (300 hours) of intensive language training. Younger and older subjects were matched on five variables: 1) initial listening ability (as determined by pretest score), 2) amount of informal exposure to English (minimal in all cases), 3) years of schooling, 4) amount of previous ESL instruction, and 5) nonverbal IQ.

It was hypothesized that the two groups would differ with respect to rate of development in listening. It was predicted that gains reflected by pretest/post-test score differences would be greater for younger subjects than for older subjects.
Instrumentation

Listening test. A listening test was developed specifically for this study. First, guidelines for test design and development were established pertaining to 1) test length (i.e., relatively brief), 2) level of difficulty (i.e., low to moderate), 3) task type (i.e., tasks measuring listening only and not other linguistic skills as well), and 4) test content, both situational and linguistic (i.e., related to the prospective subjects’ realm of experience). Next, the test was designed and items constructed in accordance with the guidelines. The test was then administered on a trial basis to four groups: 5 ESL teachers, 6 ESL learners similar to the subjects anticipated, 11 native speakers (military personnel), and 12 advanced-intermediate ESL learners. Revisions were made on the basis of these trials, and the test was assembled in its final form.

Test materials consisted of a set of 30 taped items recorded on a cassette and an accompanying booklet. The test contained four sections, each reflecting a different task. There were ten items in each of Sections 1 and 2, and five in each of Sections 3 and 4. For most items, text length was under 30 seconds.

Tasks 1 and 2 were of the multiple-choice variety. In the first, subjects were to select, from among four oral descriptions, the one most appropriate for a picture. In the second, the procedure was reversed: Subjects indicated which of four pictures corresponded best to an oral description. Task 3 called for the placement of numbers on a picture or diagram in accordance with an oral text and specific instructions. Task 4 involved answering a question, by writing a few words in French, about a taped dialogue. All pictures and diagrams for items appeared in the answer booklet.

The test was prefaced by brief instructions in French, presented both orally on the tape and in writing in the answer booklet. Test items in each section were preceded by specific instructions in French, again given both orally and in writing, and by one sample item. Total administration time for the test was about 40 minutes.

Items answered correctly were given a score of 1 point each, with the exception of those in Section 3, which were given a score of 2, as two responses were required. One item in Section 2 was not included in the scoring, since during test trials it was found to be inappropriate. The maximum score for the test was 34.

Other instruments. The Raven (1960) Standard Progressive Matrices, Sets A, B, C, D, and E, were used to measure nonverbal intelligence. Information concerning education and L2 exposure was obtained by means of an interview based on a prepared questionnaire. The questions, formulated in French, were designed to establish for every
subject 1) the number of years of schooling, 2) the amount of previous instruction in English (i.e., years of ESL at school), and 3) the amount of informal contact with English. These data were required for the selection and matching of subjects.

Subjects

The 71 subjects in the study were Quebec francophones, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, who were undergoing intensive English language training (25 hours a week) at the Canadian Forces Language School in St. Jean, Quebec. The purpose of the instruction was to enable them to acquire enough proficiency in English to use the language in their work. Upon arrival at the school, all of the subjects were placed in the Basic English Course and began at Unit 1 of the program, although they were scattered across a large number of classes taught by different teachers. The classes to which they were assigned were small, comprising from seven to ten students of similar linguistic ability. Instruction emphasized listening and speaking, with considerably less attention accorded to reading and writing. The core curriculum focused on basic grammatical structures and common everyday vocabulary. This was supplemented liberally by the teachers, who used virtually every instructional activity imaginable. Considerable attention was paid to the development of listening and speaking skills through the use of what has been labeled authentic materials (e.g., radio and television programs, videotapes, audiotapes of native-speaker conversations, and so on) and communicative activities. In addition, during the 12-week instructional period, each subject encountered several different teachers and was thus exposed to a variety of native speakers, instructional strategies, and teaching materials.

The subjects were selected from 131 male privates and noncommissioned officers who had been designated as potential subjects on the basis of low entrance scores on the Department of National Defense’s (DND) aural comprehension test. Of these, 18 individuals were screened out because their pretest scores indicated some initial proficiency (a score of 18 or above on the listening test), 5 because they had more than a high school education, 9 because they had spent time in an English milieu, and 1 because he had an anglophone parent. These eliminations were made to control amount of education and to ensure that all subjects selected had little initial proficiency and minimal informal exposure to English. An additional 22 subjects were lost during the 12-week training period: Some were transferred to another language school, some were sent to trades school because trades training was considered a top priority at that time, and a few
were released from the Armed Forces. Finally, 5 subjects were not post-tested due to time constraints. This left a total of 71 subjects.

The subjects ranged in age from 17 to 41 years, with a mean age of 22.76 (S.D. =5.68). The mean number of years of schooling was 10.18 (S.D. = 1.03), with the highest grade level completed ranging from grade 7 to grade 11 (final year of high school). All but two had previously received some ESL instruction at school. The mean number of years of ESL was 5.11 (S. D. =2.09), with a range from 0 to 10 years. All began language training with limited proficiency in listening. In all cases, informal exposure to English had been minimal, as none had lived in an English milieu or had used English at home (see Table 1 ).

The 71 subjects were divided into two groups on the basis of age. The older group included 21 subjects (16 noncommissioned officers and 5 privates), who were 25 years of age or more. The mean age for this group was 29.62 (S.D. = 5.57). The remaining 50 subjects (48 privates and 2 corporals), who were all 24 years of age or less, constituted the younger group, for which the mean age was 19.88 (S.D. = 2.03).

Procedure

The investigative procedure, which required eight months to complete, entailed a number of steps. The 71 subjects were selected over a period of five months. Weekly admission lists were scanned, and subjects were identified on the basis of entrance scores on the DND's aural comprehension test, which assesses proficiency on a scale of 0 (no measurable competence) to 5 (native-speaker competence). Most subjects had scores of 0 or 0+; a few had a 1- or a 1 score.

The listening test was administered to subjects as a pretest during their first week of language training—usually on the third day. Subjects were tested in groups of ten or fewer. Prior to testing, it was explained that they had been chosen to participate in a study, the purpose of which was to evaluate student progress in listening over a period of time, and that the test which they were being asked to take would determine their initial level of listening proficiency.

Those subjects who scored 17 or below on the pretest were retained and then interviewed individually for a period of 10 to 15 minutes to gather information about previous schooling and contact with English. Additional subjects were eliminated on the basis of the interviews.

The Raven Standard Progressive Matrices (1960) were administered to the subjects, as a group test with no imposed time limit, during their language training. No more than ten people were tested in any given session. The administrative procedures used complied with the instructions outlined in the test guide.
Post-tests were administered to subjects individually during Week 13 of language training. Once a subject had completed the test, all items were reviewed with him. The entire discussion was conducted in French. Each item was replayed, and the subject was asked to state what had been comprehended and to justify the response made. The subject was also asked to describe any listening or responding strategies used. It was felt that this qualitative data might complement the quantitative data (i.e., test scores).

Of the 71 subjects post-tested, 69 also took the DND aural comprehension test again. This retest was also administered in Week 13.

**Analysis of Data and Results**

Gain scores for subjects were calculated by subtracting pretest scores from post-test scores. Mean scores for pretest, post-test, and gains were computed for all subjects post-tested, for younger subjects, and for older subjects. These data are presented in Table 1, along with ranges and standard deviations.

Pretest reliability, as determined by KR-21, was .69. This was about what could be expected, given the total number of points possible (34) and the fact that many subjects, having little initial proficiency in English, had no doubt responded randomly to some items. Post-test reliability was somewhat higher: .74.

The primary objective of the study was to compare gains made in listening by older and younger subjects matched on all variables but age—namely, pretest score, IQ, years of education, and years of ESL. To make such a comparison, a sample of 18 matched pairs (Sample 1) was created from the pool of 71 subjects. Paired individuals differed by no more than one point in pretest score and had identical IQ percentile scores. With regard to ESL and educational variables, differences between members of a pair were slightly greater, since it was more difficult to match subjects as closely on those variables.

There was some debate as to how subjects should be matched on the IQ variable. In Sample 1, raw IQ scores were converted to percentile scores, regardless of the subjects’ age, using the norms established by Raven (1960) for 20- to 25-Year-olds. This procedure may be questionable, however, as Raven shows slightly different raw score ranges for percentile ranks as age increases. Therefore, another procedure was employed as well, one which took age norms into account in the conversion of raw scores to percentiles. With the application of this procedure, a somewhat different sample of matched pairs (Sample 2) was produced, Sample 2 included the same 18 older subjects used in Sample 1; however, 5 of these subjects were matched to a different younger subject. Thus, 13 of the pairs were the same in
TABLE 1
Descriptive Information for Subject Pool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Subjects (N=71)</th>
<th>Younger Subjects (n=50)</th>
<th>Older Subjects (n=21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pretest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>5-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>10.80</td>
<td>12.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>11-27</td>
<td>11-27</td>
<td>11-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>18.90</td>
<td>19.76</td>
<td>16.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gain</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>-1 to +20</td>
<td>+2 to +20</td>
<td>-1 to +9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>17-24</td>
<td>17-24</td>
<td>25-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>22.76</td>
<td>19.88</td>
<td>29.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>5.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IQ (Percentile)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>37-58</td>
<td>38-58</td>
<td>37-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>50.77</td>
<td>51.28</td>
<td>49.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education (Years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>7-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>10.34</td>
<td>9.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESL (Years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>0-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

both samples, and 5 were different. The same criteria were applied in both samples for matching on variables other than IQ. Descriptive statistics for the two samples are given in Table 2.

In both samples, the mean gain made by the younger subjects (9.89 in Sample 1 and 10.28 in Sample 2) exceeded that made by the older subjects (4.50 in both samples). A t-test for matched pairs showed the difference to be highly significant in both (Sample 1: t = 5.17, p < .0005; Sample 2: t = 4.86, p < .0005).

An analysis of scores obtained by subjects on the DND test—that is, scores upon entrance and after 12 weeks of instruction—produced similar results. In Sample 1, the mean gain for younger subjects was
TABLE 2  
Descriptive Information for Matched-Pair samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample 1</th>
<th>Sample 2</th>
<th>Sample 1</th>
<th>Sample 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>Older</td>
<td>Younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n= 18)</td>
<td>(n= 18)</td>
<td>(n= 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>5-16</td>
<td>5-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>11.89</td>
<td>11.89</td>
<td>11.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>21.78</td>
<td>16.39</td>
<td>22.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>+4 to +14</td>
<td>-1 to +9</td>
<td>+3 to +20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>9.89</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>10.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>25-40</td>
<td>17-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>19.67</td>
<td>29.22</td>
<td>19.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>1.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>IQ (Percentile)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>37-58</td>
<td>38-57</td>
<td>46-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>50.94</td>
<td>50.67</td>
<td>52.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>8-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>9.89</td>
<td>10.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL (Years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>3-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

significantly higher than that for older subjects (t= 3.83; p <.005). A t-test was not performed for Sample 2.

Performance on the two listening tests was correlated. For subjects who had taken both tests, there was a significant positive correlation (Pearson product-moment) between post-test scores and DND test scores after 12 weeks (n= 69; r = .545; p <.01). A significant positive correlation was also obtained between post-test gain scores and DND gain scores in the case of subjects in Sample 1 (n = 36; r = .39; p <0.05). A correlation was not done for Sample 2.
Finally, stepwise regression was performed to assess the relationship between post-test scores and the other variables. Three data samples were entered: Sample 1 \((n = 36)\), Sample 2 \((n = 36)\), and Sample 3 \((N = 71)\). For each sample, both age and pretest score were significant predictors \(p\) were shown for IQ, education, or ESL. The relative importance of predictors is given by standardized coefficients (see Table 3). In Samples 1 and 2, there was not a great deal of difference between the two predictors. In Sample 1, pretest outranked age somewhat, while in Sample 2, the reverse was true. In Sample 3, which was the largest, there was a greater difference, with pretest being the more important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.418</td>
<td>.457</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0.416</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0.321</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis was supported by the matched-pair results. In both samples, the mean gain for the younger subjects was significantly greater than the mean gain for the older subjects. This finding was corroborated by gains on the DND test, with younger subjects significantly outperforming older subjects. The relationship between age and listening achievement was further confirmed by the results of stepwise regression. In all three samples analyzed, age was shown to be a strong predictor of post-test (achievement) score. Thus, the findings indicate a significant negative relationship between learner age and aural comprehension achievement in adults. The older the learner, the less achievement takes place, given the same time span and similar learning conditions.

It must be emphasized, however, that only rate of development was investigated. The findings may be interpreted as suggesting only a faster initial rate of development in listening for younger adults as compared with older adults. On the question of ultimate attainment—levels of L2 proficiency eventually attained by older and younger adults—the study is mute.
In stepwise regression, the variable of nonverbal intelligence was found to have no significant effect on post-test score. This suggests that there is little relationship between nonverbal intelligence and achievement in listening; hence, nonverbal IQ is not a good predictor of success in acquiring L2 aural comprehension skills. Whether the same applies for verbal IQ is not clear.

Neither was education a significant predictor of post-test score. Once the effects of age were removed, years of schooling showed very little effect. If, however, the educational range in the study had not been so restricted, this might not have been the case. In d’Anglejan, Renaud, Arseneault, and Lortie (1981), schooling was an important predictor of success in language learning.

Regression also indicated that previous ESL instruction was not significantly related to post-test score. It must be recognized, however, that the measure used—the number of years English was studied in elementary and high school—was at best a crude estimate. It may not have adequately reflected actual differences, or previous instruction may have had little to do with listening comprehension.

Stepwise multiple regression revealed that in all three samples analyzed, age and pretest together accounted for only part of the variance in post-test scores. They accounted for 44 percent of the total variance in Sample 1 (R² was .44, as is shown in Table 3), for 38 percent in Sample 2 (R² was .38), and for 31 percent in Sample 3 (R² was .31). The remaining part of the variance in each sample was a reflection of other factors, though it should be kept in mind that 26 percent of the variance was random error, based on the reliability estimate of .74.

One factor that may have affected post-test scores is aptitude for language learning, a variable which was not measured and therefore not controlled in anyway in this study. Differences in motivation may also have influenced scores. Although the main purpose of language training was the same for all subjects—all were expected to acquire enough English to be able to work in the language—not all subjects shared the same personal goals. Some wished only to gain functional proficiency, while others had greater aspirations (i.e., native-like competence). The relationship between differing personal goals and L2 attainment was not carefully investigated.

A third factor which may have affected post-test scores is ability to cope with the classroom setting. Some subjects may have been more academically oriented than others. Time away from school may have also played a role here. Some subjects had been away from school longer than others, and some of them may have had difficulty adapting to formal instruction for that reason.
Furthermore, post-test discussions revealed differences among subjects in a number of other areas. While some subjects appeared to have a lot of confidence in their listening ability, others lacked confidence and tended to become discouraged easily. Whereas some responded quickly to items, others did not; a few made responses only after much deliberation. Some subjects were more willing to guess than others; the latter were very reluctant to make guesses based on partial comprehension. Some seemed to be able to deduce situations and to arrive at correct responses on the basis of limited clues while others were less capable of this. A few admitted that concern over failure to comprehend a word or phrase early in an item often blocked further auditory processing. Others, however, were not upset about bits and pieces missed; they concentrated on grasping as much as they could and tried to work with that. Some subjects experienced difficulty in processing auditory and visual information simultaneously. For others, this presented no problem. Finally, some subjects appeared to have adopted systematic working procedures for handling listening tasks, while others did not. There was little evidence to suggest that any of these differences in personal characteristics, specific abilities, and strategies employed were age-related. However, like aptitude, motivation, and classroom orientation, they may have affected gains independently of age.

While age was shown to be an important determinant of achievement in listening, the study was not designed to reveal what it is about age that is responsible for this. As chronological age in itself means relatively little, it would be logical to assume that the age-related decline in the ability to acquire a second language must be associated with certain characteristics, physiological or otherwise, that are concomitant with age.

Loss of auditory acuity and increased reaction time to stimuli, both of which tend to accompany aging, are possibly associated factors, but it is unlikely that they assumed more than a minimal role in this study, given the ages of the older subjects. Declines in these areas appear to become marked only past age 40 (Kidd 1973). On the other hand, it is possible to speculate that some type of neurological change (i.e., change within brain mechanisms brought about by aging) is in some way responsible for the poorer achievement of the older subjects in the study. This, however, is pure conjecture based on no observable evidence. It is also conceivable that the older subjects were hampered by psychological problems; they may have been more inhibited and less confident than the younger subjects. Aging may make one prone to greater inhibitions and loss of self-confidence when faced with new learning tasks. Further research would be necessary to confirm this possibility.
One age-related factor to which it is reasonably safe to assign some importance in this study is time away from school. The older the subject was, the longer was the time away from school. Although all older subjects had been involved in classroom learning situations while in the Armed Forces (in job-related courses), it is conceivable that the younger subjects were more accustomed to classroom instruction, since their high school experience was more recent. It must be acknowledged, however, that time away from school is an external factor (i.e., external to the human organism) rather than an internal one like auditory acuity, neurological change, or loss of confidence and, as such, could not be said to be as directly related to age.

In its finding on age, this study is consistent with previous research and, at the same time, offers something new. In Thorndike (1928) and Halladay (1970), younger adults acquired L2 aural comprehension skills more readily than older adults. In Brown (1983), as well as in Klein and Dittmar (1979), similar findings are reported with respect to speaking development. Those studies, with the exception of the last mentioned, found differences between people in their 20s (or around age 20) and people in their 30s, 40s, or 50s. This study, however, found differences within the 20-to-30 age range. Students in their early 20s outperformed students in their late 20s. This finding suggests that among adult L2 learners in a formal setting, significant differences in rate of attainment may be found within a fairly narrow range of age. Klein and Dittmar (1979) also found differences in attainment among adults below age 30 (18- to 21-year-olds showed greater proficiency than 22- to 30-year-olds). Unlike that study, however, this study dealt with formal rather than informal learning and was able to separate effects of age from effects of L2 exposure.

**PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Certainly, generalizations cannot be made about adult learners on the basis of this one study. First, in terms of first language, educational background, occupation, purpose of instruction, initial L2 proficiency, and previous L2 exposure, the subjects represent a very specific and extremely homogeneous group of learners. What is true of these adults may not necessarily be true of adults with more education, greater initial proficiency, or more informal exposure. Second, it is possible that the program used was biased toward younger learners. As will be discussed below, another program might have produced different results. Third, achievement was assessed in relation to one skill only, and there is no basis for concluding that findings on listening
comprehension are generalizable to other L2 skills. Nevertheless, when the findings of this study, though limited in itself, are compared with those of Thorndike (1928), Halladay (1970), and Brown (1983), a trend begins to emerge, a trend which suggests that in adults learning a second language through formal instruction, aural-oral achievement declines with increasing age.

The findings of this study have two possible implications for second language training for adults, particularly adults over age 25. The first concerns choice of instructional program, and the second, expectations for achievement. The instructional program investigated in this study may have been biased toward younger learners. It may not have been particularly well-suited to older learners. As a general rule, in any adult learning situation, those charged with decision making should make every effort to ensure that the curriculum materials and teaching approach prescribed for older learners are in keeping with their preferred learning styles and linguistic needs.

The instructional program used at the military language school was designed for students similar to the younger learners in this study. In the past, few older adults took basic English training. The core curriculum and the supplementary materials produced by teachers were geared to the needs, interests, and abilities of young adults who had recently joined the Armed Forces. The teaching strategies and techniques used in the classroom were those that teachers found to be effective with these people.

There are, however, marked differences between those young adult learners and older adults, like those used in the study, who are presently undergoing language training in increasing numbers. The older adults have been away from school longer and are presumably less accustomed to classroom learning. Much of their knowledge and many of their skills have been acquired through on-the-job training. While the younger students are new to the military and generally have no clear idea of the type of work that lies in store for them in the future, the older students have considerable experience in the Armed Forces and are well aware of the kinds of tasks they will be required to perform in English. In addition, the older students, unlike the younger ones, tend to be married. Many of their interests and leisure-time activities center around their families. Finally, unlike the younger students, the older adults are accustomed to assuming responsibility both at work and at home.

By looking at these differences, it is possible to envisage some of the ways to modify a program for older learners. First, the older learners might be grouped together rather than scattered across classes in which younger learners predominate. They could be given a special
designation and offered an altered version of the basic English program. This could have two psychological advantages. Without younger learners in the classroom, the older learners might be less inhibited and generally more at ease. In addition, the special treatment, that is, a program designed specifically for them, might do much for their morale. If a group of teachers was assigned to work exclusively with the older students, they would soon enjoy the added advantage of having instructors experienced in teaching people like them. Second, attempts could be made to de-emphasize the classroom and more formal aspects of language training and to make it more job-related. This would involve basing second language learning activities on specific tasks learners would be expected to perform in their work, as well as searching for alternative learning settings to be used in combination with the classroom (e.g., the work place, social gatherings, group projects with native speakers). Third, efforts could be made to increase student responsibility in the learning process by designing tasks which learners complete by themselves and by encouraging learners to undertake projects of their own outside of class time.

If, however, the poorer performance of older adult students is not attributable (or at least not entirely so) to the program or method of instruction used, then administrators, teachers, and learners themselves must adopt different expectations about rates of progress. Allocations of time for language training and/or terminal objectives should not apply equally to all learners. Some attention should be paid to the age of the individual learner and to initial L2 competence. Students who are 30 and 40 years old should not be expected to attain the same level of proficiency as 20-year-olds, not even when initial proficiency is similar. Nor should all older learners be expected to achieve similar levels of proficiency in the same time period when their initial competence differs.

As required proficiency is usually linked to work assignments, it follows that caution should be exercised in allocating duties to mature unilinguals. It does not seem reasonable to assign duties requiring considerable L2 competence (e.g., using the second language for instructing) to an individual who has little competence in that language and to hope that the individual will gain the necessary proficiency through language training. In the case of individuals with little L2 proficiency, it might be wiser to make work assignments contingent upon progress in language learning. In addition, older learners could

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Some of these avenues are in fact now being explored at the Canadian Forces Language School, along with others. Since the time of the investigation, school administrators have devoted considerable attention to the older learners, and the instructional program used has recently undergone revision.
be given an opportunity to acquire the second language slowly through a process in which periods of instruction at the language school alternated with periods of exposure to the language in work situations, where assigned tasks required increasingly greater L2 proficiency over time.

It might also be helpful if the older learners themselves were made aware of the limitations which appear to be correlated with age. If they embark upon language training with high expectations, there is a risk that they will quickly become discouraged over failure to obtain immediate results and will consequently lose their motivation to learn. Pretraining information sessions might alleviate problems in this area.

This study leaves a number of questions unanswered. It is reasonably clear that when older and younger adults are compared, the rate of L2 development is different. However, ultimate attainment remains an open question; whether younger adults reach higher eventual levels of L2 proficiency than older adults is not certain. In addition, post-test discussions revealed certain characteristics, abilities, and strategies in which subjects differed (e.g., confidence, response time, willingness to guess, ability to process auditory and visual information simultaneously). Whether any of these might be related to age was not determined. The relationship between age and confidence in listening ability might be particularly interesting to explore. Another unresolved issue is the extent to which other L2 skills are affected by age. Are other skills as prone or more prone to age constraints than listening? Finally, what is it about the aging process that constrains language development in older adults? Do psychological factors such as lack of self-confidence and increased inhibitions play a key role? All of these are questions which need to be addressed by future research.

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The Hidden Curriculum of Survival ESL

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This article discusses a new genre in ESL materials—the increasingly popular survival texts designed for newly arrived adults. A wide range of selections from these texts is examined in light of the stated goals of curriculum writers, as well as the less obvious social implications of these materials. In view of the explicit concern with realistic context, texts are evaluated in terms of both how accurately they reflect the immigrants’ reality and the extent to which they may shape that reality. Examination of excerpts reveals that frequently, neither the situational content nor the communicative structure of materials reflects authentic interaction. Furthermore, the texts often prepare students for subservient social roles and reinforce hierarchical relations within the classroom by precluding the creation of meaning and the development of critical thinking skills. Finally, Freire’s (1981) distinction between problem-solving and problem-posing pedagogues is suggested as a framework for interpreting the shortcomings of the survival genre and for moving toward a more empowering mode of curriculum.

The post-Vietnam-era wave of refugees and immigrants to the United States has triggered increased attention to the teaching of adult ESL students. In response to the pressing needs of these students, anew literature of survival English has begun to proliferate. Reflecting the “communicative” trend in language teaching, these materials focus on language use rather than grammatical form. Their goal is to teach “those skills that provide the students with the practical abilities that enable them to function in the new society” (Vaut 1982:1). They have gained widespread acceptance based on their practical, reality-based, student-centered orientation.

While the survival approach is widely acclaimed as “state of the art” ESL by practitioners and publishers alike, there has been little critical analysis of its theoretical assumptions and implications. This
separation between theory and practice is what Raimes refers to when she says, “All too often scholars look at classroom methodology rather than the underlying intellectual assumptions which generate methods” (1983:538). Moreover, survival ESL exemplifies the type of curriculum which Raimes (1983) claims must be re-evaluated in terms of “communicative” character: She argues that many new materials in fact focus on the forms rather than the content of language interaction, continuing to divorce language from thought and language teaching from the creation of meaning.

In addition, sociologists of curriculum (e.g., Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, Apple 1979, Anyon 1980, Giroux 1983a, 1983b) call for a critical analysis of adult education curricula in terms of their sociopolitical implications. They argue that no curriculum is neutral: Each reflects a particular view of the social order, whether implicitly or explicitly. This “hidden curriculum” generates social meanings, restraints, and cultural values which shape students’ roles outside the classroom. The choices that educators make reflect their views of the learning process, the social context for learning, and the students’ place in society. These choices have a very real impact on students: Giroux (1983a) argues that the failure to examine assumptions about how particular materials mediate meanings between students, teachers, and society very often leaves little room for students to generate their own meanings and develop critical thinking.

Such calls for re-examination are particularly applicable to the survival literature genre because of its increasing popularity, its place in the communicative teaching trend, and its inherent sociocultural nature. While particular texts cannot be equated with curriculum, they often shape practice and reflect curricular orientation. As such, the examination of text materials is a necessary step toward the analysis of goals and directions for adult ESL curricula. Thus, the purpose of this article is not to review or rank individual texts in relation to each other, but rather to lay the foundation for debate about the theoretical assumptions and social implications of survival models by looking at a range of currently available text materials (see the Appendix for a list of textbooks discussed).

THE ROOTS OF THE SURVIVAL TREND

Although survival skills have been defined as those necessary for “minimum functioning in the specific community in which the student is settled” (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:162), in practice, the term has been widely used to refer to literacy and prevocational and basic skills for students with zero to intermediate language proficiency.
The single unifying characteristic of this type of text seems to be that it is situationally oriented around daily living tasks (shopping, banking, housing, health care, and so on). Most authors explicitly reject a grammatical framework and focus not on “what students know about the language but what they can do with it” (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:11). A basic tenet of the survival trend is that language learning for adults should be experience-centered and reality-based. “Adults begin by learning for and from the situations in which they find themselves” (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:7). The success of learning depends on the degree to which content is useful to students. Thus, “curricula, teaching methods and techniques, test materials, and assessment instruments have been developed to bring both the students and the classroom closer to the language needs of the real world” (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:1).

This concern with reality derives from theoretical developments in both adult education and second language teaching. From adult learning theory comes the view that adults must be treated as people with complex individual histories, responsibilities, needs, and goals (Knowles 1973). The tasks that an adult learner must perform in everyday life have increasingly become the focus of curriculum development (Grognet and Crandall 1982:3). The Texas Adult Performance Level Study (Northrup 1977) made the notion of experience-centered learning concrete by identifying 65 competencies “necessary for an adult to perform successfully in today’s society” (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:9). Out of this study, the competency-based adult education (CBAE) model for adult basic education was developed.

This movement in adult education has occurred more or less simultaneously with the growth of the functional-notional and communicative trends in ESL. The latter can be characterized by concern with real language use, a student-centered classroom, humanistic approaches to instruction, and an orientation to language acquisition rather than language learning (Raimes 1983:543). Out of the parallel trends in CBAE and ESL has arisen the notion of competency-based ESL (CBE/ESL), which has gained increasing popularity in teaching survival English. CBE/ESL curricula teach to “task-oriented goals written in terms of behavioral objectives which include language behavior” (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:9). Often these competencies are defined in terms of those identified by the Texas Adult Performance Level Study (e.g., Keltner and Bitterlin 1981, Keltner, Howard, and Lee 1981). Language learning is broken down into “manageable and immediately meaningful chunks” (Grognet and Crandall 1982:3). The goal is demonstrated mastery of the language associated with specific skills; performance indicators are associated
with competencies so that students can be pre- and post-tested for mastery.

In view of this explicit concern with real-life tasks and their linguistic demands, survival curricula must be examined in terms of how well they live up to the goals of being situationally and communicatively realistic. As Taylor (1982) points out, what is labeled “reality” in the language classroom may not in fact be reality. Thus, we must ask to what degree the content—the “real world” presented in survival texts—reflects what adult ESL students actually encounter outside the classroom and to what degree language forms—the types of language interaction which take place in the classroom—replicate those of the outside world. Furthermore, we must examine how the selection and presentation of reality contribute to shaping social roles for students.

SITUATIONAL REALITY

One of the inherent limitations of presenting situationally realistic content at a low level is the need to maintain structural simplicity. As a result of linguistic constraints, model dialogues in survival texts are often oversimplified to the point of being misleading, as Examples 1 and 2 illustrate:

1. A. How can I get a loan?
   B. Why do you want the money?
   A. To buy a car.
   B. How much money do you need?
   A. $2,000.00.
   B. Please fill out this application.
   A. When do I get the money?
   B. In a week.
   (Freeman 1982:101)

2. A. How much is the house?
   B. It’s $460 a month.
   A. How much is the cleaning deposit?
   B. $200.
   A. When can I move in?
   B. Next week.
   (Mosteller and Paul 1985:188)

A more serious limitation of many texts results from not taking into account the socioeconomic conditions of newcomers’ lives. Middle
class values, culture, and financial status are often reflected in lesson content; for example, a dialogue describing a student spending his one day off work playing golf fails to acknowledge that golf is a culture- and class-specific sport (Delta Systems 1975/1976:21–23). A passage which argues that the advantages of having a telephone include the fact that it facilitates buying by credit card, ordering meals for delivery, and finding out snow conditions for skiing (Cathcart and Strong 1983:214) is not likely to be relevant to survival ESL students.

Beyond these rather obvious examples of a reality alien to newcomers, more subtle distortions are pervasive in survival texts, as can be seen from an examination of health, housing, and work units. Typical health units focus on the use of the medical system: describing symptoms; making appointments; understanding simple diagnoses, instructions, and prescriptions.

3. A. Hello, Dr. Green’s office.
   B. This is Mary Thompson. I’m calling about my daughter, Sarah. She has a fever and a rash.
   A. When can you bring her in?
   B. Right away.
   A. All right. We’ll see you in a few minutes.
   (Keltner, Howard, and Lee 1981:55)

4. Eat good food.
   Stay in bed.
   Sleep a lot.
   Don’t smoke.
   drink.
   work.
   worry.
   stay up late.
   go to bed late.
   (The Experiment in International Living 1983:52)

Example 3 is misleading for several reasons: A newcomer is more likely to go to a community health clinic or emergency room than to a private physician; it is highly unusual for a doctor to see a patient on a moment’s notice; and a phone call of this sort would probably require giving more information about symptoms (onset of fever and rash, and so on).

Economic problems associated with health care are ignored in most texts. For example, in one lesson, a nurse asks a first-time
patent if he would like to be billed, and he responds that he thinks insurance will cover the visit (Keltner and Bitterlin 1981:61). Frequently, new patients are asked to prepay; newcomers are unlikely to have insurance, and if they do, it may not cover routine office visits. The advice in Example 4 may be impossible to carry out for someone who must work to survive. As Wallerstein points out (1983a:40), this kind of lesson neither acknowledges possible problems in following doctor’s instructions (because the patient cannot afford leisure time) nor recognizes unhealthy conditions which may be contributing to the illness. Not exploring the economic or social context of health problems may reinforce students’ sense of helplessness.

Thus, what is excluded from curricula is as important in shaping students’ perceptions of reality as what is included. Failure to address such factors as crowded clinics, long waits, unhealthy living or working conditions, high costs, and communication problems neither prepares students for what they might encounter nor legitimates these experiences when students encounter them. Instead, it may promote the view that these problems are somehow aberrations or, worse, the result of the students’ own inadequacies.

English Spoken Here: Health and Safety (Messec and Kranich 1982b) is noteworthy for presenting a broader view of health care. It elicits discussion about fears of going to the doctor and problems of long waits, expenses, and treatment (Example 5); compares private and public health facilities; and discusses preventive medicine, home remedies, and stress reduction. The student is presented with options rather than formulaic prescriptions for behavior.

5. Talk to your friends about their doctors. Ask them questions about their doctors:
   1. What do you like about the doctor?
   2. What don’t you like about the doctor?
   3. Is the doctor easy to see?
   4. Do you have to wait a long time for him or her?
   5. Does the doctor charge a lot?
   6. How does the doctor treat you?
   (Messec and Kranich 1982b:65)

Housing units typically include information about looking for an apartment, negotiating rental agreements, communicating with the landlord, and describing repair problems; competencies include reading ads, taking care of sanitation problems, and filling out
rental application forms. As is the case with health units, lessons on housing often reflect a middle class perspective. The gap between this perspective and the actual survival issues faced by newcomers can be seen by comparing Examples 6 and 7 with the excerpt from the *Boston Globe* story (Example 8) about the housing problems of Indochinese refugees in Boston.

6. A. The kitchen has a new sink and stove . . . The bedroom has a beautiful river view.
   B. Yes, it does. How many closets are there?
   A. Three closets and a linen closet. The bathroom is very modern.
   B. Does it have a shower and a bathtub?
   A. Yes, it does.
   B. I like it. I'll take it.
   (Freeman 1982:53)

7. You have to be quiet in an apartment. You have to clean it and take care of it. Talk to the landlord if you have problems ... If you don’t like your apartment, or if it’s expensive, you can move.
   (Walsh 1984a:53)

8. “We buy the diapers, the Huggies,” Le Suong was saying. “In the cold, they are good to stuff in the cracks by the window.”
   “But it’s not the cold that is the biggest problem,” Nguyen Van Sau said. “It is getting somebody to come when things get broke, when the ceiling cracks or when people get scared of a fire like there was at number 4.
   “We call, 10, 15 times and nobody comes. All I want is them to clean and make the rats go so children will not be near them,” he said.
   “I tell them once about a rat and the man, he say to eat it,” Sing Ha, 9, said. “He laugh and say we eat dogs so we can eat rats too.”
   (Barnicle 1984)

The situation of tenants who are forced either to accept poor conditions or fight to have them changed is usually not mentioned in survival texts. While tenants’ responsibilities in the areas of sanitation and upkeep are discussed at length, landlords’ obligations are largely omitted. Where housing problems are discussed, there is seldom follow-up discussion on how to resolve them. For example, although *English Spoken Here: Consumer Information* (Messec and Kranich 1982a) includes dialogues about complaining to an unresponsive landlord, the absence of discussion about alternative courses of action
may reinforce the sense that the goal of the lesson is language practice rather than communication for survival.

Examples 9 and 10 illustrate the kind of lesson material which could serve as a stimulus for discussion about strategies for addressing housing problems.

9. A. We’ve just moved out of our apartment. They won’t give us our deposit back.
   B. Did you leave it clean?
   A. Yes, we did. It was spotless.
   B. Why don’t you see a lawyer?
   A. We don’t know one. Lawyers are expensive and we’re broke.
   B. Try the legal aid society. Someone there can help you.
   (Keltner, Howard, and Lee 1981:167)

10. When you are having a problem with your apartment, notify the landlord as soon as possible . . . If he doesn’t make the necessary repairs in a reasonable amount of time, write a letter to him explaining the problem again . . . Keep a record of the dates when you spoke to him and keep copies of the letters that you have sent. If the landlord still doesn’t make the repairs, you can often get help from a local government agency.
   (Foley and Pomann 1982:41)

In each of these cases, the authors leave it up to teachers to structure discussion which relates lesson content to students’ own experience.

Units on work often promote the view that finding a job depends on how well you fill out applications, dress for interviews, make appointments, and so on. While these skills may be helpful, they are not sufficient. Weinstein (1984:481) suggests that focusing on paperwork tasks (which in fact are of ten handled by family members) only adds to “feelings of powerlessness in a bewildering new culture” and gets in the way of developing talents which the newcomers may already have. This mechanical, decontextualized view of job finding is exemplified by Examples 11 and 12.

11. Women wear dresses or skirts and blouses; men wear jackets and ties.
    Listen carefully to the questions and answer questions carefully.
    Ask questions about the job...
    Have your resume with you.
    Be confident.
    (Freeman 1982:92)
12. Miss Nakamura is looking for a job. In her country she was a waitress. Every day she looked in the newspaper. Last week she went to an employment service and they helped her. They sent her for an interview. First she called the personnel department and made an appointment. She also sent in an application. She looked very nice on the day of the interview . . . [The interviewer] asked if Miss Nakamura wanted to work full-time or part-time. She said she would like to work full-time. Now she has a job. She makes $3.50 an hour plus tips . . . She is very happy. (Keltner, Howard, and Lee 1981:136)

The suggestions in Example 11 are too vague to be useful; in addition, they are presented as universal guidelines when, in fact, they may be inappropriate for many jobs. The hidden message of passages like Example 12 seems to be that if you, like Miss Nakamura, follow the appropriate steps, you will find a job. Conversely, if you have problems, it may be because you did not communicate properly. This idealized version of job finding contrasts sharply with another, more realistic view from the same text series:

13. A. You look tired. What have you been doing?
   B. I’ve been looking for a job for 2 weeks now, but I can’t find anything.
   A. Did you check the want ads?
   B. Yes, but they all say they need someone with experience.
   A. What about the state employment office? Have you gone there yet?
   B. Yes, I went there and left an application. They told me to come back in a week.
   (Keltner and Bitterlin 1981:132)

Example 13 is exceptional in its portrayal of the frustrations faced by job seekers. Most texts do not prepare students for long lines, for situations where they are treated less than respectfully, or for rejections. They rarely discuss nonpersonal factors like competition with Americans, economic recessions, and discrimination.

Beyond describing an oversimplified reality, texts often prescribe particular roles for students. As sociologists of curriculum have pointed out, education is an “important social and political force in the process of class reproduction” (Giroux 1983a:267). The classroom often serves to “parallel and reproduce the values and norms embodied in the ‘accepted’ social relationships of the workplace” (Giroux 1983b:9).
survival materials, this hidden curriculum often takes the form of preparing students for menial positions and teaching them the corresponding language of subservience. *Opening Lines* (The Experiment in International Living 1983:178) makes explicit what other texts imply by outlining only the lowest-paying jobs as options for refugees (busboy, busgirl, waiter, waitress, cook, maid, janitor, factory worker, dishwasher, and so on).

The humorous dialogue in Example 14 captures the essence of the employment conflict for many newcomers.

14. A. What did you do in Laos?
   B. I taught college for 15 years. I was Deputy Minister of Education for ten years and then . . .
   A. I see. Can you cook Chinese food?
   (The Experiment in International Living 1983:177)

Rather than being used as the basis for a meaningful discussion of the contradictions facing refugees who were professionals, this dialogue trivializes their dilemma by not encouraging students to explore the problem (or even to discuss options like becoming bilingual paraprofessionals). Instead, teachers are instructed to ask students, “Why do refugees have to start their jobs at the bottom?” (1983:387). The presupposition of the question (that newcomers must start at the bottom) in itself precludes consideration of less than menial jobs. The reason given in answer to the question is that refugees lack language skills, contacts, and credentials. Again the broader social context is ignored: The implication of the answer is that refugees start at the bottom because they are somehow inadequate, rather than that structural demands of the economy (for example, the need for cheap labor, which foreign-born workers have traditionally filled) restrict their options (Auerbach 1984).

Survival on the job is often equated with being submissive; students are taught the language associated with being on the bottom of the power hierarchy. This can be seen in the often expressed position that prevocational ESL students be taught to understand the imperative but not to produce it because they must obey orders but not give them. Language functions in most survival texts include asking for approval, clarification, reassurance, permission, and so on, but not praising, criticizing, complaining, refusing, or disagreeing. The Hopewell *Work Series* (Husak, Pahre, and Stewart 1976), which is promoted by the Center for Applied Linguistics as “matter of fact with a minimum of moralizing” (1983:154), provides students
with a list of rules for job success in Examples 15 and 16. Example 17, from Part II of Basic Adult Survival English (Walsh 1984b), illustrates that this kind of prescriptivism is by no means a thing of the past.

15. I should be clean and neat.
   I should be friendly and polite.
   I should help other people.
   I should not complain.
   I should not be silly at work.
   I should not lose my temper at work.
   If my boss tells me I made a mistake, I should not get mad.
   (Husak, Pahre, and Stewart 1976:2)

16. Sarah was a shampoo girl . . . sometimes her supervisor told her she made a mistake. Sarah did not get mad or yell. She told her supervisor she would try harder to do better work. She worked harder than the other employees. . . Sarah was a good worker. Why?
   (Husak, Pahre, and Stewart 1976:34-35)

17. To be a good worker, you should:
   Go to work on time.
   Don’t be absent a lot.
   Work hard. Don’t be lazy.
   Be friendly. Get along with everybody.
   Be nice to other workers.
   Say hello to them.
   Talk to them. Smile at them.
   Be clean and neat.
   If you have a problem, tell your boss.
   If you are a bad worker, the company can fire you.
   Then it might be hard for you to get another job.
   (Walsh 1984 b:66)

In each of these cases, workers are told to be obedient and to do whatever the boss asks; at the same time they are told to get along with co-workers. In reality, these two goals may be contradictory: A worker who naively tries to curry favor, works harder than others, and indiscriminately follows orders may be resented or ostracized by co-workers. There is a delicate balance of power in every American work place, and the new arrival who enters the work force unaware of these dynamics may encounter problems. Moreover, texts which suggest that workers immediately go to their bosses with problems
overlook the possibility that the source of many problems may be the supervisors themselves (some of whom may ask workers to do unsafe work, work outside their job classifications, and so on). While claiming to teach students how to get and keep a job, prevocational units rarely address conflict on the job. They focus on the duties and obligations of workers without mentioning their rights or options.

The power relations of the outside society may also be reproduced in the classroom when the tone of materials is patronizing. Despite the persistent claim that the learner must be treated with respect because “his intellectual capacity is that of an adult” (Freeman 1982: v), students are often portrayed as incompetent and addressed like children. Every chapter of Opening Lines includes a “humorous” cartoon depicting student errors, for example, a student trying to mail a letter at the drugstore (The Experiment in International Living 1983:89). Students are taught to use polite forms, although teachers are not required to do so in addressing students (e.g., The Experiment in International Living 1983:19); instructions are given in the imperative; and some authors use the we form, commonly used with children.

A more subtle form of disrespect to students is the way in which cultural information is presented. It is commonly agreed that “an adult education program shouldn’t require the adult to integrate with the second culture to acquire the language” (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:55). The introductions to survival texts often stress the need to accept the students’ culture (see Delta Systems 1975/1976). At the same time, the stated goal of most survival texts is to teach American cultural norms: “skills which the community requires and the students lack” (Vaut 1982:1). Many curriculum writers have difficulty reconciling these goals of accepting the students’ own culture and teaching about the new culture. In practice, the norms of American culture are often presented without reference to students’ experience or exploration of cultural differences. Readings and cultural notes suggest rules for behavior, and lessons chunk these behaviors into skills which students are taught to perform. In many cases, guidelines are presented as invariable standards. For example, under the subtitle “Orientation Notes: Transportation,” Basic Adult Survival English states that “In America you need a car. Almost everybody has a car. Some families have two or three cars” (Walsh 1984a:85).

18. Brush your teeth after every meal. If you can’t brush, rinse with mouthwash or plain water. If you have food between your teeth, use a toothpick. Use dental floss every day . . . You should see your dentist twice a year for a check-up. (Freeman 1982:43)
In Example 18, from a text which claims to “treat the adult learner with dignity,” the author takes on the role of prescribing personal hygiene (in the imperative), a topic which may be inappropriate for discussion in some cultures. Other texts tell students to tie their garbage in plastic bags, to defrost their refrigerators once a week, to make shopping lists, and to use deodorant and insect spray (see Walsh 1984a).

In addition to presenting cultural information as “standards,” many survival texts view cultural adaptation as a one-way process. Texts often violate a basic principle of adult education by concentrating on what students do not know rather than using prior knowledge and experience as a bridge for learning. Very few survival texts incorporate cultural comparisons and contributions from students about their own experience in a systematic way. Information about differences in such areas as housing, family structure, and job finding is rarely elicited (presumably because the goal is to teach American ways). This approach contradicts the findings of schema theory research which shows the importance of activating background knowledge for reading comprehension (see Carrell and Eisterhold 1983). Some texts do elicit explicit cultural comparisons. The reading in Example 19 is followed by questions about cultural differences.

19. American customs are different from Laotian customs. There are many things here that I find strange and confusing. In America, men and women often walk hand in hand. Sometimes they even kiss in public! We don’t do this in Laos.

People also dress quite differently here. Very often I see women wearing shorts and sleeveless blouses.

(Kuntz 1982:6)

Carver and Fotinos (1977) consistently encourage students to examine cultural differences. For example, even in a simple lesson about vegetable names (1977:21), they ask, “Which of these vegetables grow in your native country?” A reading about American dressing customs is followed by the questions in Example 20.

20. How do people dress in your native country to go to school? To go to church? To go to parties? To go to work? Are people in your native country allowed to wear their hair any length they want to? If not, why not? What do you think about the people’s clothing in this picture?

(Carver and Fotinos 1977:11)
Texts which exclude cultural comparisons and conflicts from curricula define acculturation as a one-way process rather than as an interactive one. They implicitly promote a view of learning about a new culture as a mechanical process of superimposing one set of norms on another. This view does not allow for meaningful cultural transformation, the creation of culture through a process of critical and selective integration of the old and the new. To the degree that survival texts focus on changing behaviors rather than critically examining cultural differences, they may contribute to what Freire calls adaptation. Freire (1981:4) characterizes the difference between adaptation and integration as follows:

Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and transform that reality. To the extent that man loses his ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his decisions are no longer his own because they result from external prescriptions, he is no longer integrated. Rather, he is adapted.

COMMUNICATIVE REALITY

Because teaching communication, rather than teaching language per se, is a stated goal of survival curriculum developers (Center for Applied Linguistics 1983:6), it is particularly important to examine the degree to which these materials are communicatively realistic. To what extent is realistic discourse modeled in the texts, and to what extent do materials stimulate authentic communication between students?

Raimes’s (1983) criticism—that much of the so-called communicative approach is little more than the traditional, form-centered method in disguise—applies to many survival texts. The organizing principle for some books continues to be structure (e.g., Delta Systems 1975/1976, Cathcart and Strong 1983). Using structural criteria in sequencing lessons may result in a lack of semantic cohesion between units; for example, a lesson called “Where did you work in your country?” is followed by “We went to the circus” (Delta Systems 1975/1976). While both lessons focus on the past-tense structure, the juxtaposition of these two topics seems incongruous. Concern with grammatical control rather than discourse constraints can lead to anomalous dialogues, for example, portraying a newly arrived refugee talking to her children in English. The attempt to teach specific forms often leads to communicatively unrealistic passages such as those in Examples 21 and 22.
Beyond examining whether the model dialogues mirror reality, we must ask if texts create a setting where authentic communication can take place in the classroom. What are the interactive tasks and demands made on students? In most cases, students are provided with grammatical, functional, or cultural information in the form of model dialogues and a series of follow-up exercises designed to help them “master” or reproduce the information. The text provides both the content and the form of language/behavior to be used. Students contribute neither experiences nor ideas new to the teacher or other students. Display questioning, a technique designed to elicit specific information already known to the teacher (Gaies 1983:208), is used frequently. For example, almost every chapter of Everyday English begins with a variation of “Is this a tomato? No. It’s an apple” (Shurer 1980: [Food] 1). Although this type of questioning occurs rarely in natural conversation outside the classroom (Long and Sato 1983), it appears frequently in survival texts. An information gap usually appears only after a long series of “communicative drills” (Raimes 1983:544). From a language acquisition point of view, the rehearsal of rituals may be inefficient if, as Warshawsky claims (1978:472), forms are best acquired when they assume a critical role in transmitting information.

The concern with assessability may partially account for this lack of attention to the creation of meaning. With the new emphasis on accountability in education, ESL curriculum developers have focused on behavioral objectives and performance indicators as a way to quantify progress (Tumposky 1984). Since knowledge of the world and thinking skills do not lend themselves to easy measurement, they are not compatible with the expressed goals of creating a curriculum which is “a performance-based outline of language tasks that leads to demonstrated mastery of the language associated with specific skills” (Grognét and Crandall 1982:3). As Tumposky warns, this behavioral orientation may well result in teaching which concentrates primarily on “the lower order skills which are easiest to measure (1984:305).” Raimes argues that the concern with quantification contradicts a truly
communicative definition of language: “We have divided language into discrete units, we have stressed assembling, not creating” (1983:539). Not until language teaching engages the thought and mind of the learners can it be called communicative.

**PROBLEM SOLVING VERSUS PROBLEM POSING**

Survival ESL materials have been created in response to very real and pressing social problems and have attempted to be situationally realistic, to treat adult learners with dignity, and to assist their transition into the new culture. However, as this article has tried to show, there is a great deal of unevenness among texts and within texts regarding these goals. In many cases, survival texts unwittingly present an idealized view of reality, a patronizing attitude toward students, a one-sided approach toward culture, and a model of language acquisition which is only superficially communicative. While attempting to help newcomers to fit into American society, some texts may have the impact of socializing students into roles of subservience. Why is it that despite well-meaning and commendable intentions, survival texts often fall short of stated goals?

The distinction made by Freire (1981) between problem solving and problem posing offers insight into this question. Freire suggests that very often in situations of profound social change and upheaval, educators see their role as one of assistencialism; that is, they believe they must intercede on behalf of their students with educational welfare to help them solve their problems. Curriculum developers thus assess students’ needs and prescribe solutions. As Goulet (see Freire 1981: ix) puts it, “An expert takes some distance from reality, analyzes it into component parts, devises means for resolving difficulties in the most efficient way, and then dictates a strategy or policy,” The teacher’s job is to transmit predetermined knowledge or skills which the students need to meet the demands of society. The teacher is the “provider,” and the students are the “clients,” or “consumers,” of the curriculum. Freire calls this view the banking model of education: The teacher makes deposits which accumulate interest and value (Berthoff 1984:3). The transfer of wealth/information/knowledge is one-way, from the teacher to the students. Solutions are found for the students and imposed on them. While claiming to be student-centered, “such an approach in fact places all the responsibility for learning on the teacher” (Tumposky 1984:306). According to Freire (1981), the greatest danger of this approach is that it reinforces the silence and passivity of powerless people, rather than creating conditions which allow them to identify and think critically about problems.
In survival materials, problem solving often takes the form of chunking reality into competencies corresponding to specific skills judged necessary for successful functioning in American society. The complex reality of the newcomers' world is presented in simplified, reduced form, with almost recipe-like instructions for what to say and how to act. Where problematic aspects of reality are introduced, they are sometimes treated as sources of humor, language practice, or supplemental activities. Only rarely are students asked to develop their own strategies for addressing problems, as in Examples 23 and 24.

23. Who would you call? Where would you go?
   1. If I wanted to find out about care for my children, I would
   2. If I wanted to learn a trade to get a job, ______
   3. If I wanted to locate the nearest playground for my children, ______
   (Keltner and Bitterlin 1981:185)

24. What would you do in the situations below
   Your new washable shirt shrinks the first time you wash it.
   The milk you just bought at the store is sour.
   (Carver and Fotinos 1977:36)

However, even in these selections, the problems are quite straightforward, and there seem to be expected correct answers. For more complex problems, like job-finding difficulties or landlord problems, students are often presented with solutions (like job retraining or legal remedies), rather than encouraged to discuss a range of options and devise strategies together.

By contrast, a problem-posing view of education sees the identification and analysis of problematic aspects of reality as central to the curriculum. The teacher’s role is not to transmit knowledge, but to engage students in their own education by inviting them to enter into the process of thinking critically about their reality. The purpose of the endeavor is not to find solutions for students but to involve them in searching for and creating their own alternatives. “Instead of education as extension—a reaching out to students with valuable ideas we want to share—there must be dialogue” (Berthoff 1984:3).

The only currently available book which defines problem posing as the starting point for adult ESL curricula is Wallerstein’s (1983a) *Language and culture in Conflict: Problem-Posing in the ESL Classroom*. This book, intended as a teacher resource rather than a student
text, adapts Freire’s outlook to survival issues in the United States. It is based on the premise that education should start with problematic issues in people’s lives and, through dialogue, encourage students not only to develop a critical view of their reality but to act on it to improve their lives. Each of the sample lessons codifies in picture or dialogue form an affectively loaded theme which reflects a contradiction in students’ lives. The teacher’s role is to facilitate the dialogue between students with a series of inductive questions aimed at eliciting students’ ideas, assisting them in making generalizations, relating the theme to their own lives, and helping them to take action to effect change where applicable. Unlike many other survival materials, the vocabulary, grammar, and function exercises are subordinated to the process of exchanging and creating meaning. What is remarkable is that even at beginning levels of language learning, Wallerstein (1983b) has found that a problem-posing environment can be created through the use of simple codes, small-group work, the physical acting out of dialogues, and support from bilingual participants.

CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that newcomers need to know the language associated with finding jobs, housing, health care, and so on. Refugees and immigrants are immersed in a process of profound transformation, and they need the tools to be able to confront changes. The question is not whether they should be taught the language of survival, but how and to what ends. The problem-posing view of education challenges the notion that survival skills should be taught as a body of knowledge (linguistic and cultural) to be transmitted from teachers to students. It suggests that the language of housing and jobs, for example, be taught as a function of the single most important skill needed for survival: the ability to think critically. As London (see Collins 1983:181) has said, “Increasingly a premium must be placed not so much on what to think, but on how to think critically. Preparation for living in a rapidly changing world requires that people learn how to learn.”

The transition from a problem-solving orientation to a new, more empowering mode must start with teachers’ examining materials already in use and asking simple questions about how reality is portrayed, to what degree student contributions are encouraged, what kinds of social roles are implicit, and how much opportunity for creative and critical thinking is allowed. Only by asking these questions and making explicit the values inherent in the materials we use can we begin to move toward a new mode of curriculum. As Giroux (1983b:II) puts it,
To acknowledge that the choices we make concerning all facets of curriculum and pedagogy are value laden is to liberate ourselves from imposing our own values on others. To admit as much means that we can begin with the notion that reality should never be taken as a given, but, instead has to be questioned and analyzed. In other words, knowledge has to be made problematic and has to be situated in classroom social relationships that allow for debate and communication.

By problematizing our knowledge about teaching, we do exactly what is proposed here for students; our own critical self-examination becomes a model of the process we are inviting our students to engage in.

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REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Currently Available Textbooks Discussed


Person to Person
Communicative speaking and listening skills
Books 1 and 2
Jack C. Richards • David Bycina

It does exactly what you want it to do: gets students talking and listening.

Person to Person is a two-book, functional course in speaking and listening for adults and young adults at the intermediate level. It consists of two Student Books, Cassettes for both books, and one Teacher’s Book.

The Grammar Handbook
Irwin Feigenbaum

"An excellent book for intelligent, motivated students."
Ann Aguirre, Coordinator
Language Institute,
Northrop University

The Grammar Handbook makes grammar easy. It's an invaluable student resource for either classroom use or at-home reference. Comprehensive enough for the most advanced ESL students, it is easy to use for intermediate students as well.

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A Semantic Field Approach to Passive Vocabulary Acquisition for Reading Comprehension

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Traditionally, vocabulary study has been based on a word-by-word approach and, as such, has often been criticized as a component in ESL curricula. This study compares a traditional approach to vocabulary instruction with an approach based on the semantic fields of words that appeared in college-level reading texts. Half of the words presented to experimental groups (semantic field approach) were randomly selected and presented to control groups (traditional approach), according to the format used in current vocabulary texts. The semantic field approach was based on the association between five related words and a keyword that could be mentally substituted in context. Testing revealed some short-term advantage for the control groups, but no significant differences were revealed on long-term testing. Since experimental groups were exposed to twice as many words in the same amount of time, the findings lend support to the use of the semantic field approach. In addition, long-term testing revealed, for the words in this study, a highly significant difference favoring vocabulary taught experimentally over incidental learning that may occur during exposure to academic English.

The teaching of vocabulary to second language learners has long been an area of concern to language teachers. The cause for this concern is most visible when ESL learners are required to read high school- or university-level texts. A 10- to 20-minute reading task for a native speaker becomes a 1- to 2-hour ordeal for the non-native speaker, as the reading process is broken into small fragments of discourse by constant (often excessive) recourse to a dictionary. While frequency counts indicate that a total of about 2000 words is an adequate amount for everyday conversational situations (Celce-Murcia and Rosensweig 1979), it is estimated that the average college student brings to any reading situation a passive vocabulary of
approximately 60,000 lexical units, or over 150,000 words (Miller 1951). If students were able to acquire 40 lexical units a day, 365 days a year, without forgetting a word, they would still need over four years to achieve native-speaker status!

How do we equip the language learner with a passive vocabulary large enough to permit fluent reading? This question is yet to be answered. Twaddell (1973:62) accurately evaluates the current situation by stating that vocabulary control is “one very important component of language mastery about which there is more agreement in discouragement than in any constructive proposals for effective techniques.” This study examines whether a semantic field approach is more effective than a traditional approach to passive vocabulary acquisition.

BACKGROUND

Traditionally, vocabulary skills were viewed as necessary for understanding the grammatical structures of a language and, ultimately, its literature. The techniques used were mainly dependent upon word lists, root study, derivational affixes, and extensive dictionary use. These methods are still widely used in vocabulary classes today.

With the advent of the audiolingual method (ALM) in the 1940s, the importance of vocabulary was “subordinated to a foundational knowledge of structure, by which words, when learned later, can be fitted into the discourse” (Rivers 1964:17). As a result, little research into vocabulary acquisition was done during the ALM era. The research that was done focused mainly on identifying areas of acquisition (often through contrastive analysis) and the problems inherent in these areas (e.g., Lado 1965, Prator 1965, Vanderwerf 1969, Hagerty and Bowen 1973). However, a methodology has yet to be developed that incorporates these findings into vocabulary enhancement activities.

The move away from ALM saw a re-emergence of a vocabulary component in the second language curriculum (e.g., Politzer and Politzer 1972, Henning 1973, Twaddell 1973). Researchers tended to identify problems faced by ESL students but offered very little improvement in teaching approach. As Richards (1980:437) points out, “vocabulary has been for some time the one area of the ESL syllabus where the link between approach, method and technique has been neglected.”

One interesting, if unproven, method of rapid vocabulary acquisition is Suggestopedia, developed by Lozanov (1979). This method has been under close scrutiny because of its phenomenal claim that
students can learn 5 to 50 times more vocabulary than with traditional approaches. *Superlearning*, by Ostrander and Schroeder (1979), presented a method modeled closely after Lozanov’s. However, Wagner and Tilney (1983), who studied this approach experimentally, found that traditionally taught students learned significantly more vocabulary than those taught by the “superlearning” techniques.

**Active Versus Passive Acquisition**

Most researchers today agree that one’s approach to vocabulary instruction must be based upon active or passive needs of the students. Celce-Murcia and Rosensweig (1979), for example, propose different methods for teaching active and passive vocabulary, advocating good dictionary skills, word-stem and word-form knowledge, and extensive reading to build passive vocabulary. Most experts acknowledge the importance of distinguishing between active and passive vocabulary, and everybody agrees that vocabulary practice needs to be contextualized as much as possible. Nevertheless, most texts today continue to use a word list approach, incorporating lexical items that have little, if any, internal consistency into units of study; moreover, they attempt to build active and passive skills simultaneously.

**Vocabulary in the Reading Comprehension Process**

There is evidence that “as students become more proficient in a second language, problems caused specifically by syntactical variation become less significant” (German 1979:155-156). When advanced ESL students at UCLA were polled, 68 percent of them indicated that they considered an inadequate vocabulary to be the main single contributor to problems in academic reading, while only 19 percent considered syntactic complexities as the major problem area (German 1979). Second language learners can acquire an adequate active vocabulary relatively quickly and easily. However, as Chastain (1976) and others have pointed out, it is a passive knowledge of vocabulary that is needed for reading. If we are to help resolve the vocabulary problems our students face in advanced reading situations, we must find an approach that will allow students to acquire recognition ability for a large number of words in a relatively short period of time.

**Semantic Fields**

Mackey (1965:76) defined the concept of a semantic field as being made of basic key-words, which command an army of others. The semantic area may be regarded as a network of hundreds of associations, each word...
of which is capable of being the centre of a web of associations radiating in all directions. A word like man might have as many as fifty such associations—chap, fellow, guy, gentleman, etc.

Research in several areas indicates that an approach to vocabulary study based on the semantic organization of our universe might be productive. Learning theorists, working in the area of memory and recall, have shown the superiority of recall of data that have been organized into logical semantic categories (Bousfield 1953, Tulving 1962, Bower, Clark, Lesgold, and Winzenz 1969, and so on). Psycholinguists, especially in the Soviet Union, have developed theories which involve semantic field relationships and which suggest that such an approach would be beneficial (Sakharnyi [see Wertsh 1978], Zalevskaya 1978). Researchers in ESL (e.g., Conolly 1973, Martin 1976) have also investigated semantic field relationships. Martin, in particular, presented concrete examples of semantic field methodology that can be used in the classroom. However, very little, if any, empirical evidence has been produced either in support of or counter to a semantic field approach to passive vocabulary acquisition. The study reported here addresses this area.

THE STUDY

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. Can experimental groups (semantic field instruction) be exposed to twice as many words as control groups (traditional instruction) and still perform as well on short-term tests of passive vocabulary retention?

2. Can experimental groups (semantic field instruction) be exposed to twice as many words as control groups (traditional instruction) and still perform as well on long-term tests of passive vocabulary retention?

3. Is passive vocabulary acquisition resulting from a semantic field presentation superior to incidental learning that may occur during exposure to academic English (so far as the words covered in this study are concerned)?

Subjects

Students enrolled in Level 5 (of 6 levels) at the North Texas State University Intensive English Language Institute for the Fall 1983
semester served as subjects for this study. The 42 students were assigned to one of four sections. Sections 1 and 2 comprised Group 1, and Sections 3 and 4 comprised Group 2. Languages represented were Chinese (16); Arabic (9); Thai (6); Malaysian (4); Spanish (2); and Farsi, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian, and French (1 each). The teachers were experienced ESL instructors but had never used a semantic field approach to vocabulary.

Design

Since the groups were already established by the school’s level/section assignment procedures, an intact-group design was used. Group 1 was initially the control group and Group 2 the experimental; after the first two units, the positions were reversed. The experimental group received the keyword method of vocabulary instruction, and the control group received the traditional method.

A pretest over the vocabulary covered in Units 1 and 2 was administered, and the same test was later used as the first post-test. The independent variable was method of instruction, that is, the semantic field approach or the traditional approach. Since there was no significant difference between the two groups on the pretest of the material covered in Units 1 and 2, a pretest for Units 3 and 4 was not administered. (See the Results section for a fuller discussion of this aspect of the experimental design.) The post-tests, designed to examine short-term retention, covered the material taught during the intervening two weeks.

The follow-up tests were designed to examine long-term retention of the material presented. The first follow-up test was given four weeks after completion of the vocabulary instruction modules. During the interim, the students were continuing their intensive English study for 20 hours a week. The second follow-up test was given to those students who, after completing intensive English study, were accepted into North Texas State University. Only 10 of the 12 students accepted at North Texas were present for the examination. These students had been in full-time university classes for two months at the time of the test. An overview of the design is as follows:

| Group 1 | Pre 1 | Post 1 | X | Post 2 | Foll 1 |
| Group 2 | Pre 1 | X | Post 1 | Post 2 | Foll 1 | Foll 2 |

where Pre = Pretest, Post = Post-test, X = Experimental treatment, and Foll = Follow-up.

The experimental treatment: the keyword method. An article on scientific experimentation (Hammerton 1966:51-53) and passages on history
(Bruun and Mamatey 1962:391-394), psychology (Munn, Fernald, and Fernald 1969:511-514), and anthropology (Ember and Ember 1973:100-103, 21-23) were selected from college-level texts. Each of these passages was developed into a unit for study in the following manner: Words that might be troublesome for ESL students were identified by an experienced teacher of ESL. Where possible, a keyword or a key phrase was selected, along with four additional words in the same semantic field. For example, if the word rage appeared in the text, then ANGER, a word that the students would probably know, was chosen as a keyword, and four related words (i.e., fury, ire, wrath, indignation) were added to complete a keyword group. Each of the four units contained 36 of these keyword groups.

Exercises were then developed specifically to reinforce the connection between the related words and their keywords. These exercises began at the word level and moved quickly to the sentence and discourse level, requiring students to 1) substitute the keyword for related words, 2) substitute related words for keywords in context, and 3) pick out the unrelated word from a group of related words. Each unit also contained a word puzzle. All of the exercises required recognition skills only—the students were never asked to use any of the words actively. The final exercise required the students to read, without recourse to a dictionary, and to discuss the original passage from which the keyword groups were derived. The students were encouraged to substitute the key word, that is, the semantic field, for each related word that appeared in the passage. Approximately 15 minutes of classroom time a day was spent going over the material.

The control treatment: the traditional method. The traditional method was patterned after those used in three current texts (Barnard 1975, Markstein and Hirasawa 1977, Coomber, Peet, and Glatthorn 1979). Two additional texts (Bromberg, Leibb, and Traiger 1975, Brownstein and Weiner 1979) were used as references. An alphabetical list of words with their definitions was presented. Subjects were asked to give derivations of some of the words (with the aid of dictionaries) and to do matching exercises; multiple-choice, sentence-level exercises; word substitutions in paragraphs; and word puzzles. In keeping with the models chosen, some of the exercises required active control of the vocabulary. Approximately 20 minutes of classroom time a day was spent going over the materials.

Methods

Tests. A preliminary run-through of the experimental design indicated that it was impossible to cover the same number of words in the same
amount of time using a traditional approach as using a semantic field approach. Therefore, half of the words in each unit were randomly selected for presentation to the control groups. Thus, the experimental groups were tested after two 180-word units, while the control groups were tested after two 90-word units.

Only those words covered in the control-group units were included in the pretest and post-tests. The post-tests consisted of three parts: 1) 75 multiple-choice sentences, for which the subjects were required to choose the best of four words to fill in the blank; 2) a paragraph with 15 blanks, for which the subjects were required to choose the best word for each blank from a given list of 16 words; and 3) a paragraph with 15 underlined words or phrases and a list of 18 words below the passage, for which the subjects were required to put the number of the most closely related word under the underlined word or phrase in the passage.

The first follow-up test contained 50 words from the first two units and 50 words from the second two units. It was identical in format to the two post-tests. The second follow-up test consisted only of those words over which the students had not been previously tested. The test contained 50 words from the untested half of the first two units and 50 words from the untested half of the second two units. It consisted of two parts: 1) 50 multiple-choice sentences, for which subjects were required to choose the best of four keywords for the related word underlined in the sentence; and 2) two paragraphs containing underlined related words, for which the subjects were required to write a related word or phrase in blanks below each paragraph. See Table 1 for an overview of the source of the various tests.

Since the experimental groups received training in specific associations that the control groups did not receive, that is, substituting a keyword for a related word, this type of task could not be included on the pretest, the two post-tests, and the first follow-up test. Thus, in an effort to protect the integrity of the tests, the experimental groups worked with two disadvantages: 1) They were exposed to and held accountable for twice as many words in the same amount of time, and 2) they were not allowed to use the tool that was the raison d'être of their training—keyword substitution. Only on the second follow-up test were the students required to choose or produce a correct keyword.

Procedures. The teachers were individually contacted prior to the experiment and given the teaching material and instructions for the first two units. Material and instructions for the second two units were not given out until the first two units were completed. For the first
TABLE 1
Sources of Material for Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
<th>Unit 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exp. 90</td>
<td>Exp./Contr. 90</td>
<td>Exp. 90</td>
<td>Exp./Contr. 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test 1</td>
<td>X^3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-Up 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-Up 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^1 Exp. 90 represents those 90 words presented to the experimental group only.

^2 Exp./Contr. 90 represents those 90 words presented to both the experimental and the control groups.

^3 X indicates a source of vocabulary items for the test named in the row.
half of the experiment, the morning classes (8:30-12:30) were taught experimentally, and the afternoon classes (1:00-5:00) were taught traditionally. For the second half, the positions were reversed. There was little contact between morning students and afternoon students, and neither group was informed of the experiment being conducted until after the fact.

Since the experimental groups were informed that they would be responsible for all of the material presented, the testing situation very closely resembled a normal procedure: The students were held accountable for a larger body of knowledge than any single test could cover effectively. The test itself sampled areas within the total corpus. The only difference was that, unbeknownst to the experimental groups, the items tested were limited to those words presented to the control groups.

RESULTS

Pretest 1

A pretest was given over the material covered in Units 1 and 2 to determine whether the two groups differed significantly prior to instruction. The same instrument was used as Post-Test 1. Means and standard deviations of the pretest were computed, and the Levene (1960) procedure for homogeneity of variances was performed. Results indicated a significant difference between variances (F = 5.00, p < .05), necessitating a nonparametric analysis. The differences between the scores of the two groups were compared by the Mann-Whitney U test (see Table 2). Because there was no significant difference between the two groups on the pretest of the material covered in Units 1 and 2, a pretest of the material in Units 3 and 4 was not administered: The potential-for-practice effect would be much greater if, once again, the same test were to be used for a pre- and post-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.75</td>
<td>184.5</td>
<td>-0.802*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2

Pretest Differences Between Groups

*n.s. (p > .42)

A SEMANTIC FIELD APPROACH TO VOCABULARY ACQUISITION
Post-Tests 1 and 2

A post-test was given after the first two and the second two units. The statistical design used to test for treatment differences was a two-factor analysis of variance with repeated measures on one factor. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the two tests, and Table 4 presents the analysis of variance data. There were no significant differences between groups or within groups. There was a significant interaction, however: The traditional-approach test results were better than the experimental-approach test results (p <.001).

### TABLE 3
Means and Standard Deviations for Post-Tests 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Test 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Test 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82.55</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>78.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80.17</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>83.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Control-group score
2 Experimental-group score

### TABLE 4
Analysis of Variance: Post-Tests 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>Between Subjects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Teaching Methods</td>
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<td>1.587</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error Between</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>136.037</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Subjects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35.063</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>280.778</td>
<td>11.69</td>
<td>.0015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error Within</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24.028</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pretest and Post-Test 1

Analysis of variance revealed no significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the first post-test. However, an analysis of covariance, using the scores from the pretest as the covariate, revealed that the adjusted mean score for the control group
(83.58) was significantly higher than the adjusted mean score for the experimental group (78.23) (p < .05). Table 5 summarizes the results.

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>293.36</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1141.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Follow-Up Test 1**

Four weeks after the final unit, subjects were given an unannounced follow-up test. The purpose of the test was to examine whether there was a significant difference in long-term retention between words presented experimentally and those presented traditionally. Students were not informed of the test in advance so as to hold constant the effect of individual study habits and motivation. The smaller number of subjects for both Groups 1 and 2 was due to absences on the day of the test. Half of the test was drawn from the first two units, and half was drawn from the second two units. These halves were randomly merged into one testing instrument. Thus, Group 1 had been exposed to half of the words experimentally and half of the words traditionally; the reverse was true for Group 2. A 2 x 2 analysis of variance was used to analyze the data. Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics and Table 7 the analysis of variance data. There was no significant difference either for main effect or for interaction.

**Follow-Up Test 2**

This test, administered to a group of students after they had been enrolled in full-time university work for two months, was given to answer two questions:

1. Did learning occur for those words which were presented experimentally but not included on any testing instrument (50 percent of the words presented experimentally)?

---

1 A parametric procedure was performed for two reasons: 1) There is no nonparametric correlate to analysis of covariance, and 2) a parametric t-test for independent samples on the pretest strongly corroborated the absence of significant differences between the two groups revealed by the Mann-Whitney U test (t = .50, p < .62).
TABLE 6
Means and Standard Deviations for Follow-Up Test 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Units 1/2</th>
<th>Units 3/4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Mean S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36.76' 5.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40.19' 6.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Scores based on number correct out of 50. For comparison with post-tests, mean scores must be doubled.
2 Words presented traditionally,
3 Words presented experimentally,

TABLE 7
Analysis of Variance: Follow-Up Test 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>128.33</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups (Words)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.40</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. If learning occurred, was it significantly better than any incidental vocabulary learning that may have occurred as the subjects continued their intensive English and then their university studies?

Those students from Group 2 who were at North Texas State University were contacted and asked to take the exam. All of the subjects were asked not to study for the test; they would, in fact, have been unable to do so because they were not allowed to keep the material used in the experimental presentation. Half of the test came from the untested half of Units 1 and 2 (to which the group had been exposed experimentally), and half came from the untested half of Units 3 and 4 (to which the group had not been formally exposed). Means and standard deviations were computed for each half of the test; differences between means were analyzed by use of a matched t-test (see Table 8). The subjects performed significantly better on the experimental half of the test.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The exigencies of the experimental situation prevented an equal comparison between experimental and control groups. As explained earlier, the experimental groups worked with two disadvantages: They were held accountable for twice as many words as the control groups, and they were not allowed to use keywords during the testing.

The answer to the first research question, based on these results, appears to be negative: Immediate post-test results indicated that although there was no significant difference between the individual groups, the combined traditional approach yielded significantly better results than the combined experimental approach. However, two points must be kept in mind. First, the evidence strongly suggests that the experimental groups would have scored significantly higher than the control groups if the tests had covered the additional 180 words to which they had been exposed. Second, the traditional-approach advantage was short-lived. Tests over the material after four weeks had elapsed showed that there was no significant difference in recall between the words learned experimentally and the words learned traditionally. Indeed, even though the differences were not statistically significant, performances for both groups were significantly superior on the experimental portion of the test. Based on these results, the answer to the second research question appears to be positive. Longer-range testing strongly supports the position that the learning that occurred through formal exposure was significantly better than whatever incidental vocabulary learning may have occurred during intensive English and university studies. Based on these results, the answer to the third research question appears to be positive.
The keyword method, utilizing a semantic field approach to the teaching of passive vocabulary, is not magic. Experimental subjects were unable to learn twice as many words in the same amount of time as those using a traditional approach without having some short-range disadvantages in the testing situation. The long-range results of this study lend support, however, to the hypothesis that a semantic field approach is a more effective and efficient builder of passive vocabulary. In addition, student reaction to the keyword method was surveyed and found to be overwhelmingly positive (see the Appendix for the results of this survey).

Additional research on the method needs to explore the following questions:

1. While the approach appears to be superior with four units, would proactive and retroactive interference inhibit learning if more units were attempted?
2. Would the keyword method produce significant effects on the reading comprehension process per se?
3. What would happen if the disadvantages to the experimental groups inherent to this study were removed? Research which tests reading comprehension rather than vocabulary retention might allow for this.
4. Is there a more effective way of teaching vocabulary by semantic field associations than that employed in this study?

A weak passive vocabulary is a serious problem for ESL students who need to read university-level material. Traditional approaches to the teaching of vocabulary have been organized around principles that are not based on meaning alphabetical listings of random samples or of those words that occur most frequently. Furthermore, these approaches often fail to differentiate between active and passive requirements of the students. Learning theorists have pointed out for years that long-term retention of information that has been organized into some type of cognitive categories is superior to retention of randomly presented material. This research lends tentative support to an approach that is more in keeping with our understanding of how the human mind works: a semantic field approach to passive vocabulary.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the cooperation and assistance of the teachers and staff of the Intensive English Language Institute, North Texas State University. In addition, we would like to thank Grant Henning for his advice concerning testing, Maria Jean Crow and Marian Aitches for their very helpful comments on earlier drafts, and two anonymous TESOL Quarterly reviewers for their invaluable suggestions.

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REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Student Survey Keyword Approach to Vocabulary

The following survey was conducted at the completion of the research project. The smaller number of students (n=33) was due to absences on the day the survey was given. The percentage of students selecting each option is shown under each question.

Vocabulary Survey

During the last semester you have been exposed to two types of vocabulary instruction. I would like your opinion about both methods. Please use the following key to state your opinion.

A. Traditional Approach “Vocabulary Building”
B. Keyword Approach
C. No opinion

Please circle your choice:

1. Which method did you like more?
   A. 15%  B. 76%  C. 9%
2. Which method was easier?
   A. 21%  B. 73%  C. 6%
3. Which method required you to spend more time in preparation for class?
   A. 58%  B. 33%  C. 9%
4. Which method helped you learn more vocabulary?
   A. 3%  B. 79%  C. 18%
5. If you had your choice of methods in the future, which method would you prefer?
   A. 6%  B. 85%  C. 9%
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1 - 4 April 1986

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Organizational problems in academic writing by second language learners are often attributed to interference, or negative transfer, from the first language, but recent research suggests that developmental factors may be relevant. In the case of Chinese, an examination of classical texts and modern works on Chinese composition found no support for claims that the organizational pattern of Chinese writing differs markedly from that of English. Hence, language transfer seems more likely to help than to interfere. In regard to developmental factors, research in first language composition indicates that organization develops late and can be influenced by appropriate composition practices. For the group of Chinese students studied, a comparison of composition practices in Hong Kong and British Columbia indicated that their school experience with English composition was oriented more toward accuracy at the sentence level than toward the development of appropriate discourse organization. A survey of these students also suggested that they saw their current writing problems as sentence-level problems. These findings point to a need for greater awareness of students’ native literacy and educational experience as factors influencing the development of academic writing in a second language.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally recognized that many second language learners have difficulties with academic writing in English. Some of these difficulties are sentence-level problems with grammar and vocabulary. However, a special feature of academic writing is the importance of discourse organization. This article uses data from Chinese students to examine factors which may affect second language learners’ competence in the organization of written academic discourse in English.
The development of academic writing in ESL learners raises issues of wide importance. Is the discourse organization of academic writing in English culture-specific, or is it universal? Similarly, are the underlying structures of academic knowledge culture-specific or universal? Are there universal patterns of development in the ability to produce academic discourse? While research on these questions is still at a beginning stage, findings will have broad implications in a number of areas. Take, for instance, the concept of bilingual proficiency. Should we think of the bilingual as possessing two distinct and separate language competencies, or should we regard language competence as containing a common component of cognitive/academic language proficiency, manifested in different surface features of L1 and L2, as in Cummins’s (1980) “dual iceberg” model? (For a detailed example of a common cognitive component—knowledge structures which are probably universal—see Mohan 1985.) If there is a common cognitive/academic component, we would particularly expect it to appear in academic discourse across cultures.

In a widely quoted work on ESL academic writing, Kaplan (1972) claims that problems of organization in academic writing by ESL students are due to cross-cultural differences in rhetoric. In Kaplan’s view, deviations from the expected organization of English academic discourse can be explained as the result of interference, or negative transfer, from the rhetorical organization of the writer’s first language. In subsequent work based on the Kaplan approach, Hinds (1983) exemplifies cross-cultural differences in rhetoric by documenting an expository writing schema in Japanese which does not exist in English. He was able to demonstrate that newspaper articles which followed this schema were judged significantly better in organization by Japanese readers than by English readers.

Noting that Kaplan’s pioneering work has stood essentially alone in the field, Hinds points out that Kaplan’s position has been misrepresented by later writers, who have converted his observations into proven statements. Kaplan, says Hinds, was somewhat cautious in his claims, emphasizing the need for more detailed and accurate descriptions of the rhetorical organization of languages other than English. Hinds is, however, critical of Kaplan’s use of written compositions in English gathered from speakers of various languages. Such data, he claims, do not necessarily say anything about the rhetoric of the first language, since it has now been recognized that at least some errors in the target language are not the result of negative transfer from the first language.

Evidence which casts doubt on Kaplan’s claims is provided by Das (1985), who studied the expository writing of bilingual undergradu-
ate students in India. Students produced samples of writing in English and in their first language, which were then evaluated by a panel of judges. Findings indicated that students’ rhetorical strategies in their first language tended to be as deficient as in their second language, English. This result suggests that interference from the first language is not an important factor at the rhetorical level of second language composition. What may be more critical is the student’s general level of development in composition.

Extensive research on second language acquisition at the sentence level has found weak influence of the first language on the L2 learner’s grammar (Dulay and Burt 1974, White 1977) and has analyzed second language acquisition as a developmental process showing similarities to first language development (see Dulay, Burt, and Krashen 1982). Likewise, in what can be broadly labeled a developmental approach to ESL composition research, Zamel (1983) and others have drawn on research in first language composition and pointed to similarities in development between ESL writers and writers for whom English is a mother tongue. (Of course, a developmental perspective on composition does not by any means imply that the acquisition of grammar and the acquisition of competence at the discourse level are similar processes.) Any investigation of organizational problems in the written academic discourse of second language learners must therefore consider the possibility of both developmental and transfer factors.

This article considers the case of academic writing and Chinese ESL students. First, it examines evidence for Kaplan’s claim of interference from the organization pattern of Chinese expository prose. It then considers evidence of the presence of relevant developmental factors.

TRANSFER FACTORS

A claim that writing errors in the L2 are due to interference from the L1 should provide 1) a contrastive analysis of L1 and L2, 2) an error analysis of second language learners’ performance in the L2, and 3) unambiguous evidence that the errors found are due to transfer. With these requirements in mind, we will now review Kaplan’s claims.

Kaplan (1972) claims that second language learners writing expository prose in English will show organizational patterns different from those of native speakers. His explanation is that the learner is transferring rhetorical organization from the mother tongue and culture. In fact, Kaplan believes that “each language and each culture has a paragraph order unique to itself”(63).
In regard to the contrast between English and Chinese, Kaplan asserts that there is a difference in directness between English and Chinese paragraphs. English readers expect a pattern of paragraph development that is essentially linear and direct (10-11); the typical Chinese paragraph, however, has an indirect pattern of development.

The development of the paragraph may be said to be “turning and turning in a widening gyre.” The circles or gyres turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views, but the subject is never looked at directly. Things are developed in terms of what they are not, rather than in terms of what they are. Again, such a development in a modern English paragraph would strike the English reader as awkward and unnecessarily indirect (46).

Thus, Chinese students writing in English will be expected to use a pattern of organization which reflects Chinese rhetoric. More precisely, they will follow the literary form of the Chinese Eight-Legged Essay (or bi-gu wen). This form is a part of the Chinese literary tradition, having been used as the prescribed essay form for the civil service examinations in China for five centuries. Kaplan quotes four compositions written by Chinese students to substantiate his claim that they closely resemble the form and style of the Eight-Legged Essay. By following this form, the student essays lose, from an English reader’s perspective, unity and coherence: “There is a lot of seemingly unnecessary wandering about the topic. The papers are characterized by an inability to get to the point and stick with it” (60).

Expository Writing in Chinese

Kaplan’s assertions that the Eight-Legged Essay is a central example of Chinese expository writing and that it has a strong influence on modern Chinese students are both questionable. The Eight-Legged Essay is one among numerous literary forms classified under the wen-yan, or classical, style and based on the classical written language (see Jiang Zu-yi 1973). This prose form was used only for the Chinese civil service examinations, which were abolished in 1901. Authors writing compositions for other purposes did not write in this form. Thus, it is hardly a typical example of exposition. In fact, some Chinese literary historians believe that this literary form was emphasized by the conservative Quing government as a device to stop Chinese intellectuals at that time from proposing reforms and interfering with politics; the form was so rigid in structure and style that meaning and content had to be sacrificed (see Zhen Tao 1961:73).
In addition to not being a typical example of exposition, the Eight-Legged Essay is not a currently influential genre. Since the May 4th Movement of 1919 (the Chinese Literary Revolution), the wen-yan style has been replaced by the bai-hua, or spoken language style, which is based on contemporary spoken Mandarin and includes a different set of literary forms (see Hsu 1970:581–600). In countries where Chinese is spoken as the first language, Chinese students are taught in school to write in bai-hua style only. Although they may be taught to read and appreciate wen-yan forms as part of the study of Chinese literature, the Eight-Legged Essay is a minor and poorly regarded form, one that is not included in the Hong Kong Chinese syllabus, for example. (See Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination Board 1976.)

Since the Eight-Legged Essay is not a central or influential example of exposition, we turn to examples of traditional Chinese expository writing which are familiar to Chinese students. Classical Chinese literature provides much evidence that undermines the claim that the Chinese paragraph is indirect. Here, examples are drawn from The Analects of Confucius (Waley 1938) and Mencius (Lau 1970), since many Chinese students study some sections of these traditional texts. (The original texts were used for analysis, and our illustrations are presented in translations which retain the organization of the original.)

The following passage from The Analects is a deductive paragraph of classification, which states a generalization and directly supports it:

Master K’ung said, “There are three sorts of friends that are profitable, and three sorts that are harmful. Friendship with the upright, with those who are faithful to their promises, and with those who have heard much is profitable. Friendship with the obsequious, friendship with those who are good at accommodating their principles, and friendship with those who are clever at talk is harmful” (Analects of Confucius Bk. 16, No. 4).

In the next passage, which shows inductive development, Mencius builds directly toward his conclusion that benevolent government is important in order to rule well:

Mencius said, “Even if you had the eyes of Li Lou and the skill of Kung-shu Tzu, you could not draw squares or circles without a carpenter’s square or a pair of compasses; even if you had the acute ears of Shih Kuang, you could not adjust the pitch of the five notes correctly without the six pipes; even if you knew the way of Yao and Shun, you could not rule the Empire equitably except through benevolent government” (Mencius Bk. IV, Part A, No. 1).
Many similar examples can be found of paragraphs which are directly stated and which illustrate cognitive categories of organization widely used in English expository prose: the definition of an educated man (Analects Bk. 1, No. 7); the comparison of the gentleman with the common man (Analects Bk. 4, No. 11); cause and effect (Mencius Bk. 4, Part B, No. 3, first paragraph); prediction (Mencius Bk. 4, Part A, No. 3); chronological order and hypothesis (Mencius Bk. 7, Part B, No. 38). All of these are clear examples of direct rather than indirect paragraph statement, and many equivalent examples can be found in modern Chinese expository prose.

Perhaps the most succinct evidence of the organizational structure of exposition in Chinese is provided by works on modern Chinese composition. Here we find that the indirect approach is explicitly condemned: “Sometimes when people write compositions, they like to wander about the topic for a long time without talking directly about it. . . . Essays written in this way have serious problems in organization as well as style” (Hu-bei-sheng Research Team 1973:206). Direct, concise development is recommended over an indirect approach: “To be concise in writing means that we should not waste our energy in writing anything that is superfluous. . . . There should be no verbosity and no repetitions. We should write just what we want to say in a concise manner” (Beijing University 1973:104–105).

Analysis of statements about the organization of expository prose in a number of representative works on Chinese composition demonstrates many parallels with expository prose in English: Every essay should have a thesis; each paragraph should have a main idea; and more generally, an essay should have unity and coherence (see Ou Jun-zhi 1964: 24-33; Beijing University 1973, Chapter 1:33,39-40, 42-43; Hu-bei-sheng Research Team 1973:204, 206; Li Ji-gang 1973: 25-26, 34). In addition, the patterns of paragraph development discussed in these books are very similar to those identified in English expository prose, such as definition, comparison and contrast, classification, cause-effect, spatial order, and chronological order (see Ou Jun-zhi 1964: 88–89; Beijing University 1973:6, 87; Hu-bei-sheng Research Team 1973:194, 298; Li Ji-gang 1973: 51–53).

Thus, evidence from classical and modern Chinese prose does not support the view that there are gross differences between the organization of exposition in Chinese and the organization of exposition in English. On the contrary, similarities are much more apparent than differences and may well be part of a cognitive/academic component shared by English and Chinese. Of course, this does not mean there are no differences. Rigorous studies of the discourse structure of expository prose are needed in both languages to examine these
questions. Until these are available, however, it is hard to see how negative transfer from the discourse patterns of Chinese can be demonstrated. On the contrary, we might expect accomplished Chinese writers to have a positive advantage in English composition. In other words, positive transfer is likely to be important.

Error Analysis of ESL Students’ Writing

Kaplan does not offer an objective, quantitative error analysis of the 110 essays he collected from Chinese students, but only an informal discussion of the four examples mentioned earlier. Only one of these is expository prose, the others being a mixture of narrative and description. These examples may well indicate that students avoid the problems of expository writing, but they tell us very little about specific difficulties with the organization of expository prose.

Even if we were given a quantified error analysis of Chinese students’ writing which showed a lack of linear development, this would not prove that negative transfer is operating. For one thing, we have shown that there is no evidence that Chinese paragraph development is in fact indirect. For another, there are a number of alternative explanations for errors at the organizational level in composition: A student’s English may be inadequate for expressing complex ideas; a student who is unfamiliar with a topic may be unable to write a well-organized essay about it in any language; a student may feel the teacher values correct grammatical expression more than organizational form; and a student may not be familiar with the conventions of expository writing in the native language (just as there are many English-speaking students who are not skillful writers of expository prose). In studies of grammatical transfer we can assume that students are competent in the grammar of their first language; in studies of the transfer of written discourse we cannot make the equivalent assumption.

Another way to look at this point is to reverse cultural roles and imagine a Chinese researcher analyzing the expository essays of English-speaking students writing in Mandarin. If the researcher made claims based on these essays about the pattern of English expository prose, we would be unlikely to accept them.

Thus, we do not find evidence for Kaplan’s claim of negative transfer of organizational patterns from Chinese to English. As we have said, this does not mean that language transfer does not operate at this level and that evidence for negative transfer cannot be provided by further studies. Furthermore, we do not wish our detailed criticisms to detract from the credit due to Kaplan for drawing
attention to this important area of research and for providing a bold framework from which to begin.

DEVELOPMENTAL FACTORS

To discuss developmental factors in second language learners’ writing, we must first review some of the relevant research on native English speakers’ composition. Important points are that competence in the organization of written discourse develops late and that appropriate instruction has an impact on this competence.

Most people learn to write in school (Frederiksen and Dominic 1981:3), and school learning of the discourse component of writing—organization—is a central issue:

Writing is developed after language is rather thoroughly learned. It would appear, in fact, that the major components in [a developmental theory of writing] would be discourse or utterance components—those aspects of writing which foreground, subordinate, equalize, relate, connect, alternate, open, close (Schuy 1981:126).

Schuy outlines a developmental model of first language writing. Sentence-level skills such as spelling, punctuation, and grammatical accuracy are established early, and awareness of them declines as they become relatively automatic. Awareness and control of discourse strategies, competence in organizing larger units of discourse coherently, are a later development. From this model, one can see that much composition instruction is often inappropriate, teaching beginning-level sentence skills for longer than is necessary and neglecting the development of discourse strategies. Similarly, much assessment is inappropriate when it concentrates on the measurement of sentence-level skills and mechanics.

While English-speaking students may be competent speakers of the language, they are not necessarily competent writers. Lack of competence at the discourse level of writing is widespread. Drawing on national assessments of writing, Brown (1981) suggests that only 50 to 55 percent of 17-year-olds in the United States write competently and that writing problems at this age are largely at the discourse level rather than at the sentence level. Brown also points out that these problems are not addressed by the traditional grammar- and usage-oriented approach to writing instruction. A detailed description of the writing of “remedial” college-level students is given by Shaughnessy (1977). These students’ encounter with the school system has failed to make them competent and assured writers; academic writing is a trap rather than a way of saying something to someone. “So
absolute is the importance of error in the minds of many writers that ‘good writing’ to them means ‘correct writing,’ nothing more” (Shaughnessy 1977:8).

The late development of discourse skills is supported by evidence of the revisions writers make. Nold (1981) found that 13-year-olds made more organizational and transitional revisions than 9-year-olds and infers that 13-year-olds were more able to conceive of a written discourse as a whole. She reports that skilled adult writers first revised globally at the discourse level and then revised locally at the sentence level. By contrast, unskilled writers mainly revised at the sentence level, viewing revision as “finding the right word” and changing their prose to conform to the rules of written English.

Zamel (1983) has drawn on this body of research to show similarities in the composing processes of first and second language students. In a case study of the expository composing processes of six advanced ESL students, she found that her least skilled writer did not see composing as the creation of a whole discourse and was overly concerned with correctness, perhaps because of previous experiences with composition and teacher expectations. By contrast, her skilled ESL writers first explored and clarified ideas and did not attend to sentence-level language concerns until their ideas had been delineated. Believing that ESL writing continues to be taught as if form preceded content, Zamel recommends that rather than adopting a premature focus on correctness and usage, teachers should work interactively with students during the composing process.

The belief that writing is not improved by instruction in sentence-level grammar is borne out by previous research (see Zamel 1976). Yet, appropriate composition instruction can have an impact. West (1967) reports that studies on teaching methods consistently show that careful reading of essays along with analytical discussions of ideas, presentation of functional writing assignments, and intensive evaluation are effective strategies when combined with practice.

These research findings have implications for both first and second language learners. A large proportion of young adult writers in general are likely to have problems in the organization of discourse, whether they are native speakers or second language learners. For either group of learners, composition instruction which deals only with accuracy at the sentence level and which does not accompany writing practice with discussion and intensive feedback is unlikely to help much with these problems. This suggests the importance of studying the ESL student’s prior experience with English composition, since a student’s composing process is likely to be influenced by previous classroom experience. It also raises the question of how composition
practices in ESL compare with composition practices in English as a first language.

With these questions in mind, we now consider the prior experience factor, using the specific case of Chinese students from Hong Kong studying in British Columbia. Hong Kong was chosen because students were likely to have considerable experience of English composition instruction and to have had the opportunity to develop advanced composition skills in English. Clearly, one cannot generalize from teaching practices in Hong Kong to the variety of other educational systems in which Chinese students learn English composition; nor can one generalize from educational practices in British Columbia to all school systems in North America. Nevertheless, a comparison of two particular systems is an important first step.

English Composition in Hong Kong and British Columbia

To get a comparative sense of our subjects’ learning experiences with English composition, we examined the teaching of English composition in Hong Kong and British Columbia with respect to aims, teaching practices, and evaluation. We drew on the results of a province-wide study of British Columbia (Evanechko, Armstrong, Dey, Johnson, Quorn, and Smith 1976), and we used contemporaneous material from Hong Kong as far as possible. The examination of composition teaching in British Columbia public schools was part of a large-scale study of the teaching of English as a mother tongue. A survey of over 1400 teachers produced the following rank order of composition goals: 1) write clearly, 2) display logical development and organization, 3) have an appropriate level of vocabulary, 4) write grammatically, 5) spell correctly (Volume 1:104). Organization was thus rated as more important than grammatical accuracy. The importance of organization was reflected in those textbooks which the survey identified as widely used in the province. A review of a sample of these textbooks showed that they typically had substantial sections on organization and provided exercises to stimulate pre-writing discussion and thought (see, for example, Lawrence 1973, Platter 1973, Cline 1974).

The teacher survey also contained questions about methods of instruction. Pre-writing discussion and post-writing sessions for correction were reported to be widely used, but the teaching of grammar was less frequent (Volume 3:85). In addition, class size and time devoted to composition instruction were investigated. Over half the classes at the secondary level contained between 21 and 30 students, and teachers in British Columbia secondary schools allocated an
While organization at the discourse level was stressed in British Columbia schools, Hong Kong practices were more oriented toward sentence-level accuracy (e.g., grammatical correctness). According to published statements, many Hong Kong teachers believed that the most serious problem of their students was incorrect English usage; they felt that accuracy should be acquired first and that organization and other aspects of writing development should be taught later (see English Bulletin Editors 1962:14–16, 20–21). This view was reflected in evaluation practices. The English Composition marking scheme for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education in 1976 allocated, in total, 45 percent for accuracy, 21 percent for content, 18 percent for range of sentence structure and vocabulary, and 16 percent for organization.

An examination of English composition books widely used in secondary schools also reflected this view; most did not have any sections on organization. They were mainly collections of model essays of different modes of writing, and writing exercises usually consisted of suggested topics on which students could imitate the models or write freely on their own (see, for example, Chung 1977, Ip and Kwan 1977, Leys 1977).

We corroborated this impression in interviews with ten Hong Kong teachers of English conducted by Au-Yeung Lo. At the time of the interviews, the teachers were teaching in Hong Kong English secondary schools, had all had at least two years of teaching experience, and all had university degrees or teacher training. They were interviewed individually and informally, following a schedule of open-ended questions, and were told that the purpose of the interview was to find out how English composition was taught in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong teachers indicated that their main objective was to teach students how to write correct English and that much time and effort were spent in teaching grammar rules and English usage to meet the requirements of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education English composition examination. The free composition method was the most frequently used approach. Students’ essays were usually marked and corrected in full by the teacher alone, with an eye to accuracy of expression. Rarely were students given opportunities for pre-writing discussion or post-writing classroom sessions for evaluation and correction, particularly because of problems of class size. Teachers estimated that composition classes in Hong Kong generally had 45 to 60 students, and they calculated that about 40 minutes per week was devoted to composition instruction within the English program.

Thus, a comparison of composition teaching practices in Hong Kong and British Columbia shows a strong contrast in the relative
prominence of grammatical accuracy and discourse organization, and this contrast can be seen in goals, textbooks, classroom practices, and evaluation. We do not wish to pass judgment on composition instruction in either place. Rather, we see the contrast as a reflection of differences in education systems. For one thing, Hong Kong teachers must deal with considerably greater numbers of students in considerably less time.

The British Columbia study provided further relevant findings. Some 3700 essays by students in Grades 8 and 12 were evaluated for ideas, organization, sentence usage, vocabulary, and mechanics. Grade 12 students were significantly superior to Grade 8 students in organization, as might be expected. Yet, paragraph organization was the weakest point of the Grade 12 students, with little more than half of the essays being judged acceptable in this regard (Evanechko, Armstrong, Dey, Johnson, Quorn, and Smith 1976, Volume 3:89). The implication of these results—that organization is a late-emerging aspect of competence in writing and one which is still being developed at the Grade 12 level—is lent credence by a subpart of the assessment: The essays of students from anglophone homes were contrasted with the essays of students from homes where a language other than English was spoken (1125 students, approximately 30 percent of the sample). Interestingly, the essays of the two groups showed no significant differences in organization or in any other aspect of composition, with the exception that Grade 12 ESL students were weaker in “sentence clarity.” While this result should be treated with some caution, it does suggest that the first language does not necessarily influence composition organization in the second language, particularly when non-native speakers receive the same composition instruction as native speakers.

Student Perceptions of Their Composition Experience

We surveyed students’ perceptions of their experiences and problems in learning to write (see Appendix). Respondents were 30 Chinese, ranging in age from 16 to 35, who had studied in Hong Kong and were currently studying in Vancouver. Twenty were community college students, and 10 were university students. All had studied English composition in Hong Kong and were currently taking English composition classes in Vancouver. All were native speakers of Cantonese and were literate in Chinese. The majority had completed the equivalent of Grade 12 in Hong Kong, had studied English for at least 10 years, and had received at least 4 years of English composition instruction in Hong Kong. They therefore had considerable prior experience with English composition.
The majority of students had begun to study English composition by the time they were in the elementary grades (see Question 4). They had most practice in narrative and descriptive writing and least in expository and argumentative writing (Question 5). A number of students commented that they did not begin expository and argumentative writing until Grade 10. In response to Question 9, students reported that they found narrative mode easiest (24 responses) and expository and argumentative modes most difficult (23 responses). Thus, students reported least practice and most difficulty with modes demanded by academic writing in subject areas.

Their replies to questions concerning methods of teaching composition in Hong Kong (Questions 6 and 7) were consistent with our previous findings. Pre-writing discussion was relatively rare, and post-writing discussion sessions were rarer still. Accuracy was the major criterion for evaluating essays, and organization was the least important criterion. When they compared composition instruction in Hong Kong and Vancouver (Question 10), students commented that classes in Vancouver were smaller and that more time was spent on pre-writing discussion (9 responses). According to the students, Hong Kong teachers emphasized the teaching of grammar, especially verb forms, but teachers in Vancouver were more concerned with teaching units larger than the sentence, as well as with explaining and discussing organization and aspects of style (16 responses).

Student perceptions of their problems in composition (Question 8) showed their major concerns to be vocabulary, sentence variety, and transitional words and phrases. These were seen as more serious concerns than grammatical accuracy. Yet, the latter was still considered to be more problematic than organization. This may well indicate that the subjects were not fully aware of their problems with organization, despite knowledge of their difficulties with argumentative writing and of the importance of organization to composition teachers in Vancouver. Interestingly, of the 25 students who felt that they had some problems with organization, only one believed that this was due to differences in organization between English and Chinese. The rest believed that they had simply not learned to organize essays sufficiently well.

To summarize, the responses of students provided further evidence that their learning experiences with English composition in Hong Kong were oriented to accuracy at the sentence level. Their perceptions of their current difficulties with composition appeared to have moved beyond grammatical accuracy but were still largely at the sentence level rather than at the level of discourse organization. It should be noted, however, that student responses tell us only how students see
CONCLUSION

We suggest that if there are differences in the ability of Chinese and Western students to organize essays in English, the source of these differences does not lie in a preference for “indirectness” in the language and culture of Chinese. Rather, it lies in the emphasis of the English language instruction programs to which students are exposed. Teachers in Hong Kong emphasize sentence correctness and pay less attention to organization in writing.

Thus, the difficulties of Chinese students writing in English may be better understood in terms of developmental factors: Ability in rhetorical organization develops late, even among writers who are native speakers, and because this ability is derived especially from formal education, previous educational experience may facilitate or retard the development of academic writing ability. In other words, we should be aware of the late development of composition ability across the board and pay particular attention to students’ previous educational experience.

We suggest that research on second language composition in general should take more account of the developmental factors identified in this study and that negative transfer should be rejected as the sole explanation for student difficulties. Nevertheless, we do not feel that transfer factors should be ignored. First, future research may be able to identify writing difficulties which are attributable to well-established cross-cultural differences in rhetoric. Second, and more important, cross-cultural similarities in rhetoric may result in positive transfer which aids student composition in the second language. A general model of second language composition should therefore include both developmental and transfer factors. This would provide a more realistic perspective from which to analyze student difficulties and student achievements in composition.

These conclusions indicate a number of directions for future research. When second language students have difficulties with organization in writing, we cannot assume that this is a problem of second language learning. Many native speakers also have problems with organization. Future research should investigate whether there are differences between these two groups in the type and degree of difficulty. Because of the difficulty of controlling relevant variables when comparing native speakers and second language learners, it may be fruitful
to compare the written performance of bilingual in their first and second languages.

Aside from the description of these difficulties, there is the question of the reasons for them. With regard to transfer factors, we need detailed comparative studies of academic discourse in a number of languages. Until differences have been established, it is difficult to see how research can show that interference operates. We need to know which aspects of academic discourse are culture-specific and which are universal. We need to investigate underlying structures of academic knowledge to identify common components of cognitive/academic proficiency. We have shown that the evidence does not reveal gross differences between Chinese organization and English organization. On the contrary, there appear to be striking similarities, which suggests that the organization of academic writing is more universal than was previously thought. It appears that transfer of rhetorical organization is more likely to help than to interfere. The positive role of literacy in the native language needs to be investigated: We need to see whether students who are skillful writers in their native language have an advantage in second language composition.

With regard to developmental factors, prior experiences with second language composition appear to be highly relevant. First language research indicates that organization develops late and can be influenced by appropriate teaching practices. We have found evidence that the composition instruction that Hong Kong students have received is strongly oriented to sentence-level accuracy rather than to discourse strategies of organization. This may well be true for many second language learners because second language teaching tends to be heavily weighted toward the development of sentence-level skills. Comparative studies of English composition teaching in different educational systems are therefore required. We have indicated some differences between the teaching of English composition in Hong Kong and British Columbia. Are similar differences found elsewhere?

Do such differences relate to factors such as class size, or is competence in the second language a more important variable? It would also be valuable to compare the teaching of composition in first and second languages in the same educational system, contrasting the teaching of Chinese and English composition in Hong Kong, for example.

Further research is also needed to relate prior experiences with composition to written performance. A promising approach might be to investigate the link between the composing processes of second language learners and their previous educational history.

These findings have implications for classroom teachers: Teachers in English-speaking countries could find out more about their students’
native language literacy. They could ask their students about their learning experiences with composition in their home country and explore student perceptions of their difficulties with composition and student awareness of how their compositions will be evaluated. The student questionnaire used in this study provides some guidelines for doing this. Teachers who use process-oriented composition practices may well find that students are unfamiliar with these techniques and need assistance in gaining the maximum benefit from them. Composition teachers in the students’ home country, however, may find that process-oriented composition practices are difficult to implement, given the constraints under which they work. It is hoped that future research on process-oriented composition practices will address their situation.

THE AUTHORS

Bernard Mohan, Associate Professor, Language Education, University of British Columbia, has published on discourse pragmatic and educational linguistics in various journals. His book on content-based language learning, Language and Content (Addison-Wesley, 1985), outlines cognitive structures common to language and subject matter across the curriculum.

Winnie Au-Yeung Lo (B. A., University of Hong Kong; M.Ed., University of British Columbia) is an ESL instructor at Vancouver Community College and Kwantlen College. She taught English in secondary schools in Hong Kong and at the Language Centre, University of Hong Kong, and has taught writing to ESL students in British Columbia for several years.

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**APPENDIX**

**Student Experience with English Composition**

1. Educational level completed in Hong Kong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gr. 10</th>
<th>Gr. 11</th>
<th>Gr. 12</th>
<th>Gr. 12+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Years of English study in Hong Kong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1–5</th>
<th>6–10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16–20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Years of study in Canada:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 yr.</th>
<th>2 yrs.</th>
<th>3 yrs. +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Grade level at which students started to write essays in English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary (Gr. 1–3)</th>
<th>Elementary (Gr. 4–7)</th>
<th>Secondary (Gr. 8–10)</th>
<th>Secondary (Gr. 11–12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. In which mode of writing did you write most often in Hong Kong?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative mode</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive mode</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expository mode</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative mode</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Which teaching methods were used most often in Hong Kong?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Mean Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher assigned writing topics and asked us to write.</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher assigned writing topics with pre-writing discussion.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher corrected my errors on my essay.</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student groups discussed and edited each others' essays.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Which criteria were most important for evaluating essays in Hong Kong?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy (correct grammar and usage, spelling and punctuation)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of sentence patterns and vocabulary</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. What are your problems in English composition?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Mean response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A large enough vocabulary</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An adequate variety of sentence patterns</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of connectors and transitional phrases</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Which mode of writing do you find easiest, and which do you find most difficult?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Easiest</th>
<th>Most Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expository</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Rarely, 4 = Never

21 = Very important, 2 = Of moderate importance, 3 = Of little importance, 4 = Not important

10. What differences are there in the teaching of English composition between Hong Kong and Canada?
Performance on Cloze Tests with Fixed-Ratio and Rational Deletions

LYLE F. BACHMAN
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Although research on the cloze test has offered differing evidence regarding what language abilities it measures, there is a general consensus among researchers that not all the deletions in a given cloze passage measure exactly the same abilities. An important issue for test developers, therefore, is the extent to which it is possible to design cloze tests that measure specific abilities.

Two cloze tests were prepared from the same text. In one, different types of deletions were made according to the range of context required for closure, while in the other a fixed-ratio deletion procedure was followed. These tests were administered to 910 university and pre-university students, including both native and non-native speakers of English, with approximately half assigned at random to take the fixed-ratio test and the other half taking the rationally deleted test.

While both tests were equally reliable and had equal criterion validity, the fixed-ratio test was significantly more difficult. Analyses of responses to different types of deletions suggest that the difficulty of cloze items is a function of the range of syntactic and discourse context required for closure. The study also provides practical and empirically supported criteria for making rational deletions and suggests that cloze tests can be designed to measure a range of abilities.

Recent research on the cloze test has focused on the question of construct validity; more specifically, it has examined the extent to which cloze deletions are capable of measuring language abilities beyond the knowledge of sentence-level grammatical structure. While there are considerable differences among the studies which have examined this question, there appears to be some consensus among researchers that not all deletions in a given cloze passage measure exactly the same abilities. If this is so, then an important issue for test developers is the extent to which it is possible to control,
by design, the abilities which a given cloze test measures. The origin of this study was two-fold: 1) a practical need to develop a test of textual relationships beyond the clause level as a complement to other tests in a placement test battery and 2) a theoretical interest in better understanding what makes the cloze “work,” or what it measures. The primary objectives of this study were to develop criteria for rationally selecting which words to delete in developing a cloze test and to determine the extent to which performance on a cloze test developed by such a deletion procedure differs from that on a cloze test developed by the more traditional fixed-ratio deletion procedure.

Several studies have found support for the claim that cloze items are capable of measuring textual relationships beyond the level of the sentence. Ramanauskas (1972) compared native English-speaking subjects’ performance on two types of cloze passages: one in which the sentences were in the original order and one in which the sentences were randomly rearranged. In each passage, every fifth word was deleted. The subjects’ significantly better performance on the intact passages was interpreted as evidence that the cloze is sensitive to linguistic contexts longer than a sentence. Using a procedure in which the amount of context around cloze items in scrambled texts was varied from 5 to 50 words, Oller (1975) found that average cloze item scores of native English speakers increased as the amount of context increased.

Chihara, Oller, Weaver, and Chavez-Oller (1977), using a fixed-ratio deletion procedure with intact and scrambled texts, found that both native and non-native speakers of English performed much better on cloze items in intact texts than they did on the same items in the scrambled texts. In addition, they found that the percentage of correct closures was higher for groups with higher language proficiency (native speakers and advanced EFL students) than for groups with lower proficiency (beginning and intermediate EFL students). Bachman (1982), using a rational deletion procedure with an intact passage, found that deletion types requiring context beyond the clause for closure loaded on different factors than did deletions which depended only upon the context of the clause in which they occurred. That is, factor analysis indicated that these two deletion types are related to two different factors.

In a recent paper, Chavez-Oller, Chihara, Weaver, and Oller (in press) examined performance at the item level and provided a textual analysis of the contexts required for successful closure of items. Using the original Chihara, Oller, Weaver, and Chavez-Oller (1977) data, they looked at differences in item difficulty and item discrimination across scrambled and intact passages and across different proficiency levels.
levels. The objective was to identify items on which performance differed most between the scrambled and intact conditions. A linguistic analysis demonstrated that virtually all these items depended on intersentential context for successful closure. The authors offered this finding as an explanation of why these items were more difficult in the scrambled version than in the intact version.

Other studies, however, have argued that cloze tests are not sensitive to contexts beyond the sentence. Shanahan, Kamil, and Tobin (1982) constructed fixed-ratio cloze tests from intact passages, randomly scrambled passages, and passages in which the original sentences were extracted and inserted into unrelated text. They found no significant differences in their subjects’ performances across these three conditions. From this they concluded that cloze tests do not measure the integration of intersentential information. Alderson (1979), who systematically varied the size of fixed-deletion ratios across passages of differing difficulty and across groups, found no evidence that increases in context affected his subjects’ ability to complete items successfully. In another study, however, Alderson (1980) suggests that variation in the performance of native speakers on cloze tests might indicate that such tests do measure higher-order skills. Porter (1978), using a procedure originally followed by Taylor (1954), developed different cloze tests from the same passage by using the same fixed ratio of deletions but varying the point at which deletions began. From his results, he concluded that cloze items are not sensitive to contexts beyond five or six words. He interpreted the wide variation in average scores for the different passages as an indication of lack of equivalence and unreliability.

One source of inconsistency among the results of these studies might be the methods used in creating a cloze test from an intact text. By far the majority of the studies have distorted a text according to a procedure which is generally based on the linear arrangement of words and have thereby virtually ignored hierarchical structural and semantic relationships. These distortions have taken the form of either deleting words according to a fixed ratio (every $n$th word), scrambling segments of a text at random, or a combination of these. Such approaches are based on the assumption that redundancy is randomly distributed throughout a given text.

There are several weaknesses in this assumption. First, it is not clear that all words carry the same amount of information or are equally redundant; some deletions may therefore result in a greater loss of information than others. While it has been argued that these differences level out if enough deletions are made, this ignores the finding that individual deletions vary greatly in difficulty, with very few actually
having the mean value of the whole passage (Taylor 1954). Second, not all words in a given text function at only one or at the same structural level, and it therefore seems unreasonable to expect all deletions to depend equally on the same level or range of context for closure. Finally, we cannot assume that there will necessarily be equal proportions of words functioning at different levels or that different deletion patterns will yield equal proportions of deletions across different levels (compare Brown 1983, who found that cohesive deletions ranged from 56 percent to 70 percent across several different deletion patterns).

To develop a test that could potentially measure textual relationships beyond the clause level, it was necessary to identify criteria for classifying and selecting words to be deleted. An initial attempt at such a classification included three deletion types: 1) syntactic, which depended only on clause-level structure; 2) cohesive, which depended on interclausal and intersentential cohesive structure, as described by Halliday and Hasan (1976); and 3) strategic, which depended on “long-range” patterns of coherence. An earlier study (Bachman 1982) indicated that these three types of items do comprise three distinguishable factors and suggested that it is possible to develop a cloze test of specific abilities through the use of a rational deletion procedure.

The problem with this approach, however, was not with the rational deletion procedure itself, but with the criteria for classifying and selecting deletions. The identification of cohesive items according to Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) framework proved to be both difficult and subjective (compare Brown 1983, who also notes that for many of his deletions, identification was “judgmental”). It was clear that these criteria would be impossible for most classroom teachers, as well as many professional test writers, to use in preparing cloze tests and that one of the most useful characteristics of the cloze, its ease of construction, would thus be eliminated.

This study, therefore, addressed five questions:
1. Can obvious and practical criteria which are theoretically justified be developed for selecting deletions?
2. Are there any differences in the proportions of different item types deleted by fixed-ratio and rational deletion procedures?
3. Are there any differences in performance on cloze tests constructed by fixed-ratio and rational deletion procedures?
4. Are there any differences in performance on different types of items?
5. Can a rational deletion procedure yield a “better” test of specified components of language proficiency than a fixed-ratio deletion procedure?
PROCEDURES

Subjects

The tests were administered to 910 pre-university and university (both undergraduate and graduate) students at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, during the Fall and Spring semesters, 1982-1983. Since the practical objective of this research was to develop a cloze test as part of an English placement test battery, students who were actually taking the placement test battery were used as subjects. To provide a basis for comparison, advanced non-native English-speaking students were asked to participate voluntarily. These subjects were grouped according to language proficiency as follows: 1) non-native English speakers entering pre-university intensive English courses (n= 146), 2) non-native English-speaking students entering full-time academic programs (n= 605), 3) non-native English-speaking students who had successfully completed at least one year of academic courses (n= 61), and 4) native English-speaking students (n= 98).

Instruments

A passage from an introductory-level collection of readings, Scientific American Reader (Tustin 1953), was selected for its appropriate difficulty level and content and was adapted for use as a cloze test. From this 330-word passage, two cloze test forms were developed. Each test form had a lead-in of approximately the same length (40 and 41 words) and 30 deletions. In Form A, words were deleted rationally, at an average ratio of 1:11, according to four hypothesized levels of context required for closure 1) within clause; 2) across clause, within sentence; 3) across sentences, within text; and 4) extratextual. To make this primarily a test of cohesion, we wanted to maximize deletions of Types 2 and 3 and to minimize deletions of Types 1 and 4. In Form B, words were deleted strictly according to a fixed-ratio deletion procedure, at the rate of 1:11, irrespective of what word happened to be selected for deletion. After the deletions in Form B were made, they were analyzed and classified according to the four hypothesized levels of context. Examples of these types for both forms are given below. Words in upper case are exact words from the original passage; words in parentheses are acceptable alternatives. (See Appendix A for complete tests and acceptable answers.)

Type 1 (within clause)
Form A, Item 2
... a device on windmills designed TO keep their sales facing the wind.
and rotated THE main mill to the correct position.

Type 2 (across clause, within sentence)

and rotated the MAIN (whole) (large) (other) mill to the correct position.

whenever the latter faced in the WRONG (incorrect) direction . . .

Type 3 (across sentences, within text)

In the past, FIVE (few) (several) decades, however . . .

. . . new families of AUTOMATIC control devices.

Type 4 (extra-textual)

. . . radios required control circuits which would GUARANTEE (control) (regulate) (maintain) (monitor) (assure) the accuracy of signals.

. . . homes needed controls for complex heating and cooling SYSTEMS (devices) (machines) (equipment) (units) (mechanisms) . . .

Groups 1 and 2 of the subjects also took the University of Illinois English Placement Test (EPT), which consists of three parts: 1) a 100-item, four-choice, multiple-choice test of structure; 2) a 30-item cloze test; and 3) a 130-word dictation test. Scores on the three parts of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)—listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and vocabulary and reading comprehension—were also available for these two groups.

Administration and Scoring

Each subject took only one form of the cloze test; tests were passed out, at random, with every other subject taking either Form A or Form B. The tests were given to Groups 1 and 2 during regular pre-registration placement testing, when these subject also took the EPT. Both forms of the cloze test were given to Groups 3 and 4 during regular classes, following the same procedure. Both forms were scored according to acceptable alternative criteria. For each deletion, a list of syntactically and semantically acceptable alternatives was prepared, The lists were based on the responses of a sample of native English
speakers on whom the tests were pretested, as well as on the judgment of the test development team. (See Appendix A for scoring keys.)

RESULTS

Differences in Deletions

To determine whether different starting points, as well as different deletion procedures, resulted in differences in the frequencies of the four deletion types, a procedure similar to that used by Brown (1983) was followed. In addition to Form B, in which the fixed-ratio (1:11) deletions began at the 39th word, two other fixed-ratio (1:11) tests, with deletions beginning at the 40th and 41st words, were constructed from the same passage. Then, on the basis of the judgment of the test development team, each deletion was classified as belonging to one of the four types described above. Finally, a contingency table with the frequencies of deletion types across the three tests was prepared and a chi-square value obtained (see Table 1). The nonsignificant chi-square, corrected for discontinuity, indicates that there were no systematic differences in types of deletions among the three fixed-ratio tests. By far the majority of the deletions, for all three tests, were Type 1 (clause-level) and Type 4 (extra-textual).

The frequencies of deletion types for the fixed-ratio test actually administered (Form B) were then compared with those obtained with the rational deletion procedure (Form A). These results are given in Table 2. It is not surprising that the obtained chi-square,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deletion Type</th>
<th>Test 1 (Form B)</th>
<th>Test 2</th>
<th>Test 3</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Within Clause</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Across Clause, Within Sentence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Across Sentences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extra-Textual</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 4.417, \ df = 6, \ .70 > p > .50, \ n.s. \]
corrected for discontinuity, was significant, since the purpose of the rational deletion procedure was to maximize the number of deletions of Types 2 and 3.

**Comparability of Subjects Across Forms**

Although subjects were assigned at random to take either Form A (rational) or Form B (fixed-ratio) of the test, it was of interest to determine whether there were any systematic differences between subjects who took Form A and those who took Form B in their performance on other tests of English proficiency. For 437 of the pre-university and entering student groups, scores were available on four other tests: EPT Structure, EPT Cloze, EPT Dictation, and TOEFL. A two-way ANOVA, using the regression approach, was performed to determine if subjects in these two groups who took Form A and those who took Form B were comparable on these four tests (see Table 3). For all four tests, neither the Group x Form interaction nor the main effect for form was significant, while the main effect for group was significant. This indicates that for Groups 1 and 2, subjects who took Form A of the cloze test were comparable on other measures of language proficiency to those who took Form B. These results also indicate a significant difference between the means of these two groups on all four measures, which confirms the groupings.
TABLE 3
Two-Way ANOVA: Other Tests by Group (1, 2) and by Form (A, B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EPT Structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>89.897.42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>365.57</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group x Form</td>
<td>85.37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>245.71</td>
<td>433</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EPT Cloze</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>6.434.52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>321.85</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group x Form</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>19.99</td>
<td>433</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EPT Dictation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>992.24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>143.45</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group x Form</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>433</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOEFL Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>(14.51)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>541.83</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>16.19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group x Form</td>
<td>487.81</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>2,677.06</td>
<td>433</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability

Given the differing levels of reliability reported for cloze tests in the literature, it was of interest to determine whether there were any differences in the reliabilities obtained with the two forms. The obtained Guttman (1945) split-half reliabilities are given in Table 4. All of the reliabilities, with the possible exception of that for Group 3 on Form A, were acceptably high for a test of this length. While there were differences across groups, which may be due, to some extent, to differences in sample size or sample variance, none of the differences between the reliabilities of Form A and Form B was significant (as measured by z-ratios based on Fisher’s transformation to z).

---

1Considerable discussion has been devoted to appropriate estimators of internal consistency reliability for cloze tests. The main point of contention in this discussion is the extent to which items on cloze tests are dependent upon each other and the possible effect of such dependence on estimators of reliability. While I believe this problem is not a trivial one, it may well be, as Brown’s (1983) results seem to suggest, that the practical differences in obtained reliability estimates are inconsequential. Since it would appear that no currently existing internal consistency estimate is entirely appropriate for cloze tests, I have adopted a conservative strategy of employing the estimator with the least stringent assumptions, the Guttman split-half.

FIXED-RATIO VS. RATIONAL DELETIONS ON CLOZE TESTS
TABLE 4
Reliabilities (Guttman Split-Half) for Cloze Tests, by Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Form A</th>
<th>Form B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>.781</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Groups</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>.864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations with Other Measures of Language Proficiency

The independent measures of language proficiency for Groups 1 and 2 were correlated with Forms A and B of the cloze test (see Table 5). Both forms of the cloze test correlated highly, and to an almost equal degree, with the other measures. In addition, the ordering of the four highest correlations was the same for both forms: TOEFL Total > TOEFL Structure > TOEFL Reading > EPT Cloze.

TABLE 5
Correlations Between Forms A and B and Other Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Form A</th>
<th>Form B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL Total</td>
<td>.848</td>
<td>.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL Structure</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL Reading</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td>.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPT Cloze</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPT Dictation</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPT Listening</td>
<td>.740</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPT Structure</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pair-wise deletion used, minimum n = 181. All correlations significant at p < .001.

 Discrimination Among Groups

Since the four groups varied in their level of English proficiency, it was important to find out if the two cloze tests would discriminate equally well among them. To determine whether the differences among the means were significant, a one-way ANOVA, using the regression approach and post-hoc comparisons with the Scheffé test \( (\alpha = .05) \), was performed (see Tables 6 and 7). The significant F-ratios for Group for both Form A and Form B indicate that the two cloze
### TABLE 6
One-Way ANOVA and Post-Hoc Comparisons (Scheffé, $\alpha = .05$), Form A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>2,536.41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>96.47</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>26.29</td>
<td>466</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subset</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>-8.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18.40</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7
One-Way ANOVA and Post-Hoc Comparisons (Scheffé, $\alpha = .05$), Form B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>1,952.11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85.37</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>22.88</td>
<td>436</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subset</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>-7.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>13.48</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16.42</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17.78</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIXED RATIO VS. RATIONAL DELETIONS ON CLOZE TESTS 545
tests did discriminate among the groups. The post-hoc comparisons, however, indicate that neither Form A nor Form B clearly distinguished all four groups. Form A distinguished Group 1 from all others, and Group 4 from Group 2, but did not clearly distinguish between Groups 2 and 3 or between Groups 3 and 4. Form B distinguished Groups 1, 2, and 3, but did not distinguish between Groups 3 and 4.

**Relative Difficulty of Forms A and B**

To determine whether there were significant differences between the means for Forms A and B across groups, a two-way ANOVA, using the regression approach, was performed (see Table 8). The interaction term was nonsignificant, while the main effect for Form was significant, indicating that Form B was significantly more difficult than Form A. In addition, the significant main effect for Group indicates that individual groups differed on Forms A and B. The differences in performance of the four groups on Forms A and B are illustrated in Figure 1.

These analyses of the performance of the different groups on the cloze tests as a whole indicate the following similarities between Forms A and B:

1. Both forms were about equally reliable.
2. Both forms correlated highly with other measures of language proficiency.

**TABLE 8**

Two-Way ANOVA, Form x Group, and Post-Hoc Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>934.48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37.93</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>4,421.48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>179.47</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form x Group</td>
<td>58.34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>24.64</td>
<td>902</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subset</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>12.70</td>
<td>-1.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Both forms made about the same discriminations among the groups.

The only significant difference in performance on the two forms, therefore, appears to be in the level of difficulty, with Form B being significantly more difficult than Form A. Since the subjects who took Forms A and B were equivalent groups and since exactly the same text with the same deletion ratio was used for both forms, the difference in the difficulty of the two forms can only be due to differences in the specific words deleted and in their contexts.

**Differences in Performance on Different Item Types**

Implicit in the classification of items is the hypothesis that the difficulties of these item types will be ordered according to level of context required for closure, with Type 1 being the easiest and Type 4 being the most difficult. To examine this hypothesis, a composite score for each item type was obtained for each subject by averaging the item scores (1 or 0) for all the items of each type. This was done for both Forms A and B. These average item scores, or average difficulties, for the different item types for the different groups are given in Table...
9. (Item difficulties and discriminations for all items are given in Appendix B.) For Form A, the hypothesized order of difficulty of item types was observed for all groups except Group 1, for whom Type 2 was slightly easier than Type 1. In addition, the four groups were ordered correctly by all of the item types except for Type 2. For Form B, while Type 1 was the easiest, Types 2 and 4 were the most difficult, with Type 4 more difficult for Groups 1 and 2 and Type 2 more difficult for Groups 3 and 4.

TABLE 9
Average Item Scores for Item Types, by Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Type</th>
<th>Form A</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Form B</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Clause</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across Clause,</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Sentence</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across Sentence</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

This study addressed five questions regarding different deletion procedures for constructing cloze tests. The first question was concerned with developing criteria which might serve as a practical basis for rationally selecting deletions in cloze tests. Using the hierarchical structure of written discourse as a criterion, four deletion types were defined, according to the hypothesized context required for closure. In this study, a high degree of consistency was found among members of the test development team in using these criteria to identify deletions. Our experience with the continuing development of cloze tests also attests to the practicality of this criterion for use by language teachers. Its application by other test developers to other passages may further refine our understanding of the distinctions (and relationships) among deletion types.

The second question had to do with the proportions of different deletion types which are made by fixed-ratio and rational deletion procedures. The results indicate that deleting every 11th word in the sample passage yields cloze tests in which the majority of the deletions
are of either the clause-level, Type 1 (37 percent), or the extra-textual “vocabulary,” Type 4 (53 percent), with very few items requiring across-clause or across-sentence context for closure. Whether these results are generalizable for different types of reading passages and for different deletion ratios is an empirical question which might readily be examined in future research. Based on the results of this study, one might hypothesize an order of frequency of deletion as follows: Type 4 > Type 1> Type 3> Type 2. The results also indicate that the test developer can, by choice, depart significantly from these proportions through the use of rational deletion criteria.

The third question was aimed at determining whether there would be any differences in performance on cloze tests constructed through fixed-ratio and rational deletion procedures. The results indicated that scores on the rational cloze test were comparable in both reliability and concurrent validity to those on the fixed-ratio test, thus demonstrating that these qualities are not necessarily associated only with a random reduction in redundancy, but may also be attained by a selective reduction in redundancy. The observed difference in difficulty of the two tests may be due to the higher proportion of the more difficult Type 4 deletions in the fixed-ratio test.

The fourth question asked whether difficulty of closure would increase as the amount of context required for closure increased. With one exception (Type 2 in Form B), the answer to this question was affirmative; the predicted order of difficulty of deletion types was observed. Since there were only two items of this type in Form B, it is instructive to examine these more closely. These are Items 7 and 10 (both Type 2):

... and whenever the latter faced in the_ (7)_ direction . . .
... first the engine (10) , and then the steering . . .

The native-speaker group found both these items particularly difficult, with only 24 percent and 20 percent passing Items 7 and 10 respectively, compared with 33 percent and 23 percent for the other groups. The most common wrong responses from the native speakers for Item 7 were “opposite” and “right,” while the most frequent wrong response for Item 10 was “itself,” which indicates misunderstanding of these parts of the passage.

The last question was concerned with whether a rational deletion procedure provides the test developer a better means of controlling the specific components of language proficiency measured by the test. The criteria proposed here provide a principled basis for selecting words to be deleted, that is, for designing the contents to be measured by the cloze. The test developer, therefore, is better able to
make judgments regarding the content validity of such tests than that of the more traditional fixed-ratio cloze tests. Much more complex, of course, is the question of the construct validity of such tests, or whether they in fact measure the components of language proficiency hypothesized by the deletion criteria. While this study did not address this question directly, the differential performance of subjects on the different item types indicates that this question warrants further research.

CONCLUSION

This study has described a set of procedures for constructing and developing cloze tests that are not based on the notion of random deletion and has demonstrated that these procedures can result in tests that are comparable in reliability and validity to fixed-ratio cloze tests. In addition, these procedures minimize some of the practical problems which have been associated with cloze tests. First, the development and use of a scoring key make scoring entirely objective and greatly increase scoring efficiency. Second, cloze tests, to be reliable and valid, need not be as long, nor deletions as frequent, as has been recommended in the literature; the tests in this study included only 30 items and used deletion ratios of 1:11. This is consistent with Rand’s (1978) finding that maximum reliability for cloze tests is achieved with about 25 deletions. Finally, the use of a rational deletion procedure allows the test developer much greater flexibility in revising specific items on the basis of both the content specifications of the test and the item statistics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank James D. Brown, Gary A. Cziko, John W. Oller, and John A. Upshur for their valuable comments on an earlier version of this article. Fred Davidson was largely responsible for the initial selection and adaptation of the passage and assisted in its pretesting and development; Liz England assisted in the development of the scoring keys in the data analysis. This research was supported in part by a grant from the University of Illinois Research Board.
REFERENCE


Chavez-Oller, Mary A., Tetsuro Chihara, Kelly A. Weaver, and John W. Oller. In press. When are cloze items sensitive to constraints across sentences? *Language Learning*.


**APPENDIX A**

**Cloze Tests Used in This Study**

**Cloze Test Form A (Rational Deletions)**

The science of automatic control depends on certain common principles by which an organism, machine, or system regulates itself. Many historical developments up to the present day have helped to identify these principles.

For hundreds of years there were many ____ (1) ____ of automatic control systems, but no connections were recognized among them. A very early example was a device on windmills designed ____ (2) ____ keep their sails facing into the wind. ____ (3) ____ consisted simply of a miniature windmill which rotated the whole mill to face in any direction. ____ (4) ____ small mill was at right angles to the main ____ (5) ___, and whenever the latter faced in the ____ (6) ____ direction, the wind caught the small mill’s sails and rotated the ____ (7) ____ mill to the correct position. ____ (8) ____ automatic control mechanisms were invented with the development of steam power: first the engine governor, ____ (9) ____ then the steering engine controller, ____ (10) ____ operated a ship’s rudder in correspondence with the helm. These ____ (11) ____ and a few others constituted the achievement of the ____ (12) ____ of automatic control, up to about 50 years ago. In the past ____ (13) ____ decades, however, rapid technological development has created numerous urgent and complex ____ (14) ___. The solutions to these problems have given birth to new families of ____ (15) ____ control devices. For example, chemical plants needed ____ (16) ____ for both temperature and flow; homes needed controls for complex ____ (17) ____ and cooling systems; radios required control circuits which would ____ (18) ____ the accuracy of signals.

Historically, then, the modern science of automatic ____ (19) ____ has been aided by related advances in many fields, ____ (20) ____ now seems surprising to recall that the relationships among these developments were not originally ____ (21) ___. Yet we know that ____ (22) ____ control and regulating systems depend on common ____ (23) ____ which are found in both nature and human affairs.

Indeed, ____ (24) ____ of modern and old automatic control systems give us new insight into a wide ____ (25) ____ of natural and human phenomena. The results of these studies have been very ____ (26) ____ in understanding how a ____ (27) ____ is able to walk upright, how the ____ (28) ____ heart beats, why our economic ____ (29) ____ suffers from slumps and booms, and ____ (30) ____ the rabbit population in parts of Canada regularly fluctuates between scarcity and abundance.
Form A Acceptable Answers

Words are ordered on the basis of their frequency of occurrence in the native-speaker pretest group, with most frequent first. Words in upper case are the exact words in the original passage.

1. kinds, types, EXAMPLES
2. TO
3. IT, this
4. THE, this
5. mill, ONE, windmill
6. WRONG, incorrect
7. MAIN, whole, large, other
8. many, OTHER, two, then, new
9. AND
10. WHICH, that
11. MECHANISMS, inventions, devices, systems, examples, three, developments
12. SCIENCE, technology, field
13. FIVE, few, several
14. PROBLEMS
15. AUTOMATIC
16. CONTROLS, control, regulation
17. HEATING, warming
18. control, regulate, maintain, monitor, assure, (GUARANTEE) *
19. CONTROL
20. IT
21. known, RECOGNIZED, discovered, found, noticed, understood, evident
22. AUTOMATIC, these, all
23. PRINCIPLES, properties, laws
24. STUDIES
25. range, VARIETY
26. HELPFUL, useful, important
27. man, PERSON, human, child
28. HUMAN
29. SYSTEM, development, condition
30. WHY, how

* Did not occur in native speaker pretest responses.

Cloze Test Form B (Fixed-Ratio Deletions)

The science of automatic control depends on certain common principles by which an organism, machine, or system regulates itself. Many historical developments up to the present day have helped to identify these principles. For hundreds of years there were ____(1)____ examples of automatic control systems, but no connections were recognized ____(2)____ them. A
very early example was a device on windmills (3) to keep their sails facing into the wind. It consisted (4) of a miniature windmill which rotated the whole mill to (5) in any direction. The small mill was at right angles (6) the main one, and whenever the latter faced in the (7) direction, the wind caught the small mill’s sails and rotated (8) main mill to the correct position. Other automatic control mechanisms (9) invented with the development of steam power: first the engine (10), and then the steering engine controller, which operated a ship’s (11) in correspondence with the helm. These mechanisms and a few (12) constituted the achievement of the science of automatic control, up (13) about 50 years ago. In the past five decades, however, (14) technological development has created numerous urgent and complex problems. The (15) to these problems have given birth to new families of (16) control devices. For example, chemical plants needed controls for both (17) and flow; homes needed controls for complex heating and cooling (18); radios required control circuits which would guarantee the accuracy of (19).

Historically, then, the modern science of automatic control has been (20) by related advances in many fields. It now seems surprising (21) recall that the relationships among these developments were not originally (23). Yet we now know that automatic control and regulating systems (24) on common principles which are found in both nature and

Indeed, studies of modern and old automatic control systems (25) us new insight into a wide variety of natural and (26) phenomena. The results of these studies have been very helpful (27) understanding how a person is able to walk upright, how (28) human heart beats, why our economic system suffers from slumps (29) booms, and why the rabbit population in parts of Canada (30) fluctuates between scarcity and abundance.

Form B Acceptable Answers

Words are ordered on the basis of their frequency of occurrence in the native-speaker pretest group, with most frequent first. Words in upper case are the exact words in the original passage.

1. MANY, numerous, various
2. between, AMONG
3. used, DESIGNED, invented
4. mainly, SIMPLY, basically, essentially
5. FACE, work, operate
6. TO, with
7. WRONG, incorrect
8. THE
9. WERE
10. controller, control, (GOVERNOR) *

554
11. engine, propeller, controller, RUDDER, engines, wheel, motor
12. OTHERS, more
13. TO, until
14. this, RAPID, new, modern, advanced, further, such
15. SOLUTIONS, answers
16. AUTOMATIC
17. pressure, power, intake, steam, drainage, dryness, operation, storage,
   smoke, suction, resistance, chemicals, energy, performance, TEMPER-
   ATURE, air, growth, ebb, material, heating, production, light, heat
18. SYSTEMS, devices, machines, equipment, units, mechanisms
19. sound, frequency, tuning, receiving, transmissions, reception, current,
   frequencies, volume, sounds, transmitting, (SIGNALS)*
20. developed, improved, influenced, extended, characterized, assisted,
   affected, accelerated, strengthened, stimulated, advanced, (AIDED) *
21. TO
22. known, found, discovered, seen, understood, identified, considered,
   RECOGNIZED, noticed
23. DEPEND, work, rely, operate, function
24. HUMAN, daily, social, related
25. GIVE, bring, provide
26. HUMAN, social scientific, other, complex, historical, supernatural
27. IN, for
28. THE, a
29. AND, or
30. always, often, REGULARLY, constantly, now, greatly, frequently,
   periodically

*Did not occur in native speaker pretest responses.
APPENDIX B

Item Means (p) and Corrected Item-Whole Correlations (r)

**FORM A**

* (Rational Deletions)*

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**FORM B**

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*All groups, N = 470.*
Learning Strategy Applications with Students of English as a Second Language

J. MICHAEL O’MALLEY
ANNA UHL CHAMOT
GLORIA STEWNER-MANZANARES
ROCCO P. RUSSO
LISA KÜPPER

InterAmerica Research Associates

Recent research on cognition has indicated the importance of learning strategies in gaining command over second language skills. Despite these recent advancements, important research questions related to learning strategies remain to be answered. These questions concern 1) the range and frequency of learning strategy uses by students learning English as a second language (ESL) and 2) the effects of training in learning strategies on English language skills. This study, which was conducted with high school ESL students, was carried out in two phases corresponding to the two research questions. In Phase I, ESL students and their teachers were interviewed to identify strategies associated with a range of tasks typically found in ESL classrooms and in other settings. Results indicated that students used a variety of learning strategies but typically used more familiar strategies and applied them to discrete-point rather than integrative tasks. In Phase II, ESL students were randomly assigned to receive learning strategies training on vocabulary, listening, and speaking tasks. Results varied depending on the task but generally indicated that strategy training can be effective for integrative language tasks. Results are discussed in terms of implications for teaching and future research.

Research and theory in second language learning strongly suggest that good language learners use a variety of strategies to assist them in gaining command over new language skills. Learning strategies are operations or steps used by a learner to facilitate the acquisition, storage, or retrieval of information (Rigney 1978, Dansereau in press). The learning strategies of good language learners, once identified and successfully taught to less competent learners, could have considerable potential for enhancing the development of second
language skills. Second language teachers can play an active and valuable role by teaching students how to apply learning strategies to varied language activities and how to extend the strategies to new tasks both in the language class and in content areas requiring language skills.

This paper reports the results of a two-phase study of learning strategies with students of English as a second language (ESL). In Phase I, students were interviewed to identify the range of learning strategies they were already using for specific language activities; in Phase II, students were trained to use learning strategies with different ESL activities.

BACKGROUND

Studies of learning strategies with second language learning have been influenced by theories in second language acquisition and in cognitive psychology. Although there have been theoretical advances in these two areas, there has been little communication between them which might lead to reformulation of research questions or designs. Relevant second language and cognitive research are briefly reviewed below. Theories of second language acquisition are discussed to identify cognitive processes that relate to learning strategy applications. Research on learning strategies in both the second language area and in cognitive psychology is described. Following this discussion is a description of how research and theory in second language learning and cognitive psychology were integrated in the design of this study.

Second Language Acquisition Theory

Theories of second language learning and proficiency often include a cognitive component, but the role of learning strategies has remained vague. In Cummins’s (1984) model of language proficiency, tasks vary along a continuum from cognitively demanding to cognitively undemanding, while language varies along a continuum from context-embedded to context-reduced. Academic tasks, for example, are cognitively demanding and usually require language in which contextual clues for meaning are reduced. Tasks outside the classroom, on the other hand, are relatively undemanding cognitively and are characterized by language that either has rich contextual clues or is formulaic. The role of learning strategies, although potentially located in the cognitive component of this proficiency model, has never been expressly identified.
Other models of language competence also contain cognitive components but leave the role of learning strategies ambiguous. For example, Canale and Swain’s (1980) model of communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic knowledge. In this model, the strategic component refers to communication strategies, which can be differentiated from learning strategies by the intent of the strategy use. Fillmore and Swain’s (1984) model of second language competence includes a cognitive component but in addition has affective and social components. Unlike the prior conceptual models, Fillmore and Swain reserve an important role for learning strategies in the cognitive component. Learning strategies are said to be the principal influence on learning a second language, whereas inherent developmental and experiential factors are primarily responsible for first language learning. The types of strategies intended by Fillmore and Swain appear to be more global than those usually described in cognitive psychology, however, and the role they play with regard to the other model components has not been identified.

While most second language models either fail to acknowledge learning strategies at all or mention them only in passing, Bialystok (1978) includes four categories of learning strategies in her model of second language learning: inferencing, monitoring, formal practicing, and functional practicing. In this model, learning strategies are defined as “optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language” (71). The type of strategy used by the learner will depend on the type of knowledge required for a given task. Bialystok discusses three types of knowledge: explicit linguistic knowledge, implicit linguistic knowledge, and general knowledge of the world. She hypothesizes that inferencing may be used with implicit linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. Monitoring, formal practicing (such as verbal drills found in a second language class), and functional practicing (such as completing a transaction at a store) contribute both to explicit and implicit linguistic knowledge. That is, strategies introduced explicitly in a formal setting can contribute to implicit linguistic knowledge and therefore to students’ ability to comprehend and produce spontaneous language.

Bialystok’s model can be contrasted to Krashen’s Monitor Model (1982), which does not allow for contributions of explicit linguistic knowledge to implicit linguistic knowledge. The Monitor Model includes two types of language processes: acquisition and learning. Acquisition occurs in spontaneous language contexts, is unconscious, and leads to conversational fluency. Learning is conscious knowledge of the rules of language and is derived from formal instruction.
The “monitor” involves analyzing language production for correspondence to learned structural rules and therefore is a highly deliberate form of processing. In Krashen’s view, learning does not lead to acquisition. Therefore, conscious use of learning strategies to further language acquisition has no role in this model.

Research in Learning Strategies

Research in learning strategies in the second language acquisition literature has focused on describing strategies used by successful second language learners. Research efforts concentrating on the “good language learner” by Rubin (1975) and others (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco 1978) have identified strategies, either reported by students or observed in language learning situations, that appear to contribute to learning. These efforts demonstrate that students do apply learning strategies while learning a second language and that these strategies can be described and classified. For example, Rubin proposed a classification scheme that subsumes learning strategies under two broad groupings: strategies that directly affect learning (clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and practice) and those which contribute indirectly to learning (creating practice opportunities and using production tricks such as communication strategies). An alternative scheme proposed by Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) contains five broad categories of learning strategies: an active task approach, realization of a language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring of second language performance.

Studies of learning strategy applications in the literature on cognitive psychology concentrate on determining the effects of strategy training for different kinds of tasks and learners. Findings from these studies generally indicate that strategy training is effective in improving the performance of students on a wide range of reading and problem-solving tasks (e.g., Wittrock, Marks, and Doctorow 1975, Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, and Campione 1983, Chipman, Segel, and Glaser in press, Dansereau in press).

One of the more important findings from these studies is the formulation of learning strategies in an information-processing, theoretical model. This model contains an executive, or metacognitive, function in addition to an operative, or cognitive-processing, function. Metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place, and self-evaluation of learning after
the language activity is completed. Cognitive strategies are more directly related to individual learning tasks and entail direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials (Brown and Palincsar 1982).

This line of research suggests that transfer of strategy training to new tasks can be maximized by pairing cognitive strategies with appropriate metacognitive strategies. Students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to review their progress, accomplishments, and future learning directions. A third type of learning strategy suggested in the literature on cognitive psychology is a social-mediating strategy, most clearly evidenced in cooperative learning (Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, and Campione 1983). Cooperative strategies have been shown to enhance learning on a variety of reading comprehension tasks (Dansereau and Larson 1983).

Training research on learning strategies with second languages has been limited almost exclusively to cognitive strategy applications with vocabulary tasks. The typical approach in this research has been either to encourage students to develop their own association for linking a vocabulary word with its equivalent in the second language (Cohen and Aphek 1980, 1981) or to train students to use specific types of linking associations to cue the target word, such as the keyword method (e.g., Atkinson and Raugh 1975, Pressley, Levin, Nakamura, Hope, Bisbo, and Toye 1980, Levin in press). Generally, the strategy training is given individually or is provided by special instructional presentations to a group. Dramatic improvements in individually presented vocabulary learning have been reported consistently in these studies.

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

Prior research and theory on learning strategies in second language learning leave a number of questions unanswered. From a theoretical standpoint, research is needed on how strategies introduced explicitly in a formal setting influence implicit linguistic knowledge and a student’s ability to comprehend and produce language. Given the prominence of decontextualized language in school settings, the importance of learning strategies for tasks involving such language clearly needs to be explored. However, recent theoretical emphases on language acquisition and spontaneous production raise questions about the importance of conscious strategies outside the classroom. The relative importance of metacognitive, cognitive, and social-mediating strategies in second language learning also must be investigated to determine how these strategies interplay with specific
language learning tasks. Empirical information is needed on how learning strategies are perceived by second language students, the strategies or strategy combinations used for specific language tasks both within and beyond the classroom, and the strategies used by beginning- and intermediate-level second language students. And finally, empirical data are needed on the extent to which strategies taught in natural, as opposed to laboratory, instructional settings are used by students and influence second language learning for a variety of language tasks.

The present study departs from prior descriptive and training research on learning strategies in second language acquisition in a number of important ways. Overall, the study included both a descriptive and a training component to refine the strategy definitions and ensure that strategies in which students were trained could be applied reasonably to the learning tasks. The descriptive study extended prior work in three major ways: 1) Strategies reported by students were classified as metacognitive, cognitive, or socioaffective; 2) students of ESL at beginning and intermediate levels were the subjects of the study; and 3) students reported on strategies used with specific language tasks both within and outside the classroom.

The most important contributions of the training study were as follows: 1) Natural classroom instruction was used rather than special individual or laboratory training; 2) learning strategies were applied to a range of language tasks rather than to vocabulary alone; 3) different combinations of metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies were presented during training; and 4) the cues for strategy use were “faded” over successive days of practice to determine if students could transfer strategies taught for one task to a similar task.

Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the range of learning strategies in second language learning and acquisition, how can the strategies be classified, and with what frequency do the respective strategy groupings occur for individual language tasks by beginning- and intermediate-level second language learners?

2. Can metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective learning strategies be taught successfully to second language learners in a natural teaching environment with tasks of varying complexity?

The two phases of the study corresponded to each major question:

1. Description phase: The first phase was descriptive and involved interviews with highschool-level ESL students and their teachers
in order to identify the range and type of strategies used by students at beginning and intermediate levels of English proficiency.

2. Training phase: The second phase of the study was experimental in design and involved random assignment of a group of high school ESL students to one of two treatment groups instructed on strategies associated with vocabulary, listening, and speaking tasks. The treatment groups were a metacognitive/cognitive/socioaffective strategy group and a cognitive/ socioaffective strategy group. A random control group received the same tasks but with no strategy training.

PHASE I: THE DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

Method

Subjects. The subjects were 70 high school students enrolled in ESL classes during the Spring 1983 semester and 22 teachers providing instruction to these students. The study was conducted in three Eastern suburban high schools. Students participating in the study were classified by their schools as either beginning or intermediate level in ESL, and all were from Spanish-language countries, except for 5 Vietnamese intermediate-level students. Students judged by their ESL teachers to be high in academic ability were selected on the assumption that higher-ability students would use a greater range of strategies. The teachers who volunteered to participate in the study all held secondary teaching certificates and had a minimum of two years of teaching experience. Although most were ESL teachers, content-area teachers also participated to identify learning strategies used by students after they began participation in mainstream classes.

Instruments. The instruments used in the data collection were a class observation guide and interview guides for teachers and students. The Class Observation Guide—besides calling for identifying information on the teacher, school, subject (e.g., ESL grammar, ESL reading, biology, and so on), and proficiency level of students—also asked for information on the following aspects of learning strategies:

1. Source: Did the strategy originate from the student or the teacher?
2. Activity: What instructional activity was the strategy used in? Vocabulary? Grammar drills? Listening comprehension?
3. Setting: Was the strategy used when whole-group instruction was being delivered, when small-group activities were taking place,
or when an individual student was interacting on a one-to-one basis with the teacher?

4. **Materials:** What instructional materials were employed by the teacher and/or students at the time of the strategy use?

5. **Approach:** What did the teacher and/or students say or do as the strategy was being implemented?

The Student Interview Guide was designed to elicit from students the types of learning strategies they used for specific English learning tasks. The guide for interviewing teachers had a similar format and elicited the learning strategies they either overtly taught or had observed their students using for the same learning tasks. Appendix A presents the questions asked on the Student Interview Guide about the following nine language learning activities: pronunciation, oral grammar drills, vocabulary learning, following directions, social communication outside the classroom, operational communication outside the classroom (job interviews, answering the telephone, and so on), two levels of listening comprehension (getting the main idea, making inferences), and presenting an oral report.

**Procedures.** Fifty-three class observations were conducted by pairs of researchers using the observation guide. Notes on observations were compared immediately after each observation so that researchers could pool the information needed.

Teacher interviews were conducted individually. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was tape-recorded. After an initial discussion of the instructional approach and the teacher’s understanding of students’ learning processes, the interview guide was used to ask teachers if they provided instruction in learning strategies for any of the nine language activities or if they had observed students using strategies for any of the activities on their own.

The 70 students were interviewed in 19 small groups consisting of 3 to 5 students in each group. Hispanic students in beginning-level ESL classes were interviewed in Spanish so that their limited English proficiency would not hinder their ability to describe their learning strategies. All interviews were tape-recorded. As an initial warm-up, the researcher explained that the purpose of the interview was to ask students to share any special tricks or techniques they used to help them learn English so that their ideas could be shared with other students like themselves. Then a context was established for each of the nine activities (see Appendix A) in turn. For instance, students
were asked to imagine that their teacher wanted them to practice pronouncing English words. They were asked to describe any special techniques they had developed for imitating and remembering how to pronounce English words. As another example of the student interview procedures for a language activity, students were asked to imagine themselves in a situation in which they had to apply for a part-time job or make a telephone call in English. Once the situation was established, they were asked to share ways in which they prepared for such an activity and carried it out. At the end of each student interview, students were asked what kind of advice they would give to a friend who had to learn English.

The taped student and teacher interviews were transcribed and, if necessary, translated into English by the researcher who had conducted the interview. Inter-rater reliability was established by having another member of the research team listen a second time to the taped interviews and make his or her own transcription; the transcriptions were then compared and any discrepancies resolved through a third listening by the research team. The transcripts of the interviews were then analyzed for occurrences of learning strategies that had been identified in the literature reviewed on second language learning and cognitive psychology (O'Malley, Russo, and Chamot 1983).

Some of the strategies identified in the literature were not mentioned in the interviews or were mentioned infrequently. Examples of these were advance organizers, keyword, deduction, and recombination (see Appendix B for strategy definitions). On the other hand, some strategies reported by students did not easily fit into descriptions found in the literature, and in these cases new strategy names were developed to match the descriptions in the transcripts. These additional strategies tended to be quite specific activities of the study-skill type, such as note taking or grouping, both of which are examples of a more general cognitive strategy identified in the literature as transformation. Additional strategy names were also devised to reflect students’ frequent references to “paying attention in class” (directed attention) and “listening for the important words or ideas” (selective attention), both of which are aspects of a more general strategy of planning.

Finally, the strategies identified by type were then classified into the scheme developed by Brown and Palincsar (1982), which differentiates among metacognitive, cognitive, and social mediation (which we have termed socioaffective) learning strategies. This classification scheme proved useful not only in describing the types of learning strategies identified in the descriptive phase of the study, but also in the planning and implementation of the training phase.
Results

The 70 students interviewed described a total of 638 instances in which they used learning strategies, for a mean of 33.6 strategies for each of the 19 groups interviewed (O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo 1985). Teachers identified a mean of 25.4 individual learning strategies per interview. In general, the strategies identified by teachers were teaching strategies, and most teachers indicated that they were unacquainted with learning strategies. The classroom observations yielded only 3.7 strategies per observation, most probably because learning strategies are not always accompanied by observable behavior. Because the teacher interviews were of questionable value and the observations yielded such sparse data, the remaining discussion of results is based on student interviews only. The reliability of inter-rater strategy classifications from student interviews averaged 79 percent agreement for four raters, each against a standard, on the specific strategies reported.

The 638 instances of strategy use reported by students were classified into 20 distinct strategy types, which were then differentiated into 7 metacognitive, 11 cognitive, and 2 socioaffective definitions for strategy use prevalent in the cognitive psychology literature (Brown and Palincsar 1982). The resultant strategy definitions are presented in Appendix B. Additional analyses of the results were based on the reported frequency of metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategy use by student proficiency level and by task and were aggregated across tasks. Percentages obtained in these analyses were based on total number of strategy occurrences in each of the three categories of strategies.

Of the 638 reported instances of learning strategy use, 30 percent involved metacognitive strategies. Among metacognitive strategies, results indicated that for both beginning- and intermediate-level students, self-management and advance preparation were among the most frequently used (see Table 1). Self-management accounted for 19.6 percent of all metacognitive strategy occurrences for beginning students and 22.5 percent for intermediate students. For advanced preparation, the figures are 21.4 percent for beginning students and 25.0 percent for intermediate students. However, beginning-level students relied more on selective attention (22.3 percent) than intermediate-level students (16.3 percent). Metacognitive strategies were rarely reported in direct combination with cognitive strategies (about 7 percent), although strategy combinations were reported overall for 21 percent of all strategies. Cognitive strategies accounted for more than half (53 percent) of strategy uses. Students at both levels of proficiency applied such familiar strategies as repetition,
TABLE 1
Principal Metacognitive Learning Strategy Uses by Beginning- and Intermediate-Level ESL Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metacognitive Learning Strategy</th>
<th>Beginning Level</th>
<th>Intermediate Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self/Management</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Preparation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directed Attention</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective Attention</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed Production</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Monitoring</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Evaluation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL*</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due to rounding, the total percentages do not equal 100

note taking, and imagery (see Table 2). The occurrences for each group for each of these three categories range from 9.8 to 20.0 percent. However, translation and imagery were used less often by intermediate than beginning students. Intermediate-level students used more contextualization and resourcing than did beginning students. Socioaffective strategies were reported for 17 percent of strategy occurrences. Uses of cooperation and questions for clarification were about the same for both beginning and intermediate students (see Table 2).

Applications of strategies also varied according to the learning activity (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo 1985). By far the most strategies were reported for vocabulary learning (17 percent), more than twice as many as for listening for inference (7 percent) and making an oral presentation (8 percent), and substantially more than for operational communication (10 percent) and analysis in listening comprehension (11 percent). The activity for which students reported the second greatest use of strategies was pronunciation (14 percent). Thus, strategies were most frequently mentioned with discrete language tasks such as vocabulary and pronunciation, which may be less conceptually complex than integrative
PHASE II: STRATEGY TRAINING IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The results of Phase I suggested that special instruction on strategy applications with language learning tasks may be useful for higher-level language activities such as listening and speaking. Further, the use by students of metacognitive strategies indicated that they were reflecting on and analyzing the process of language learning. The results also suggested that students use interesting strategy combinations requiring active manipulation of input and that these combinations have considerable potential to contribute to language learning. In the following discussion, metacognitive and cognitive strategy combinations which are possible with listening and speaking tasks are identified, and the rationale for strategies used in the training
The phase of this study is presented. Although strategy training was also presented for vocabulary tasks, the training procedures are in need of revision and further development.

Performance on listening tasks has proven responsive to strategy training in first languages, and there is every reason to believe this would be equally so for second languages. One cognitive strategy that has proven effective with first language listening skills is note taking (Dansereau, Actkinson, Long, and McDonald 1974, Weiland and Kingsbury 1979). One of the ways to enhance note-taking skills with a metacognitive strategy would be to provide students with specific types of information to attend to in lectures, that is, to use selective attention for specific linguistic markers. Linguistic markers that are often used for emphasis in a lecture or that reflect the organization of the lecture are appropriate for this purpose, for example, first, the most important point is, ... and in conclusion. Note-taking skills could possibly be enhanced even further by encouraging students to cooperate in identifying omissions or errors in their notes or in interpreting information worth remembering from the lecture.

Strategies to assist second language students in learning how to speak more effectively in an academic setting should be effective if they provide a way to analyze essential purposes or functions in the communication and if they generate appropriate language to accomplish those functions (Stevick 1984). This type of functional planning is similar in some respects to having a schema (Dansereau in press) or an advance organizer (Ausubel 1960, 1978) in that a set of basic, superordinate principles is available to serve as an organizing framework for new information. The strategy is also similar to what was called advance preparation in Phase I of this study. In functional planning, students must first analyze the functional requirements of the task, for example, what must be accomplished. Then they must examine their capability to provide specific language fulfilling those requirements and identify needed language elements. After retrieving the needed language elements, students should be able to accomplish all the functions required in a language task. The main additional requirement would be an opportunity to rehearse the language and receive feedback in a cooperative setting. The superordinate principles could be used to organize the communication, and appropriate linguistic markers could signal the shift from one organizing function to the next or highlight other information.

The intent of the training study was to determine whether the unique combinations of strategies selected for the language tasks would facilitate learning. Students who received instruction in a combination of metacognitive, cognitive, and/or socioaffective...
strategies were predicted to perform better than the group who did not receive instruction in metacognitive strategies, and the latter group was expected to perform better than controls. Language tasks at different levels of complexity (both discrete-point and integrative tasks) were used to represent a realistic range of learning tasks from second language classrooms. Integrative tasks were included to explore the extent to which instruction in learning strategies is effective for the type of language required for effective communication in classrooms. If it was possible to demonstrate gains on listening and speaking tasks with relatively brief learning strategy instruction, then it would be warranted to explore the usefulness of learning strategies for decontextualized language in a more extended and comprehensive curriculum. Combinations of strategies, rather than isolated strategies, were presented so that the strategy training would approximate what a teacher would typically do in a classroom. Finally, a natural teaching setting was used to increase the likelihood that the results would have immediate application for instruction.

Method

Subjects. The subjects were 75 high school students enrolled in ESL classes during the Fall 1983 semester in three Eastern suburban high schools. The students, who were all intermediate-level, included males and females. About a third were from Spanish-language countries, another third from Asian countries (mostly Southeast Asian), and the remainder of the students were from other language backgrounds. Intermediate-level proficiency was defined in all participating schools as limited proficiency in understanding and speaking English and little or no skill in reading and writing English. School district procedures prohibited release of information on language proficiency test scores.

Procedures. Students were randomly assigned to one of three instructional groups in each school. Each school’s groups were roughly proportional to ethnic and sex ratios within that school. The metacognitive group received training in the use of one metacognitive strategy, up to two cognitive strategies, and a socioaffective strategy, depending on the language task. The cognitive group received instruction in only the cognitive and socioaffective strategies. A control group was instructed to work on the tasks as they ordinarily would. The size of the instructional group within each school averaged eight to ten students. To control for teacher effects, three project staff alternated presenting the three treatment conditions at the three participating schools.
Students received instruction and practice in the use of learning strategies for 50 minutes daily for 8 days. In addition, a full 50-minute period was used for pretesting and another for post-testing. On any single day, students typically engaged in two of the following three language learning activities: vocabulary, listening, or speaking. For the treatment groups, the same learning strategies were always repeated with each language activity, although new content was presented each time a language activity recurred. Students therefore could practice strategy applications with new materials. Explicit directions and cues for using the strategies were faded on successive days of treatment for each activity until the time of the post-test, when only a reminder was given to use the same strategies they had rehearsed before. An overview of the treatment conditions is presented in Figure 1, which reveals the balance of metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies for each task. A detailed description of the listening and speaking tasks and related treatment conditions is provided below.

Tasks. The listening task that students were requested to perform was to remember information presented in four 5-minute videotapes on academic subjects such as history or geography. The videotapes were designed to simulate a lecture experience the students might encounter in school. A short listening comprehension test following each lecture contained items designed to assess Bloom and Krathwohl’s (1977) knowledge, comprehension, and analysis levels. Videotapes were presented sequentially in order of least to most difficult content, a judgment based on the pilot test. Two different videotapes were used for pretesting and post-testing. All pretests, post-tests, and interim assessments were multiple-choice recognition items.

![FIGURE 1](image)

Language Activities and Accompanying Learning Strategies for the Metacognitive Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Task</th>
<th>Strategy Type</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening (5-minute lecture on academic topic)</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>Selective Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Note Taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socioaffective</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking (2-minute lecture on familiar topic)</td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>Functional Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socioaffective</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEARNING STRATEGY APPLICATIONS IN ESL
The metacognitive group received instruction on one metacognitive strategy (selective attention), one cognitive strategy (note taking), and one socioaffective strategy (cooperation). For selective attention, students were instructed to listen selectively for linguistic markers typically used in lectures to present an overview, a main topic, main points, examples, and a conclusion or summary. For example, a phrase such as *Today I want to tell you about . . .* suggests that the speaker is signaling the general topic, while *first, second,* and so on indicate that main points are likely to follow. The videotapes had been designed specifically to include these and other markers. Students were instructed on note taking by means of a T-list (Hamp-Lyons 1983), in which main points are entered on the left side of a page and corresponding examples or details are entered on the right. Thus, by selectively attending to phrases or words that often preceded important lecture points, students were able to facilitate note taking. The initial T-lists supplied main points so that students had to write in only details and examples, but T-lists presented in subsequent training sessions gradually removed the main points until only a T appeared on the paper for the final listening task. As a final step, students were instructed to use cooperation as a strategy to verify the accuracy of their notes, enabling them to fill in gaps in information or clarify areas of confusion by using their peers as a resource.

The strategies taught to the cognitive group for the listening activity were note taking and cooperation. Instruction in these strategies was identical to that received by the metacognitive group. However, these students did not receive any information regarding selective attention or markers that often occur in lectures to highlight important information.

Students in the control group received no strategy instruction. They were simply told to listen to the videotapes and do whatever they normally did to help them understand and remember a lecture. They then took the same test as the other groups. The time used for learning strategy instruction for the experimental groups was used for reading comprehension activities with the control group so that they too would benefit from extra instruction (even though reading was not investigated in this study).

As a speaking task, students were asked to present a brief oral report on one of six subjects that had personal or cultural significance. The topics included these possibilities: my first day in the United States, two differences between people in my country and people in the United States, and special traditions in my country. Each student made four separate oral presentations on four separate
days. Report preparation was completed in class to ensure comparable time on task across treatment groups. In presenting the report, students sat in a small group and spoke or read into a tape recorder from written notes. Taped oral presentations at pretest and post-test were scored blind by five judges, who rated the speeches on a 1–5 scale reflecting delivery (volume and pace), appropriateness (choice of words and phrases for a class presentation), accuracy (phonological, syntactic, and semantic), and organization (coherence and cohesion). Interjudge reliability was about 85 percent.

The metacognitive group received instruction on one metacognitive strategy (functional planning) and one socioaffective strategy (cooperation). Functional planning involves having the learner analyze the requirements of a communication task to determine if he or she has the language skills necessary to fulfill those requirements. During instruction on the use of this strategy, students were led by the teacher through an analysis of the purposes language serves in an oral report. For example, the oral report should contain an introduction or overview, main points, examples or details, and a conclusion or summary. These parts were labeled on the chalkboard, and a list of functions and the English expressions for those functions were indicated, while others were elicited from students. The functions and examples were largely the same as those found in the listening task. Once they were familiar with what needed to be communicated after the main topic idea had been selected, students could examine their language repertoires to determine whether they possessed the language required for the communication and then proceed to learn new language as required for the task. Students were guided in choosing functions and English language examples that were appropriate for their self-selected topic for their oral presentation. For the cooperation strategy, students practiced presenting their reports to a small group of other students. The other students were responsible for providing corrective feedback on volume, pace, organization, and comprehensibility. The performing student was given a list of questions corresponding to the corrective feedback that was expected and would probe for information that was useful for improving the presentation. Using the group’s advice after one practice session, the students then tape-recorded the report.

Students in the cognitive group received instruction on using cooperation as a strategy for improving their reports. They were not offered any other strategies in conjunction with the speaking activity. The control group, which received no strategy instruction, was given the list of topic possibilities and told to prepare an oral report.
on the topic of their choice in whatever manner they normally prepared for such an activity. This group also tape-recorded reports in the presence of a small group of students during practice sessions. However, students were not instructed to provide systematic feedback to their peers.

Results

The strategy training for listening and speaking tasks was implemented without major difficulties. Teachers observed students to ensure they were using the strategies and collected notes and worksheets to verify strategy use in the treatment conditions. During the listening task, students were observed to take notes on information to which they selectively attended, and they then took full advantage of opportunities for cooperation. During the speaking task, students tended to read from prepared notes rather than speak extemporaneously. Even those students who appeared shy were enthusiastic about taping and listening to their reports. The metacognitive group, although slow at first in thinking of English expressions for functions, caught on quickly and was able to contribute both new functions and expressions representing the functions.

Table 3 presents results of statistical analyses comparing the treatment groups on the listening and speaking post-tests. An analysis of covariance approach was used, with the pretest as covariate. Results also show covariance analyses for the four daily listening tests, again with the pretest as a covariate.

Analyses of post-test scores on listening approached but failed to reach significance, although the scores fell in the predicted direction. To explore this finding further, the daily tests on listening were also analyzed (see the lower portion of Table 3). Significant effects were obtained on Listening Test 1 beyond the .10 level, on Listening Test 2 beyond the .01 level, and on Listening Test 3 beyond the .05 level. In each case, the treatment groups significantly outperformed the control group, although for Tests 2 and 3 the levels for the metacognitive and cognitive groups were reversed from the predicted direction. There are at least two possible explanations for the poor performance of the treatment groups on the fourth listening test and on the post-test. One is that the cues were faded too quickly, so that students failed to use the strategies in which they had been trained. A second is that there was an interaction between the strategy effectiveness and the difficulty of the task; that is, with more difficult tasks, as were presented in the later tests, the strategy training may have failed to
TABLE 3
The Effect of Learning Strategy Training on Selected Language Skills (Controlling for Pretest Score)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Metacognitive (n = 27)</th>
<th>Cognitive (n = 26)</th>
<th>Control (n = 22)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Adjusted Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Adjusted Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Tests on Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening 1 (i = 8)</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening 2 (i = 8)</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening 3 (i = 9)</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening 4 (i = 9)</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 = number of items

compensate for the complexity of the listening task to which students were exposed.

Post-test analyses for the speaking test were significant in the predicted direction beyond the .01 level. If the adjusted mean scores shown are converted into a 1–5 scale of the type used by the Foreign Service Institute, the metacognitive students score on the average close to 2+, whereas the control group scores are just below 2. This amount of difference represents a substantial increment in language skills over the control group. The principle differences between a 2 and a 2+ on the scoring system used are that a 2+ indicates more organization, as suggested by clear subordination and sequencing of parts of the report, and greater comprehensibility.

DISCUSSION

Phase I of this study revealed that both beginning- and intermediate-level high school ESL students were able to describe their use of a wide range of learning strategies with specific language tasks. These strategies proved readily classifiable using the distinction between metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies. Analyses of the ESL student interview data using this distinction revealed that there were about one and one half as many cognitive as metacognitive strategies and that students in general reported using the cognitive strategies far more regularly than the metacognitive strategies.
There were nevertheless differences between beginning- and intermediate-level ESL students in the kinds of specific strategies of either type that they used. Also, roughly one strategy in five involved two or more strategies in combination, although generally these were cognitive strategies rather than metacognitive and cognitive strategies together. Selected combinations were sufficiently interesting to warrant using multiple strategies during the training phase of the study.

Analyses of the effects of training in metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective learning strategies with second language learners in a natural classroom setting produced mixed findings, depending on the language strategies and task. In the listening skills tasks, there were indications that the difficulty of the task or the explicitness of directions for using the strategies may both be important determinants of performance. Students presented with a listening task that is too difficult may derive little help from using learning strategies; the initial communication may be so unfamiliar that comprehension and learning fail to occur. The transfer of strategies already used to new learning activities may be extremely sensitive, requiring continued prompts and structured directions until the strategies become autonomous. There was little evidence that metacognitive strategies were uniquely instrumental in aiding this transfer. However, the metacognitive strategy used—selective attention, a planning strategy—was not the type that would afford students the opportunity to reflect on the learning, analyze the relevance of strategy applications, and foresee the potential for future use of strategies with similar activities. This suggests that metacognitive strategies should be selected carefully to allow for both planning and evaluation in learning.

Skills in speaking a second language were clearly improved, relative to a control group, through learning strategies training. Students were extremely adept in learning and applying functional planning, the metacognitive strategy, and gained in judged organization and comprehensibility. The other strategy, cooperation, involved students’ evaluation of each other through feedback on their speeches. The fact that cooperation, as used in this study, consisted of an evaluative activity indicates that metacognitive components were involved. This could have contributed to the improved performance of the cognitive group relative to the controls. In the cognitive group, however, the feedback was not linked to organizational elements entailed in planning, as was true in the metacognitive group. Thus, both a planning and an evaluation strategy seem advisable in future oral production activities.

There is neither a theoretical nor an empirical reason why most of the learning strategies identified in this study should be considered
unique to second language learning. Learning strategies of similar
types have been discussed in the cognitive psychology literature and
applied to reading comprehension, thinking skills, and problem solv-
ing (e. g., Brown, Bransford, Ferrara, and Campione 1983, Chipman,
Segel, and Glaser in press). Bialystok’s (1978) four learning strategies—
inferencing, monitoring, formal practicing, and functional prac-
ticing—could easily apply to reading comprehension, composition,
and academic oral production for native English speakers. The Fill-
more and Swain (1984) model also indicates that the conscious
strategies which play an important role in second language learning
may be no different from those used with nonlanguage tasks. In fact,
all of the strategies identified by the students in the descriptive study
can be seen as general learning strategies, rather than language-
specific ones. Even translation, which seems at first glance to be a
uniquely second language-oriented strategy, can be used in a broader
educational context, such as translating a narrative description of a
math problem into numeric form. Thus, there may not in fact be any
learning strategies that are solely related to languages, but rather a
subset of general learning strategies of particular use in developing
second language skills. This is not to suggest that language learning
itself is not distinctly different from other kinds of learning, only that
the strategies which facilitate second language learning may be no
different from those used with other learning tasks.

In this study, strategies training was successfully demonstrated in a
natural teaching environment with second language listening and
speaking tasks. This indicates that classroom instruction on learning
strategies with integrative language skills can facilitate learning.
Given these findings, learning strategy instruction with decontextual-
ized language to augment second language instruction can be seen as
a potential extension of the Natural Approach, which focuses on
spontaneous learning in acquisition-rich settings, as described by
Krashen (1982). The results should be meaningful to teachers, who
have students for a much longer period of time than was used for
presenting the treatment in this study. We suggest that future research
be directed at refining the strategy training approaches, targeting
evaluative metacognitive strategies for specific language tasks, and
strengthening the effects of the training on student learning and
strategy transfer.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Dr. Rocco P. Russo was Project Director of the Basic Skill Resource Center at InterAmerica Research Associates, where this study was conducted.

REFERENCES


**APPENDIX A**

**Student Interview Guide**

1. Pronunciation
   Your teacher wants you to pronounce several words. He/she says them aloud. Then you must repeat them, using the same pronunciation as your teacher.

   My questions are
   1. Do you do this activity in your class?
   2. Do you do this outside of class?
   3. What special ways do you have to make sure that you copy the teacher’s pronunciation? (How do you remember the pronunciation?)

2. Oral Drills/Grammar Exercises
   Your teacher asks you to (pick an appropriate example):
   1. Repeat a sentence.
   2. Memorize a dialogue.
   3. Change verb tenses (give example).
   4. Change positive to negative (give example).
   5. Answer questions (give example).
My questions are:
1. Do you do this in your class?
2. How do you remember what the teacher says?
3. Do you use any special techniques or ways to help you understand the sentences?

3. Vocabulary Learning
You are asked to learn the meanings of ten words in English.

My questions are
1. Do you do this in your class?
2. Do you use any special techniques or ways to help you understand the sentences?

4. Instructions/Directions
In this situation, your teacher asks you to understand directions on how to do something in chemistry lab, physical education class, driver’s education, home economics, or shop class. You must understand what the teacher says, the steps needed to do the activity, and then actually do it yourself.

My questions are:
1. Do you do this type of activity in any of your classes? Outside of class?
2. Do you have any special tricks to help you learn and remember new vocabulary words?
3. What do you do if you forget what to do next as you are doing the activity?

5. Communication in a Social Situation
You are talking to some people who only speak English. You must listen to what they say, understand the meaning, and speak yourself.

My questions are
1. What do you do that helps you understand?
2. What do you do that helps you remember new words or phrases?
3. What do you do that helps you talk?

6. Operational (Functional) Communication
You want to find a part-time job. Or you need to buy a present in a store. Or you need to make an important telephone call for information.

My questions are
1. Do you do this type of activity outside of school?
2. Do you prepare beforehand? If so, how do you prepare?
3. How do you understand what is said to you?
4. How do you make yourself understood?

7. Teacher Presentation/Lecture (Recall/Analysis)
The teacher talks for ten or fifteen minutes about the early history of the United States. You are expected to understand, get the main idea, and then answer questions.

My questions are:
1. Do you do this in your class?
2. What do you do that helps you understand the teacher?
3. What do you do to remember the main idea and details?
4. What do you do that helps you answer questions?

8. Teacher Presentation/Lecture (Inference)
Your teacher (pick the appropriate example):
1. Says several sentences in the presentation that have words you do not know. You have to figure out what they mean. How do you do this? Do you have any special tricks to help you?
2. Tells you the first part of a story. You then have to give a good ending. Do you have any special ways that help you predict or guess the ending?
9. Student Academic Oral Presentation

You have to give an oral presentation in class—for example, a book report, a history report, or a report on a science project. Afterwards the class asks you questions.

My questions are:

1. Do you do this in any of your classes?
2. What helps you to prepare the report?
3. What helps you to present the report?
4. Do you have any special tricks that help you answer questions after the report?

APPENDIX B
Learning Strategy Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Organizers*</td>
<td>Making a general but comprehensive preview of the organizing concept or principle in an anticipated learning activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directed Attention</td>
<td>Deciding in advance to attend in general to a learning task and to ignore irrelevant distractors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective Attention</td>
<td>Deciding in advance to attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that will cue the retention of language input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self/Management</td>
<td>Understanding the conditions that help one learn and arranging for the presence of those conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only one or two instances reported for these strategies.
Functional Planning
Planning for and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out an upcoming language task

Self-Monitoring
Correcting one’s speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, or for appropriateness related to the setting or to the people who are present

Delayed Production
Consciously deciding to postpone speaking in order to learn initially through listening comprehension

Self-Evaluation
Checking the outcomes of one’s own language learning against an internal measure of completeness and accuracy

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Repetition
Imitating a language model, including overt practice and silent rehearsal

Resourcing
Using target language reference materials

Translation
Using the first language as a base for understanding and/or producing the second language

Grouping
Reordering or reclassifying, and perhaps labeling, the material to be learned, based on common attributes

Note Taking
Writing down the main idea, important points, outline, or summary of information presented orally or in writing

Deduction*
Consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language

Recombination”
Constructing a meaningful sentence or larger language sequence by combining known elements in a new way

Imagery
Relating new information to visual concepts in memory via familiar, easily retrievable visualizations, phrases, or locations

Auditory Representation
Retention of the sound or a similar sound for a word, phrase, or longer language sequence

Keyword*
Remembering a new word in the second language by 1) identifying a familiar word in the first language that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word and 2) generating easily recalled images of
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextualization</strong></td>
<td>Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful language sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elaboration</strong></td>
<td>Relating new information to other concepts in memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer</strong></td>
<td>Using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inferencing</strong></td>
<td>Using available information to guess meanings of new items, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOCIOAFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperation</strong></td>
<td>Working with one or more peers to obtain feedback, pool information, or model a language activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question for Clarification</strong></td>
<td>Asking a teacher or other native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation, and/or examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REVIEWS

The TESOL Quarterly welcomes evaluative reviews of publications of relevance to TESOL professionals. In addition to textbooks and reference materials, these include computer and video software, testing instruments, and other forms of non-print materials.

Edited by VIVIAN ZAMEL
University of Massachusetts/Boston

Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in American English

A textbook for practice in English pronunciation and listening at the intermediate and advanced levels, Clear Speech is unique in several respects. First, it differs from commonly available pronunciation texts—which present sounds as an endless succession of utterances, unmanageable and dissociated from context—by providing pronunciation practice in which individual sounds are systematically related. Gilbert’s main concern is quite clearly to relate spoken and written linguistic skills to actual use in real-life contexts, ranging from following directions and finding places on a map to taking notes, from listening to short talks and lectures to outlining and making oral presentations. Students do not practice pronunciation per se, as in Trager and Henderson’s (1956) The PD’s: Pronunciation Drills for Learners of English, for instance; rather, “everything the teacher does,” as Parish (1980:258) states, “co-involves pronunciation.” Indeed, Gilbert’s emphasis on listening is in line with the recent trend which recognizes the cognitive, affective, and communicative dimensions of listening (Gary and Gary 1981).

Another important departure from traditional pronunciation textbooks, which follows naturally from Gilbert’s major concern with use and communication, is that particular attention is given to phonological features affecting comprehensibility of thought groups (namely, what the structuralists term suprasegmentals). Since the “chunking” of language is necessary for the listener to process an oral message
(Pribam 1980), thought groups and thought-group boundaries become more relevant to discourse than do individual words uttered in isolation.

Gilbert’s primary concern with intonation stems from the fact that intonation divides speech acts into thought groups (Teacher’s Manual [TM]:28), thus rendering an oral message easy to understand. Second, intonation contrasts new and old information and thus highlights the focus of meaning. Third, it conveys the attitude of the speaker—insistence, uncertainty, politeness, disbelief, finality, sarcasm, and so on—which can all be imparted through a particular intonation contour or a combination of contours.

Integrated into the domain of intonation are such suprasegmental features as rhythm, stress, pitch, as well as vowel quality and length and consonant deletion. But rhythm is not just a suprasegmental feature, something added to the basic sequence of consonants and vowels; it also marks the “elements which the speaker [does or] does not require the hearer to pay attention to” (Brown and Yule 1983:164). This is demonstrated when foreign students of English produce a somewhat staccato rhythm, pronouncing the unstressed syllables just as distinctly as the stressed ones. While it may be normal in German, for example, to say Dás íst eine Lándkarte (This is a map), such rhythm is reserved for very powerful commands in English, as in Don’t make a fuss! As Allen (1971:81) points out:

Students (and sometimes teachers) ask: “But don’t all languages use stress for signaling contrast and emphasis? Don’t speakers of all languages call attention to a word by saying it more loudly than the words around it?” The point is, in most other languages there is far less reduction of stress on the surrounding words, with the result that those words compete with the stressed element for the (English) listener’s attention.

Furthermore, Gilbert draws attention to the relationship between pitch and vowel length in English. Her example (TM: 15) of a Japanese name, Yásúmásá, rendered Yásúmásá (a macron indicating a long vowel; a dot, a short one) in English, shows how the whole rhythmic pattern has been altered. In discussing the feature of stress, Gilbert says:

Far from being frills, stress patterns are an essential part of the pronunciation of English words. There is some research evidence suggesting that native speakers store vocabulary according to stress patterns. When the wrong pattern is heard, the listener may spend time searching stored words in the wrong category. By the time the listener realizes something is wrong, the original sequence of sounds may be forgotten. For this reason, a stress pattern mistake can cause great confusion (TM:19).
Following Chapter 1, which aims at developing syllable-sensitivity, the 16 subsequent chapters are focused on the above suprasegmental features, proceeding from “Word Units” (Chapters 2–8) to “Thought Units” (Chapters 9–17). Nevertheless, in Chapters 18–23 the author deals with selected segmental features—those that, to her, contribute to clear understanding. One such feature is the relatively greater vowel length in words like save, Ms., close (verb), and pays, as contrasted with safe, Miss, close (adjective), and pace. Gilbert’s selection of this feature is supported by research: “In a study of English as a Second Language pronunciation errors (Leahy 1980), it was found that the two principal types of errors were based on voicing . . . and continuancy” (TM:36). The phenomenon of voicing—rather neglected by writers of conventional pronunciation textbooks on the grounds that it is only a phonetic, not a phonemic feature—is treated here as an important feature by contrasting the above pairs when the final voiced consonant is less voiced or devoiced altogether (as tends to happen in normal speech).

As for vowel sounds, Gilbert, again drawing on research evidence, asserts that they “are best learned initially through listening perception drills rather than speaking practice” (TM:52–53). The schwa is given special attention (although, to maintain a nontechnical tone, the term schwa is not used). The importance of this weakest English vowel stems from its presence in reduced syllables and forms, which constitute real listening comprehension problems. “The unfortunate effect of enunciating every sound clearly,” Brown (1977) observes, “is that students find it impossible to understand spoken English.”

The Student’s Book (S B), which consists of 36 chapters, falls into six main sections: Syllable Units, Word Units, Thought Units, Clarity of Sounds, Listening, and Clear Speech. The first four mainly address the needs of an intermediate learner, namely, the learning of specific phonological features: stress signals (pitch, length, clarity) and patterns, rhythm, reductions, sentence focus, voicing, aspiration, and so on. The last two sections, concentrating on global comprehension, address the needs of a more advanced student, namely, taking notes, giving an oral report, and the like. Review chapters are appropriately spaced every five or six chapters. Apart from the exercises specifically designed to prepare students for the TOEFL, the book provides a preliminary listening test to identify areas of weakness and help focus the students’ attention on intricate phonological aspects.

The practice exercises found in Chapters 1–23 are fairly traditional, consisting of listening perception and repetition drills, auditory discrimination drills, and question-answer drills. Special mention, however, should be made of some of the less conventional pedagogical
techniques, such as the completion exercises, quite regularly presented under “Dictation.” Here the student is usually instructed to listen to a number of sentences or a passage and then to fill in the blanks in the written script (the deleted items often focusing on a specific phonological feature basic to the comprehensibility of discourse). Such completion exercises are based soundly on principles of psychology, according to which incomplete figures tend to be reconstructed into complete patterns. Presented with an incomplete form—virtually a problem-solving situation—the learner is apt to interact, to formulate hypotheses, and to attempt to test such hypotheses. Therefore, employing a completion exercise as a pedagogical technique enhances the creative construction process and develops the ability to guess the meaning from the context. Furthermore, the completion technique, by developing the potential for hypothesis formulation and testing, can increase the learner’s tolerance of ambiguity, which is itself a significant predictor of achievement in second language acquisition (Mulls 1979). Finally, in attempting to restore a missing element, the learner’s attention is drawn to the intersentential relationships; this can lead to global comprehension and consequently to discourse comprehensibility.

Gilbert also adopts another type of exercise that further reflects her Gestalt orientation. Especially in the last two sections, she requires the learner to extract only the new or essential information, to recapitulate the main idea(s), to identify the vocabulary items of greatest semantic load, and to indicate the focus on intonation. And, proceeding presumably from Krashen’s (1980) assumption that adults both acquire and learn, Gilbert regularly assigns a Self-Analysis exercise (or some similar activity) to aid monitor users in their learning process. Before concluding a chapter or a unit, for example, she instructs the students to record given items and then self-edit, checking for a specific aspect: clarity of a particular contrast; accuracy in emphasizing the focus words and de-emphasizing “old ideas” and unstressed syllables; accuracy in distinguishing the voicing and length of syllables; accuracy in linking of consonants; and so on.

A unique feature of the exercises in Chapters 24–32 is their emphasis on the functional use of language. While the author here appears to be concerned with listening, the exercises she provides serve a more fundamental purpose. In “Listening Accuracy,” for example, the content of the dictation passage highlights the significance of intonation as a communicative vehicle. While the recorded passage in “Listening Comprehension: Age and Language Learning” represents a conventional type of exercise for improving listening comprehension, it also offers content that is psychologically relevant to adults engaged in
language learning. The passage underscores the research finding that adults are, in effect, better language learners than children and that the ability to learn languages increases with age (SB:92–93). In “Lecture: Pronunciation Achievement Factors,” the purpose of the listening comprehension practice is greatly enhanced by the subtle choice of content. While the passage identifies the four most important factors predicting pronunciation achievement—mother tongue, attitude toward pronunciation, conversation with natives, and natural ability—it focuses on the positive effects of two factors, namely, the belief in the importance of pronunciation and the amount of time spent in conversations with native speakers. Gilbert also concludes her note-taking exercises with a recorded lecture that offers valuable techniques for oral presentation.

Thus, Gilbert employs pronunciation practice primarily as a vehicle for fulfilling a communicative purpose and structures formal features to achieve a discourse function. This is the difference between Clear Speech and the conventional pronunciation practice books, which aim at accuracy in producing segmental and suprasegmentals rather than oral discourse: For the learner to be drilled in consonants, consonant clusters, tongue twisters, juncture, and rhythm per se is one thing, but to be given contextualized material for practice is quite another matter.

Clear Speech is not without weaknesses, however. Careful examination of the functions of each unit in the Student’s Book reveals that it does not have a clearly defined learner in mind. To begin with, because of its rather rapid pace, the course does not seem to address the intermediate student, whose limited command of language may not be adequate for the comprehension of lectures, for example; nor does the course seem to address the advanced student, for whom the practice of recognizing the syllables of a word would be far too easy.

Second, the units can hardly be said to cover what they are supposed to cover—either at the intermediate or advanced level. For example, the author’s treatment of intonation contours (being confined to the two most basic types, the rising and the falling tunes) fails to highlight the wealth of sociopsychological information—such as irony, disbelief, politeness—conveyed by the native English speaker through the subtle use of combinations of intonation contours.

Furthermore, Gilbert’s treatment of stress suggests that this phonological aspect is arbitrary. While this is so in many cases, Kingdon (1965) has ingeniously demonstrated how stress position is largely determined by the particular suffix and that stress patterns are highly systematic. Thus, instead of presenting personality, mammalian, analytical, pharmacology, pathogenic, metabolic, calculus (SB:25)—which are mixed examples of “arbitrary” penultimate and ante-
penultimate stress, with no semantic criterion constraining formal regularity—Gilbert could have introduced patterns of stress similar to the following:

personality mammalian metabolic communicate
hospitality grammarian pathogenic participate
nationality librarian metaphoric evaluate
abnormality Canadian energetic retaliate
generosity barbarian prehistoric eradicate

In the above examples, the main stress falls on the “next-to-last” syllable (as she tends to generalize) in words ending in -it, but on the antepenultimate syllables in the other examples. Such a procedure would perhaps stimulate the student to think of other systematic patterns, such as qualify, verify, purify, or liquefy.

One further word should be said in connection with the Teacher’s Manual. For the most part, it is a real asset, drawing attention to a number of theoretical principles and suggesting a large variety of very useful techniques and classroom procedures. However, the data it gives under “Problem Sound Contrasts Listed by Languages” (65) require careful revision. The section attempts to address different linguistic backgrounds, but the incidental treatment of the problems of 15 different language groups merely suggests the phonological problems that speakers of each of these languages actually experience. An Arabic-speaking student may, as Gilbert suggests, confuse /p/ with /b/—but not with /f/; /v/ with /f/—but not with /b/. In an inventory that lists confusion of /θ/ with /s/ in connection with Arab students of English, one would immediately expect to find the /θ/ being contrasted with /z/. (Furthermore, I suspect that Hindi can show some problem sound contrasts other than the single pair /p/ and /f/.) Numerous studies on contrastive phonology could be referred to to identify at least the major, rather than the incidental, problem sound contrasts in each of the languages.

The above objections do not seriously detract from the value of a book that makes pronunciation teachable and, as Bolinger points out in the Foreword, “as pleasant as any serious learning can be” (SB: xi).

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The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom


In The Natural Approach, Krashen and Terrell attempt to provide a comprehensive language teaching methodology based on the theory of language acquisition that Krashen has documented in his earlier work (see Krashen 1981, 1982 for summaries). A difficulty in reviewing The Natural Approach, then, is to separate the book from the theory, to evaluate a teaching methodology and its documentation separately from the theory on which it is based. This review examines the
The Natural Approach as a language teaching method and the book as a description and justification of that method. Comments on the adequacy of the theory are limited to a few major questions which bear directly on its instructional implications.

The Natural Approach is divided into seven chapters, the first of which (“Introduction”) reviews earlier approaches to language teaching and summarizes the main features of the approach under discussion. The second chapter (“Second Language Acquisition Theory”) presents the five hypotheses about language acquisition/learning which make up Krashen’s Acquisition Theory and discusses factors such as aptitude, age, and individual variation that affect language acquisition. The third chapter (“Implications of SLA Theory for the Classroom”) outlines the Natural Approach and relates it to Acquisition Theory. The next chapter (“Getting Started with the Natural Approach”) includes goals and content in curriculum organization, activities for the early stages of language teaching, and directions for classroom management. The fifth chapter (“Oral Communication Development Through Acquisition Activities”) is a grab bag of classroom activities; this is followed by “Additional Sources of Input for Acquisition and Learning,” which examines reading, the teaching of grammar, and writing, as well as TV, radio, homework, and vocabulary work in relation to the Natural Approach. The final chapter (“Testing and Classroom Management”) briefly reviews language testing and error treatment from the standpoint of the Natural Approach.

The taxonomy formulated by Richards and Rodgers (1982) provides a useful tool for describing and analyzing the Natural Approach. This taxonomy divides method into three components: approach—the theory of language and the theory of learning stated or implied by the method; design—the syllabus and roles of learners, teachers, and materials; and procedure—the actual classroom activities and techniques employed. While Richards and Rodgers point out that few methods are explicitly documented at all levels, all methods can be analyzed on each of these levels, and descriptive statements can be made about what is implied, if not actually stated.

Approach

The Natural Approach is based on a theory of learning which is well documented by Krashen’s work on Acquisition Theory. According to that theory, communicative competence, or functional ability, in a new language arises from exposure to the language in meaningful settings and in such a way that the meaning expressed by the language
is comprehended ("comprehensible input"). The specific mechanism of acquisition is the unconscious creation of language material by the learner, based on exposure to similar material in the language in the context of a communicative need ("creative construction"). Rules, patterns, vocabulary, and other language forms are not learned as they are presented or encountered but are gradually established in the learner’s repertoire on the basis of repeated active and passive experience during meaningful occasions of language use ("comprehensible input"). There is a natural order to much of what is acquired (the "natural order hypothesis"), determined by a mechanism which is not yet understood. Affective factors can interfere to block acquisition (the "affected filter hypothesis"), and direct instruction in the forms of language outside of meaningful settings has only limited usefulness for a language learner (the "Monitor hypothesis").

These are strong claims and a powerful theory. The theory is based on a certain amount of empirical evidence and much hypothesizing and extrapolating. It can account for language acquisition in almost any setting, since almost all interaction utilizing language is potentially meaningful, depending on the learner. Oddly enough, if extended, it can justify almost any kind of instructional experience: If comprehensible input is the sole source of second language knowledge and if anything encountered in the new language is potentially meaningful to some learners, then even instruction in language form can provide some comprehensible input. According to Acquisition Theory, however, the forms presented do not actually become part of the learners’ store of useful knowledge unless the learner is ready to acquire the form.

Krashen’s Acquisition Theory does account for a variety of phenomena observed in language learning, such as the ability of language learners to function well without instruction, the frequently observed lack of ability on the part of language learners to function following mostly formal instruction, and generally similar patterns of language acquisition by learners who have been exposed to many different types of second language experience or instruction. The theory will undoubtedly be refined and modified, but for the present, it is the most extensive and explicit theory of second language acquisition available.

What is missing in the Natural Approach and Acquisition Theory, however, is an adequate theory of language to accompany the theory of learning. Most other methods view language as a set of structures or rules, and the Natural Approach seems to do the same. It is difficult to find statements referring directly to the nature of language in The Natural Approach and in other work by Krashen. Repeatedly, "lan-
language” is equated with “structures” (e.g., 32) or vocabulary, and the function of language is seen primarily as the transmission and reception of meaningful messages (see in particular 71).

This is a remarkably sparse account of the nature and function of language, given all the work on communicative competence in the last two decades and the excellent summaries of the issues by Canale and Swain (1980), Larsen-Freeman (1982), and Canale (1983). Recent work on the nature of literacy and its relationship to overall language development (see Frederiksen and Dominic 1981 and Whiteman 1981 for representative collections) also raises questions about the nature of language and whether all aspects of language—formal, functional, interfactical, and strategic—are cognitively similar and are learned or acquired the same way. Communicative competence is complex and clearly involves much more than the few language forms that have been used (the morpheme acquisition studies) to establish the principle of a natural order.

Of course, given the generality of the theory of learning underlying the Natural Approach, we might assume that all the content and functions of language can be acquired in the same way. This kind of underdifferentiation is typical of most methods, but the lack of a detailed theory of language, when combined with an excessively general theory of learning, raises questions about the adequacy of the principles underlying the Natural Approach. The Natural Approach fails to provide any direction as to whether and how to address matters such as new ways of performing certain language functions (e.g., apologizing), new domains of language use (e.g., public speaking, laboratory reports), and new interfactical patterns (e.g., turn-taking strategies). The theory and the method both lead us to believe that adequate exposure under the right conditions will lead learners to acquire the appropriate behaviors.

It is true that Krashen and Terrell refer to and accept Cummins’s (1980) distinction between basic personal communication skills and academic learning skills and state that the Natural Approach applies primarily to the former (65–67). They also suggest that the acquisition of the latter would be facilitated by a strong grounding in the former but that “other methodologies, or modifications of the method presented here may be called for” (67).

Design

Design includes the roles of syllabi, teachers, students, and materials. The Natural Approach is extensively, although not systematically, documented at the level of design. The syllabus, or course content,
that the authors describe is a mixture of topical ("eating"), notional/functional ("narrating past experiences"), and situational ("clearing customs") approaches. The authors suggest that the Natural Approach is most applicable in a beginning level course that can be based on the information or content the students will need. One of the most important features of curriculum and syllabus design in the Natural Approach, however, is its insistence that requiring language learners to produce the new language too soon will not lead to acquisition and may increase negative affect. The authors argue strongly (55, 75–78) for a preproduction stage in instruction during which students are given the opportunity to comprehend the new language and react to it nonverbally, without the added burden of production. Moreover, at the content level, vocabulary development is seen as crucial:

The prespeaking stage is characterized by nearly complete attention to vocabulary recognition. Indeed, the purpose of the prespeaking stage is for the students to develop listening strategies based primarily on lexical item recognition (155).

The roles of teachers and students are not explicitly defined in The Natural Approach, but extensive descriptions of activities suggest that the teacher is a primary provider of linguistic input in the form of information and is the organizer of classroom activities that maximize both meaningful input and interaction among the students and between students and native speakers. The authors further suggest that the teacher need not be an authority on matters relating to language description or analysis. Learners actively create the new language by receiving input and testing hypotheses, especially as they engage in real interaction using the new language. Learner errors should be tolerated and reacted to on the level of comprehension and meaning.

Materials do not seem to play a well-defined role in the method; once again, anything that is meaningful, provides or encourages input, and stimulates interaction is recommended. Reading is encouraged, for its own sake and as a source of input. Intervention in reading instruction is to be limited to those students who fail to exhibit efficient reading strategies. Writing is recommended at the early stages only if the students' functional goals call for it. Limited instruction focusing on the formal aspects of the language ("grammar") is recommended to develop "optimal monitor use" (143), that is, the ability to use a few simple rules when there is enough time and a need for accuracy.

Procedure

On the level of procedure, Krashen and Terrell suggest a variety of classroom activities, few of which are new. For the initial stages, the
techniques of Total Physical Response (TPR) are recommended, along with simple questioning techniques (yes/no questions) that require comprehension of more complex language but little in the way of production. Teacher-talk is encouraged, especially teacher-talk that aids the comprehension of messages. Charts, interviews, and cloze activities are suggested as ways of leading to information-based interaction or limited production.

At the beginning of Chapter 5, the authors themselves provide the best description of the kinds of activities they recommend:

The core of the Natural Approach classroom is a series of acquisition activities. By activity we mean a broad range of events which have a purpose other than conscious grammar practice. Thus, we refer to activities as opposed to audiolingual drills or cognitive learning exercises. For acquisition to take place, the topics used in each activity must be intrinsically interesting or meaningful so that the students’ attention is focused on the content of the utterances instead of the form. It is also through acquisition activities that the instructor will (1) introduce the new vocabulary, (2) provide the comprehensible input the students will utilize for acquisition, (3) create opportunities for student oral production, and (4) instill a sense of group belonging and cohesion which will contribute to lower affective filters (97).

These activities are divided into affective-humanistic activities, including dialogues, interviews, preference ranking, and personal charts and tables; problem-solving activities; games; and grouping techniques to ensure that groups of students experience and develop different types of group communication. Examples of each, most of which have been selected from published texts, are provided.

As the preceding discussion demonstrates, The Natural Approach includes a great deal of material, and the authors have done a good job of describing a method from top to bottom. Overall, however, the quality of the book is mixed. Among the positive features of the book and the method, I would include the following.

1. There is a clear progression from theory to practice and a sensible recognition of the roles of both theory and experience in shaping language teaching methodology. The authors are refreshingly opinionated in an age of agnosticism and provide a systematic and coherent approach to language teaching. Much of what they are describing is not new but is related and explained differently and better than heretofore.

2. The Acquisition Theory underlying the method is clearly presented. The presentation is simple, direct, and accessible to the classroom teacher.
3. The book avoids false and misleading claims. Fact, theory, and hypothesis are usually labeled as such, and the role and function of theory are openly presented (25). Debts and relationships to older methods are alluded to, if not explicitly described. The Natural Approach does have strong roots in older direct methods, which are described by Krashen and Terrell (9–11).

4. Many of the techniques and activities, although few are new, are useful in themselves, and recommendations about their use are made in a systematic and principled way. The authors also endorse several other innovative methods, such as TPR and Suggestopedia. Especially useful are the recommendations on error correction, which are valuable for almost any approach.

On the other hand, the book does have some weaknesses, including the following:

1. The lack of an adequate theory of language, already discussed, is not a crucial problem, but it does leave gaps in the range of language behavior addressed by the method. Also stemming from the weak theory of language is the fact that Krashen and Terrell provide little description of the outcomes of the Natural Approach. Basically, all they say is that greater communicative ability will result:

What do we expect of students mastering these goals? We expect that they will be able to function adequately in the target situation. They will understand the speaker of the target language (perhaps with requests for clarification) and will be able to convey (in a non-insulting manner) their requests and ideas. They need not know every word in a particular semantic domain, nor is it necessary that the syntax and morphology be flawless—but their production does need to be understood. They should be able to make the meaning clear but not necessarily be accurate in all their grammar (71).

2. Given the crucial role of the Affective Filter in blocking the effect of available input, very little is said about ways to lower the filter and about what the filter consists of. Since a great deal of work has been done in these areas by writers such as Curran (1976), Stevick (1976, 1980), and Schumann (1978), more direct guidance would be useful here. Reducing the pressure to speak and avoiding overt correction (59) do not go very far toward reducing affective barriers that arise from a learner’s unwillingness to integrate with the target language community or toward addressing field dependency, if it can ever be demonstrated that that construct is a significant learner variable. Nor is simply being “concerned with the message, not with the form” (56) likely to reduce these barriers.
Since affective factors have been hypothesized (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen 1982:72) as playing a crucial role in success or failure in language learning, they deserve greater attention in the instructional process than Krashen and Terrell have provided.

3. Although the authors state that one of their goals is to produce “optimal monitor users” (57), the treatment of that goal and how to address it is all too brief. There is little specific information about which grammar rules should be the focus of instruction, how much formal instruction should be provided, and when the instruction should occur in the curricular sequence (i.e., before or after the forms have been acquired).

4. The authors’ opposition to the teaching of grammar is excessive: “Even if the Natural Approach is not adopted in whole, we feel that any reduction of the dominance of grammar-based methods will improve language teaching” (171). I say “excessive” because I believe such a strong attitude will produce more reaction than action. Monitor Theory predicts that instruction in grammar will be harmful only by taking time away from more useful instructional experience and by making learners think that grammatical knowledge is important. At the same time, however, Krashen and Terrell concede that grammatical instruction is useful in a limited way in developing optimal monitor users and in providing comprehensible input. Strategically, much of the effort spent arguing against the teaching of grammar might be better spent on convincing true believers in grammar instruction that grammar has a newly defined but useful role to play in language teaching and in showing them what it is.

5. The mechanism of input at the instructional level needs refinement and elaboration. The notion of comprehensible input is well presented, but the instructional recommendations contain too few guidelines for choosing material and making it comprehensible. As a teacher trainer, I find this to be a major problem for teachers, especially new ones.

6. The book would benefit greatly from an index, since a great deal of complex material appears in different contexts and a number of authors and methods are cited.

7. There are a number of printing and editing errors, especially in references.

So far, I have limited my comments on The Natural Approach to the book and the method it proposes. In general, it is a useful and sensible guidebook, providing language teachers with an overview of a coherent method for addressing the basic communicative needs of learners and with a rationale and set of techniques for countering the
excessive emphasis on teaching the formal aspects of the language that characterize most existing language teaching methods. When dealing with these areas, the book and the method are on solid ground. However, *The Natural Approach* frequently but ambiguously attempts to address language teaching in a more general way, suggesting that all second language behavior is only acquired. Such a suggestion ignores several serious questions that have been raised in recent years about the adequacy of Acquisition Theory as a broad basis for language teaching in general and about the role of formal instruction in developing overall second language competence over a longer period of time. Those concerns cannot go unaddressed here.

The arguments against acquisition-based instruction seem to fall into two categories: those that claim that the absence of formal instruction will produce learners whose interlanguage is marked by excessive error and those that claim that the absence of formal instruction will cause learners to fossilize. In certain conditions of language use that go beyond basic life skills, it is claimed (Eskey 1983, Dickerson 1984, Celce-Murcia 1985), errors are dysfunctional and stigmatized. Formal instruction, it is further claimed, eliminates much of this error and allows learners to continue to refine and improve their second language performance. The specific mechanism by which formal instruction is supposed to improve accuracy is often fuzzy (especially in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1983 and Celce-Murcia 1985), but there are three general lines of argument for the value of requiring explicit instruction in the forms of the language, grammar rules, or pronunciation rules. First, it is claimed that learned rules can function to help the learner monitor production when conditions permit, thus leading to better performance. This claim allows for a greater role for monitoring than it is given under Acquisition Theory. Second, it has also been claimed (Dickerson 1984) that through learned rules, learners can provide improved input to themselves; this claim retains the acquisition/learning distinction but defines a new role for learning, that of providing input for a more accurate meta-language or monitor. In a third version, learned rules gradually become part of learners’ unconscious knowledge; this explanation defends the traditional model of instruction that requires learners to learn consciously and then to practice until the behavior becomes unconscious, a process explicitly denied in Acquisition Theory.

Higgs and Clifford (1982) offer a more compelling argument for limiting the application of acquisition-based instruction. They claim that the absence of formal instruction leads to fossilization, but only at a level of competence rarely achieved by language learners. While their conclusions are not based on a controlled study, their broad data base would be difficult to duplicate under experimental conditions.
They borrow the construct of proactive interference, or interference from pre-existing and usually inaccurate knowledge, to explain fossilization. They specifically identify grammatical instruction and competency as necessary to prevent fossilization and call for grammar instruction for those learners whose need for functional ability is not immediate but who will eventually need to move beyond minimal functional ability in a language.

The issues of accuracy and fossilization have therefore been used to argue the case for limiting the use of acquisition-based approaches, at least for some learners. This is not the place to argue these issues. Moreover, in defense of the Natural Approach, it is important to point out that the accuracy issue is far from settled. It is not clear that instruction in grammar is a necessary prerequisite to accuracy in production, or even to metalinguistics ability. Almost all the available evidence suggests that instruction in grammar contributes little or nothing to the quality of first or second language performance. The notion that learned rules either become acquired directly or that they can radically upset an acquisition sequence is, for the present, an example of what Emig (1981) calls “magical thinking.”

On the other hand, there is an increasing sense that instruction contributes something (Long 1983) and that learners who have had the benefit of formal instruction are qualitatively different from those who have not. The difficulty for those arguing this position is threefold: 1) to demonstrate exactly what it is that formal instruction contributes, 2) to demonstrate the mechanism by which formal instruction contributes to language learning, and 3) to define formal instruction precisely. While there may be demonstrated positive effects of instruction (Long 1983), there is as yet no convincing evidence that such instruction must focus on the forms of the language, and there is much evidence against that point of view. It is altogether possible, at this stage of our knowledge of the acquisition learning process, that contextualized feedback (including error correction of the type recommended by Krashen and Terrell) may contribute as much to growth and accuracy as is claimed for instruction in the formal aspects of grammar. To assume that instruction must be equated with instruction in grammar is as much a mistake as to assume that acquisition-based methods do not provide feedback on accuracy. It may well be that the kind of instruction recommended by The Natural Approach is sufficient for developing accuracy in a second language.

Unfortunately, much of the discussion of the issues involved in the relation of a acquisition theory of teaching practice is conducted in a less than objective manner. The Natural Approach appears to claim that the simple constructs of Krashen’s Acquisition Theory are all we
need to know to teach language effectively. To accept this view would be naive. On the other hand, arguments against an acquisition approach are too often based on “magical thinking,” personal experience, and subjective (as opposed to empirical) evidence. Furthermore, some critics of the Natural Approach tend to damn it by referring to the success of more formal approaches to language instruction. In many cases, however, the success of these formal approaches is easily explained as a special case of Acquisition Theory, not in terms of an alternative theory. In other words, this type of argument might consist of the claim that formal instruction regularly does lead to communicative ability, but the argument is invalidated if we recognize that anything we call formal instruction has the potential of supplying comprehensible input and lowering the affective filter at the same time that it focuses on language forms.

In our efforts to understand the relationship of theory and practice in language teaching, we have certainly found a partial solution in the various constructs of Krashen’s Acquisition Theory. Moreover, the views of instruction set out in The Natural Approach, though presented in a somewhat uncritical and undigested way, are valid as far as they go. To advance our understanding still further, the theory will have to be refined, especially the role of specific types of instruction and how they relate to specific types of language behavior. By looking more carefully and broadly at what we mean by “language” and by defining and evaluating different types of “instruction,” we will, I believe, come to understand better the essential contributions and weaknesses of acquisition-based learning.

As this understanding develops, we need to avoid seeing the language teaching world through the metaphor of the swinging pendulum. In that sense, The Natural Approach can be faulted for its tendency to present its views in an absolutist way (although with an appropriate awareness of the past). If we can take the book, its approach, and the theory on which it is based as a cautiously established step rather than as a welcome or unwelcome swing of the pendulum, the contributions of all three will be positive.

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The ESL/EFL Specialists
The University of Hawaii Center for Second Language Classroom Research Technical Reports

MICHAEL H. LONG
Center for Second Language Classroom Research
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In September 1983, the University of Hawaii’s Social Science Research Institute, in cooperation with the Department of English as a Second Language, established the Center for Second Language Classroom Research (CSLCR). The Center’s mandate is to conduct research and training projects in the general area of second language (SL) education. Current work involves basic and applied research on SL teaching and learning (English and Japanese as foreign and second languages). This work is likely to expand to cover issues in education through the medium of a SL and classrooms where second dialects are present (e.g., Hawaii Creole English). CSLCR staff are drawn from faculty and graduate students in the Departments of ESL, Linguistics, and Educational Psychology at UH. The Center’s first three completed projects are briefly outlined below.

1. The Effect of Teachers’ Questioning Patterns and Wait-Time on Pupil Participation in Public High School Classes in Hawaii for Students of Limited English Proficiency

MICHAEL H. LONG, CINDY BROCK, GRAHAM CROOKES, CARLA DEICKE, LYNN POTTER, and SHUQIANG ZHANG

A study was conducted to investigate 1) the effects of training on teachers’ questioning patterns and use of wait-time and 2) the effects of changes in

Copies of Technical Reports Nos. 1, 2, and 3 may be obtained for the cost of handling and (first class) postage by writing to the Director, Center for Second Language Classroom Research, Social Science Research Institute, 2424 Maile Way, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822. Checks for $2.50 for one report, $4.50 for two, or $6.50 for all three should be made out to “Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii.” If ordering only one or two reports, please be sure to specify which one(s) you require.
teacher behavior in these areas on patterns of student participation. Six teachers of ESL to limited English proficient (LEP) children in public high schools in Hawaii were randomly assigned to one of three groups: Treatment 1 (Question patterns), Treatment 2 (Wait-Time), and Control. Each teacher was videotaped on four occasions (Times 1–4) teaching a lesson of approximately 20 minutes to his or her regular classes of LEP students. Times 1 and 4 involved normal lessons of the teachers’ own devising; Times 2 and 3 involved the use of materials—slide presentations with accompanying notes for the teachers on the subjects of “Sharks” and “Dolphins,” respectively—written by the research team. Between Times 2 and 3, each teacher received a training module on question types, wait-time, or praise markers (the latter a placebo treatment for the control group), according to their treatment assignment in the study. Students were tested on their mastery of the subject matter of the “Sharks” and “Dolphins” lessons immediately after the Times 2 and 3 lessons.

Tapes from all 24 lessons (6 teachers x 4 lessons) were transcribed, coded, and verified for a variety of linguistic and discourse features. (Inter-rater reliabilities of .85 for wait-time and of .93 to .98 for all other measures were achieved before coding began.) The features analyzed included frequencies of display and (open and closed) referential questions, syntactic complexity of questions, number of turns elicited by question types, and the length and complexity of student responses following different question types and different wait-times.

It was found that the training modules affected teaching behaviors in the desired ways: In both within-group and between-group comparisons, the length of teacher wait-time and the frequency of open and closed referential questions increased to a statistically significant degree. The new behaviors in turn affected student participation patterns in ways believed to be significant for these children’s second language acquisition, for example, by eliciting more student responses as well as longer and more complex responses. Mastery of content of the lessons increased significantly from Time 2 to Time 3, as indicated by student scores on the multiple-choice tests administered at the end of those lessons, and these changes generally transferred into the fourth lesson (Time 4).

2. Bibliography of Research on Second Language Classroom Processes and Classroom Second Language Acquisition

MICHAEL H. LONG

This 48-page bibliography, including approximately 650 items, contains references to published work of three kinds:

1. Data-based studies of communication involving the teacher and students in classrooms where a second language is being taught or used as the medium of instruction
2. Data-based studies of instructed second language acquisition
3. Articles which treat those data-based studies from a theoretical or methodological perspective

Also included are a small number of studies which, although they do not involve a classroom data base, make explicit comparisons between second language classroom discourse and second language conversation outside classrooms or between instructed and naturalistic interlanguage development.

3. Incorporation of Corrective Feedback in Native Speaker/Non-Native Speaker Conversation

GRAHAM CROOKES and KATHRYN RULON

This study investigated NS/NNS discourse which accompanied “information-gap” activities. Fifteen NS/NNS pairs performed two tasks which required a two-way information transfer for satisfactory completion. Each pair also engaged in free conversation. NS discourse was analyzed in terms of the type of feedback it made available to the NNS following a nonstandard morphological or syntactic usage or a lexical void. NNS discourse was analyzed in terms of morphological or syntactic deviations from target language norms. Instances of incorporation of feedback (i.e., potential interlanguage destabilization) were tabulated. Results are discussed in terms of 1) the advantage for interlanguage development that this type of activity offers over free conversation and 2) the differences observed within task-related conversations as these differences relate to interlanguage destabilization.

It was found that task-related conversations offer a more favorable linguistic environment than free conversation. In task-related conversations, linguistic material is “recycled,” that is, the same lexical items or grammatical constructions are used repeatedly. With regard to observed change in interlanguage, task-related conversations without visual support produced a significantly greater number of instances of interlanguage destabilization than did free conversation. Topic maintenance was found to be an inadequate indicator of the amount of reuse of linguistic material. Alternative indicators of the relationship between task type and the potential utility of related conversations for second language learning are considered.

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Peruvian Student Attitudes Toward English

GAIL M. ST. MARTIN
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Recent years have seen a decline in employment opportunities for ESL instructors in the continental United States. There still exist, however, ample opportunities to teach ESL/EFL abroad, although from a research standpoint,
many important questions about these teaching situations remain unanswered. Principal among these is the question of who studies English and why. The study reported here answers these questions for one location that may be representative of many abroad.

The survey was done during my year at a large, privately owned English language institute in Lima, Peru. While it followed quite closely the study done by Shaw (1981) in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Thailand, it provides information from a country that historically has had neither a British nor American presence or influence. As such, it represents a qualitatively different situation than those examined in Shaw’s study, one which may be more characteristic of a large number of EFL situations in the Third World.

The survey instrument was written in English, then translated into Spanish, with a back-translation done for verification. A total of 236 students responded to objective items concerning age, profession, length of time spent studying English, friends and/or family members who spoke enough English to use it socially and/or professionally, preferred variety of English, reasons for studying English, and personal attitudes toward different uses of English—for example, in international commerce, in popular music, for travel. The instrument took 20 minutes to administer; subjects completed the questionnaire during regular class time under the supervision of a member of the academic staff.

Student ages ranged from 10 to 50 in the following distribution: 10–15, 32 percent; 16–20, 31 percent; 21–25, 20 percent; 26–30, 8 percent; 31–40, 7 percent; 41–50, 2 percent. Of these, 55 percent had been studying English for fewer than six months, 31 percent for six months to a year, and only 14 percent for more than one year.

Secondary and university students comprised 66 percent of the population; secretaries, 14 percent; engineers, 6 percent; housewives, 2 percent; administrators, 3 percent; teachers, 2 percent; and various others, 7 percent.

Students reported that they came from families in which there were immediate family members who had sufficient English for use in social or professional situations; percentages for the family member named ranged from 13 for mother to 46 for cousin. Fully 58 percent reported this degree of English proficiency for friends. These results suggest English proficiency to be more common in younger generations.

Eighty-nine percent preferred to learn American English, while 11 percent would have preferred the British variety.

In answer to the question, “Why do you study English?” with instructions to mark all applicable reasons, student responses were as follows:

- Because I need it for my work 17%
- For professional advancement 51%
- To use in my studies 64%
- Because my parents insist 5%
- To talk with my friends and family 33%
- Because I like the language 75%

To investigate possible dimensions of “because I like the language,” students were then asked to respond on a 5-point Likert scale to statements about
their attitudes toward things associated with English speaking/speakers. Students agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements in the percentages indicated:

- Peruvians need to learn English to do international business. 88%
- Peruvians need to learn English to improve themselves in Peru. 71%
- I like U.S. and British popular music. 85%
- I like U.S. and British films. 60%
- I’d like to travel to the U.S. or England. 97%
- I’d like to live in the U.S. or England. 56%

At least for the Peruvian students who have the modest means to attend classes at a private institute for an hour and a half daily, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Students are both instrumentally and integratively motivated to study English.
2. Students plan to use English for both inter- and intranational communication.
3. The number of English language speakers is increasing, especially among the 15- to 25-year-old age group.

It would also seem that English and the demand for instructors to teach it will continue to grow if students maintain their generally positive attitudes toward the language.

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**Academic Listening Comprehension: Does the Sum of the Parts Make Up the Whole?**

**ANDREW G. HARPER**

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Research suggests that certain subskills may be significant in facilitating listening comprehension (LC). This research is of two kinds, the first of which attempts to identify and taxonomize the factors and subskills related to both general LC and academic listening comprehension (ALC). These taxonomies have been compiled on the basis of theoretical models and/or intuition (e.g., Nichols 1948, Brown 1951, Barker 1971, Richards 1983). Two
The Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test (Brown and Carlsen 1955) and the Listening section of the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (Educational Testing Bureau 1958), include measures of some of the subskills taxonomized by Nichols (1948) and Brown (1951). These two tests, however, appear to be of questionable validity (Lorge 1959, Petrie 1964).

The second type of research consists of investigations into the ALC problems encountered by non-native students at college and university. Data for these studies have been obtained by means of 1) questionnaire surveys and interviews (e.g., Morrison 1974, Lebauer 1982, Yuan 1982) and/or 2) discourse analysis of transcripts of lectures and seminars (e.g., Wijasuriya 1971, Candlin and Murphy 1976, Montgomery 1977, Stanley 1978, Dudley-Evans and Johns 1980, Lebauer 1982). The taxonomies of ALC difficulties encountered by NNS students suggest that specialized microskills may indeed be required to comprehend lectures and seminars. Unfortunately, however, although the research described above gives useful indications as to the identity of microskills related to ALC, the nonempirical nature of the methodology used in these studies makes their findings somewhat inconclusive.

The purpose of this study was to investigate empirically the relationship of microskills to ALC. It was hypothesized that competence in discrete microskills would predict global proficiency in ALC. To test this hypothesis, the Test of Academic Listening Comprehension (TALC) was constructed. All items on the test are multiple-choice, with listening material selected from three audiotaped university lectures.

Part I of the TALC, which lasts 37 minutes, measures competence in the following four microskills: 1) inferring the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from context; 2) recognizing the function of referential devices (e.g., it, these, here); 3) recognizing the function of conjunctive devices (e.g., therefore, however, consequently); and 4) recognizing the function of transitional devices (e.g., let’s move on now).

Part II of the TALC, which lasts 45 minutes, is divided into two sections. Section 1 measures the ability to identify, comprehend, and recall the main idea in 1-minute listening passages. Section 2 measures global comprehension of two consecutive, 6-minute listening passages. The macroskills required in this section include the ability to identify and recall main ideas, significant details, and definitions; the ability to make inferences concerning the information presented; and the ability to assess the lecturer’s attitude toward the material. The test was administered in a language laboratory to 85 foreign students enrolled in intermediate- and advanced-level English language classes at the University of Hawaii.

Intercorrelations led to the following findings:

1. There was a statistically significant relationship between global ALC, as measured in Part II of the TALC, and the set of four microskills measured in Part I (r = .650, p < .001).
2. Each of the four microskills was significantly related to global ALC at the .001 level. Correlations between Part II, Section 2 (global comprehension), and the individual microskills in Part I ranged from .377 to .457.
3. Correlations between subparts in Part I of the TALC revealed that a) there may be common factors involved in the skills of recognizing the function of markers of cohesion and markers of coherence \((r = .326, p < .01)\), and b) inferring the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary is a relatively discrete skill.

4. The correlation between the two subparts of Part II (main ideas and global comprehension) was significant but not particularly high \((r = .462, p < .001)\). This suggests that while the ability to identify and recall the main idea is related to global ALC, there are other important macro-level skills involved in global ALC.

The reliability of the TALC\(^1\) was calculated, using the Kuder-Richardson formula, at .795. The correlation between the TALC and the Listening section of the TOEFL was .508 \((p < .001)\).

Two implications for pedagogical and testing procedures arise from the findings of this study. First, it might be possible to raise the level of students' ALC proficiency by improving their competence in microskills. Second, a test of a larger subset of significantly related microskills might be useful both in predicting global ALC and in diagnosing weaknesses of individual students. These two implications offer interesting possibilities for future research.\(^2\)

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1 The TALC has now been adapted for use as a placement test of ALC. The new version, called the Harper Academic Listening Test, lasts 55 minutes and is being used successfully at the University of Hawaii in the English Language Institute and the Hawaii English Language Program.

2 I would like to thank Charles Mason, Craig Chaudron, Jack Richards, Deborah Gordon, and Kathy Rulon for their invaluable help with this study.


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THE FORUM

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

**Comments on Mark A. Clarke’s “On the Nature of Technique: What Do We Owe the Gurus?”**

**A Reader Reacts...**

**Notes from a Nominal Guru**

ROBERT B. KAPLAN
University of Southern California

In a recent article in the TESOL Quarterly (Vol. 18, No. 4, December 1984), Mark Clarke nominates me a guru. I am certainly deeply appreciative of the honor, but its bestowal gives me some concern. As Clarke himself explains:

Typically, we have a mental image of the guru on stage looking down at an auditorium full of teachers who, pencils scratching furiously on precariously balanced notepads, strive to catch every phrase, every morsel of wisdom and insight (591).

He goes on to say that gurus are “charismatic leaders who offer important insights and helpful advice to the battle-weary” (592). Never, in my wildest flights of egotism, have I thought of myself as charismatic leader; rarely have I seen myself, Moses like, pronouncing the truth from on high, even if on high is only the raised platform of an auditorium. Without false modesty, let me say that I conceive of myself as a teacher, like Clarke. (I had the ill fortune to have had a good idea 20 years ago. Everyone is entitled to one good idea in a lifetime; the lucky ones have it late in life so that it does not haunt them for long.)

Not only does Clarke nominate me for this honor, but he lists me first and credits me with introducing him to the work of Francis Christensen—now deceased. To the extent that his nomination increases my income from paid talks and consultancies, I am grateful to him—even willing to provide him a finder’s fee. To the extent that the
nomination weakens my right to be taken seriously, to be numbered among the living, to contribute something beyond a 20-year-old idea, I am less than thrilled to be a guru. When I read the paragraph (586) which names me, I felt as though I were seeing my own obituary. Reports of my death are highly exaggerated; I have every intention of continuing to work for some time to come.

Quite aside from the dangers with which guruism may be fraught, it seems to me that the term is a misnomer. What Clarke is talking about, I think, may be described in another way. Quite a number of years ago, when TESOL was much younger, I recall hearing a talk by Edward Anthony; the talk was in honor of someone who was retiring (or had died)—I really cannot recall now who it was. What Anthony said, however, I remember very well. He said that each generation stands on the shoulders of its predecessors. I think it is this phenomenon that Clarke really meant to describe. It is not a question of what specific idea one draws from what specific source; rather, it is the undeniable fact that knowledge is cumulative. Our basic knowledge derives from those who preceded us; had they not thought deeply, we would have had less to learn. What we do with what we learn is something else. For some among us, learning is quite enough; those individuals are conduits. Like relay stations, they receive a signal, boost it a bit, and send it on. Fortunately, there are others who choose to do more. They not only receive the transmission from the past, but they select what is most useful from that transmission, think about it, and do not merely boost the signal but add to it. It is precisely this process that we define as the growth of knowledge.

What Anthony said is basically true—to the extent that any metaphor may be said to be true.' Each generation stands on the shoulders of its predecessors; that is why we can see farther than our parents did. Indeed, the fact that Clarke cites me in the same breath as Christensen is the proof of my theorem; Christensen taught me (he was in fact my major professor), and I was lucky enough to apply what he taught me to an area in which he had no great interest. That application made it seem that I too had contributed to knowledge; in fact, I had had just enough imagination to focus on Christensen’s ideas beyond the problem that he had been most directly concerned with. Standing on Christensen’s shoulders, I had a somewhat longer view. Clarke may

1 Clarke has seen this text. In response to it, he writes,

I think the “shoulders” business misses the fact that, as we take wisdom and insight from previous generations, we exercise considerable discretion in what we choose to use and how we choose to use it... Yes, it is true that knowledge is cumulative, but stating it like that... leads the careless reader to assume that knowledge comes to all learners in a large undifferentiated mass, whereas the fact is that we pick and choose what we will use.

I’m not sure I agree. Knowledge does come in an undifferentiated mass. Some learners pick and choose; some clearly do not. The latter teaching most.
be standing on mine. He is, thus, two reaches above Christensen and can see farther still than either Christensen or I could. If I am one of the several foundations on which Clarke stands, I am happy to bear the weight (and the responsibility).

Not to run a metaphor into the ground, one has a choice, when standing on another’s shoulders, to select the view that is most seemly. That Clarke seems to be looking in the same direction as I was is accidental, though rewarding to me and to the memory of Christensen. Without in any way meaning to diminish Clarke’s contribution, I would like to point out that even the technique he describes has its roots elsewhere. In The Anatomy of Rhetoric (1971), there is a description of a technique for teaching the class composition which is not radically different from Clarke’s blackboard technique, though it clearly lacks some of its elements. Also, in an article in the MEXTESOL Journal (1980), Ann Strauch and I published a somewhat more elaborate version of a technique not unlike the one Clarke proposes. This is not an accusation against Clarke nor a criticism of his proposed technique; on the contrary, it is merely an expression of the Heraclitean notion that there is nothing absolutely new under the sun—that the only thing that changes is change itself.

Clarke is absolutely right; an idea, a technique, a method is only as good as its acceptance. The back corridors of science are cluttered with ideas that did not make it or that did not go far enough; even Euclidean geometry has been superseded by post-Euclidean geometry. Always, one chooses, though the choice may be constrained in various ways of which one is hardly aware. An individual may exert so powerful an influence that his or her thought is irresistible, and its acceptance shuts out other possible avenues. An idea may define itself; as Kuhn (1970) points out, intellectual paradigms tend to define the means by which their validity can be measured. Thus, while each generation stands on the shoulders of its predecessors, each generation is free to make its own choices, given the vantage point from which it sees its opportunities. History teaches us that some experiments need not be repeated; yet at some point the reiteration of a dead experiment may provide new insight. But Clarke is right. Each scholar creates a new environment, based on those shoulders on which he stands but compounded of new data and intellectual free will. Under the circumstances, “thank you” is quite sufficient.

In sum, I am cognizant of the honor Clarke has bestowed on me; I am happy to be one whose work has made some impression on him (and through him on his students), as I am happy that Christensen’s work, through me, touched him. But I do not think I deserve the honor; I have done nothing to earn it except exist. In the terms of a contemporary television commercial for a stock brokerage house, I
did not do it “the old-fashioned way.” I am reluctant to be singled out, while I still live, for such distinction. Life being what it is, I have no control over what may be inscribed on my tombstone; if guru is written there, so be it. But for the nonce, I would rather be me—teacher, student, brawler in the academic pit, talker, listener. It is not so much that I reject the honor—like tenure, I suspect, it is not mine to give away. It is a distinction I would be easier without.

This person refuses to retire to his mountain. I much prefer the Greek idea of action: To speak is to act, and speech may lead to wisdom in old age. Not being old, I continue to look forward to a time when the words I have spoken—and written—may lead me to wisdom. At this point in my life, I respectfully decline incarnation as a guru. While I will, at the least provocation, speak from any platform, I sincerely hope that those in my audience do not strain their precariously balanced notepads to record anything I say, do not scratch their pencils furiously, do not strive to capture every phrase. Rather, I hope they listen critically, take what they can use, reject the rest, and save their strength to support on their shoulders those who may wish to stand there.

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*Comments on Margie S. Berns’s Review of The Functional-Notional Approach From Theory to Practice (Mary Finocchiaro and Christopher Brumfit)*

*The Author Reacts...*

MARY FINOCCHIARO
Rome, Italy

It was with a feeling of sadness and surprise that I read Margie Berns’s review of *The Functional-Notional Approach* in the *TESOL*
Quarterly (Vol. 18, No. 2, June 1984). I considered many of the comments highly subjective and replete with misconceptions. In addition, I felt that in glossing over the strengths and uniqueness of the book, Berns revealed a lack of understanding of the goals toward which the book was written and the audience for which it was prepared.

The omissions and misrepresentations I am referring to are particularly important to readers whose only previous knowledge of notional syllabuses is based on brief articles and on Wilkins’s text, Notional Syllabuses (1976). The Wilkins book, excellent though it is, does not address issues in methodology; little mention is made, for example, of the role of grammar or of the development of reading and writing skills in classroom language learning. In short, the book is, as its title states, a syllabus—by definition, a listing of functions, notions, and topics.

Our objective, on the other hand, was to flesh out the syllabus: to add to any listing the theoretical underpinnings of a functional-notional approach, which would determine its curriculum—that is, content—and outline a methodology both flexible and precise. The text, designed to be broad in scope, would give teachers and others a feeling of security from the knowledge that no major revolution in teaching was required in order to focus the learners’ attention on “what we do with language” (12) and “the purposive nature of communication” (13).

Throughout, we emphasized the evolutionary history of any positions we would advocate and of any claims we would make. Because our field is full of conflicting and incomplete hypotheses on learning and acquisition, we felt that dogmatic statements about how learners learn might only turn readers away from an approach that does show some promise.

As noted in the Preface, the book was intended as an omnibus text, containing brief overviews of various aspects of foreign language teaching and learning, such as the evolution of language teaching during the last century in terms of the development of the Functional-Notional Approach and ongoing concern with “traditional” practices which are just becoming known in areas outside of countries like the United States and Great Britain. Of course, Hymes (1964, 1971), Kelly (1969), Gumperz and Hymes (1972), Halliday (1973), and many other works are much more complete in their discussion of different aspects of the history of language teaching and developments in the field, but most teachers and other educational personnel cannot afford to buy a number of expensive texts, even when they are available in their countries. Moreover, the language of many recent texts is too academic and formal for many non-native speakers of English, and the treatment
of concepts and issues is often too sophisticated for teachers who have never had preservice or inservice courses in the disciplines which many people all too often assume are contained in every teacher-preparation program.

The Preface underscored our belief that books about learning and teaching should be written in language which can be understood, not only by the tens of thousands of teachers of English throughout the world, but also by the lay public. Those who believe that all books on language teaching need be comprehensible to specialists only might do well to spend sometime with the teachers and in the classrooms of primary or secondary schools around the world, particularly those which have classes containing over 100 learners and which are located in places where funds for educational technology and materials are extremely limited. In short, many of Berns’s comments seem to ignore the audience for which we prepared our book and the specific needs of that audience.

There is much to react to in Berns’s review, including a rather self-serving and professionally unbecoming attitude of authority on matters relating to the functional-notional approach: for example, “for a useful discussion of these timely issues, the reader should see Berns (1984)” (328). However, since the review is more than a year old and readers of the Quarterly may be tempted not to return to it to match these comments with Berns’s assertions, I will offer a brief rebuttal to only some of the specific criticisms made by Berns:

1. One of Berns’s major criticisms is that many of the techniques and procedures we advocate “are not unique to the functional-notional approach” and that “many of the ideas presented in Chapters 3 through 9 have been taken from a previous publication by one of the authors (Finocchiaro 1969)” (326). As Berns points out, many of the more than 100 activities—oral, written, receptive, productive, reactive, and interactive—which we offer in our book are, to use our words, “time-honored tasks and activities” (165). It was our explicit intention to underscore the value of many of these activities as useful precommunicative or, in some cases, communicative exercises. We felt it was essential for teachers to recognize that the functional-notional approach builds on and modifies—rather than rejects—much of what teachers have been doing for generations. The importance of this objective has been understood by another reviewer.

All the methodological chapters provide a happy blend of “time-honored tasks and activities” (which should reassure classroom teachers about continuing to use strategies that they have found effective) and more recent strategies of a communicative and functional nature (which may
encourage teachers to try out different approaches in their classes) (Knop 1984:272).

2. Berns finds our use of the terms *approach, curriculum, methodology,* and *method*—terms which she says are used “interchangeably” (327)—problematic. In fact, we have attempted to follow the definitions of these terms which have been suggested by Anthony (1963) and modified by Celce-Murcia (1980, 1981) and which have been widely accepted by the profession for more than two decades. An approach is based on concepts from the relevant sciences, that is, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. These underlie the content of the curriculum, which in turn may influence many facets of methodology. Methodology includes techniques, strategies, and activities for in- and out-of-class use which will be effective in motivating students and in presenting and practicing integrated functional-situational-structural and notional content. The curriculum also contains criteria for the evaluation of learner progress in harmony with the language policy of the country, the learners’ age and developmental level, their learning environment, their immediate and future communicative needs, and their individual potential.

Parenthetically, it is important to note that an approach, which arises from principles within the sciences, can give rise to a number of methodologies. For example, humanistic philosophy underlies not only the functional-notional curriculum and methodology, but also others in some use today, including Community Language Learning and the Natural Approach.

3. Berns asserts that because we have included, as part of the repertoire of classroom practices which teachers should feel free to use to develop their students’ communicative skills, activities and techniques which were once advocated by audiolingualism, our book is “curiously anachronistic” (327). To support that position, she points out that we use the term *mastery* at several points. This excessively narrow concern with terminology has blinded Berns to the fact that our use of these terms is altogether different from their use in audiolingualism. Far from advocating one-time over-learning, or mastery, of the structural elements of the target language—which was central to the audiolingual method—we argue precisely the opposite namely, that the functional-notional approach does not insist upon total mastery of any body of material when it is presented. A spiral, expandable curriculum is envisaged so that grammatical and topical or cultural materials can be studied in greater depth whenever relevant during the course (18).
4. Berns claims that in saying that “aspects of culture (customs, mores, taboos, rituals, art forms) are taught incidentally [italics added] as they arise in a dialog or reading passage” (128), we have somehow undermined the view that “the speaker’s cultural background plays [a role] in determining the appropriateness of linguistic structures and lexical items selected to realize a function” (328). Berns has apparently overlooked the fact that in several places in our book, we stress the importance of explicit reference to sociocultural contexts:

The explanation of cultural insights should be both “incidental” and “systematic” (129).

Parts of messages in oral and written communication are misunderstood or given false values due to the fact that sociocultural experiences have not been shared by listener or speaker, or writer and reader. . . Nor is cultural immersion—simply living in the target country—enough to overcome the gap. . . Explicit information will be needed especially if the newcomers to the target country live and work in areas where they will continue to hear their native language/dialect (26–27).

In other languages, fixed formulas also exist but not necessarily in the same social situation. For example in Italian, we use the informal, “Ciao,” both for greetings and leavetaking; in Turkish, the host or hostess uses one fixed formula and the guest who is leaving uses another (14-15).

While I deplore the typographical errors and any minor misrepresentations of fact that are inevitable in the production of a text, I feel very strongly that The Functional-Notional Approach is a comprehensive and comprehensible text which will be useful to many readers. Theoretical bases are exemplified in charts and analyses; there are clear listings of learners’ needs, a sample curriculum, examples of functions and notions in units and in modules, activities which can be used anywhere, and suggestions on dividing text units into lessons; attention is given to reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities, as well as to procedures for simple evaluation. The value of these features of the book is emphasized in two reviews (Gotebiowska 1984 and Knop 1984), as well as by the fact that the book is currently being translated into Japanese.

Berns ignores all of these points, along with several others—for example, a discussion of the merits of a unit-credit system. Perhaps more important, she ignores our concluding statements, which invite other teachers and researchers to make their own attempts to integrate all the interlocking facets of a functional-notional approach into a workable curriculum for learners at various developmental levels learning different foreign or second languages in countries anywhere.
REFERENCES


The Reviewer Responds.

MARGIE S. BERNS
University of Florida

Discussions of recent research in the areas of reading and writing have emphasized the significant role of readers’ and writers’ social and cultural background in the expression and interpretation of meaning. The full impact of the depth and range of such sociocultural influences is realized when a reader shares neither a writer’s experiences nor the views and attitudes they shape. An author should therefore not be surprised that a reader’s perspectives differ from those expressed in the text he or she has written or that a reader may wish to react by articulating an alternative viewpoint in a critique of an author’s work. In expressing this viewpoint, the reader-turned-reviewer offers other readers an opportunity to consider another frame of reference and perspective on an issue. The life and growth of ideas depend on this interaction of readers with texts and ultimately, through the text, with the writer.
Any vital discipline benefits from the wealth of experience and insights generated by the interaction of its scholars, researchers, and practitioners. The field of English language teaching is presently undergoing considerable re-evaluation in response to changes in the forms and uses of the language itself, in the attitudes of teachers and learners toward the language, and in the contexts and situations for learning and teaching. Like other fields, this one, too, needs discussion and debate of central issues. The sharing of viewpoints and the negotiation of means and ends by those involved in the process of learning and teaching are essential if our professional responsibilities are to be met directly and with all the resources at our disposal.

Among these resources are the very language teaching professionals who are intimately involved with teaching and/or program development and evaluation. It is to their credit and to the benefit of the profession that they have not been content with yesterday’s models and proposals but, rather, have taken the initiative to make solutions fit the problems, and not the other way around. Upon careful reappraisal of their situation and the means currently available to address it, they have opted for an alternative view of language and language teaching, one that seeks to establish meaning, rather than form, as the basis for materials development, curriculum design, and evaluation. Accounts (e.g., Piepho 1979, Candlin 1981, Savignon and Berns 1984, in press, Mohan 1986) of such initiatives illustrate ongoing developments in teaching and evaluation which are being led by primary, secondary, and university language teaching professionals in Europe and in North and South America. Together, they are representative of trends in communicative language teaching that have evolved since the publication of Wilkins’s *Notional Syllabuses* in 1976.

It is primarily on the basis of my familiarity with these initiatives and my international experience as a linguist, teacher, and teacher trainer that I was prompted to take issue in my review with the views expressed by Finocchiaro and Brumfit in *The Notional-Functional Approach: From Theory to Practice*. In her response, Finocchiaro has addressed a number of points that I raised in my review. In the remarks that follow, I will focus on methodological and theoretical concerns, as these are germane to the central criticisms expressed in my review.

As Finocchiaro has pointed out, one of my major criticisms concerned the inclusion of so many activities and tasks that have come to be associated with the audiolingual method of language teaching. The potential usefulness of these activities and tasks in the communicative classroom was not at issue in my review. Rather, my concern was with the implications of the authors’ reliance on viewpoints and
concepts (e.g., *mastery* and *control*) consonant with audiolingualism and not consistent with the overall philosophy of communicative language teaching. The authors appear to endorse the latter philosophy, since they claim that communicative competence is the goal of a notional-functional approach (xv, 171, 187). As I stated in my review, in communicative language teaching, as it has come to be understood among internationally recognized scholars actively involved in language teaching and evaluation (e.g., Piepho 1979, Candlin 1981, Kramsch 1981, Raimes 1983, Savignon 1983), the development of learners’ communicative competence is not evaluated in terms of mastery or control. Rather, this development is recognized as variable and dependent on the learners’ abilities, attitudes, and rates of learning, as well as on their purposes in learning the language and the varying degrees of competence required for these purposes.

Recent studies (Raimes 1983, Ruiz in press) describe how many so-called communicative and functional language teaching materials do little more than offer new labels for old concepts or append allegedly “precommunicative” and communicative activities to language teaching units consisting chiefly of drills and contrived dialogues. As discussions of these materials emphasize, a new approach to language teaching implies new methods and techniques consistent with the principles and assumptions underlying the new approach. If the approach is truly new, this further implies a rejection of some assumptions associated with the previous approach. These implications contradict the claim Finocchiaro makes in her comments that no major revolution in language teaching is required to focus learners’ attention on what we do with language.

In addition to criticizing the authors’ views on classroom tasks and activities, I also expressed concern in my review about the inadequacy of their treatment of important conceptual, methodological, and theoretical issues. Their objective of adding theoretical underpinnings and methodology to the lists of functions, notions, and topics offered by Wilkins (1976) is well-chosen. However, since 1976 a number of insights and perspectives on developments in functional syllabus design, functional approaches, and the role of functional linguistics in language teaching have been offered by applied linguists, methodologists, and classroom teachers. Failure to take these into account can only lead to a narrow and misleading view of the nature of the notional-functional approach. In addition, an inaccurate and limited view can only generate misconceptions about such central issues as the relationship of this approach to functional approaches to linguistics, the nature of classroom techniques and procedures that can help learners develop the ability to use their new language appropriately,
and the meaning of *function* and *notion*—the very concepts upon which this approach to language teaching rests.

An understanding of these concepts properly begins with a consideration of the linguistic tradition with which they are associated. This tradition, variously referred to as British linguistics, the London School, or Firthian linguistics, is concerned with the use (function) of language in context, be it linguistic, social, or cultural. The potential of this tradition for language teaching extends beyond lending the term *function* to our pedagogical vocabulary. Language teaching has much to gain if it moves beyond a narrow concern with a concept that has become trivialized and virtually meaningless as a result of inaccurate use and misinterpretation of its original meanings and its implications for language teaching. The concept of function, when understood as “inviting,” “apologizing,” and so on, actually plays a minor role in the overall description of language as function:

It is obvious that language is used in a multitude of different ways, for a multitude of different purposes. It is not possible to enumerate them; nor is it necessary to try there would be no way of preferring one list over another. These various ways of using language are sometimes referred to as “functions of language.” But to say language has many “functions,” in this sense, is to say no more than that people engage in a variety of social actions—that they do different things together (Halliday 1978:186–187).

A more meaningful basis for establishing a communicative syllabus and curriculum is the view of language which informs our understanding of function, that is, a view of language as a social phenomenon rooted in the culture and society of its speakers and their speech communities. My own research of functional linguistics as a theoretical framework for communicative approaches (Berns 1984, 1985) has led me to see that a view of language as an institution determined by and used in social and cultural contexts can provide for limitless variety and pluralism in proposals and models for communicative syllabuses, materials, curricula, and programs. Furthermore, these possibilities allow for the interweaving of social, cultural, and political threads in the warp and weft of the contexts in which languages are used, taught, and learned.

This interweaving has been achieved in Germany, for example, by language teaching specialists who have looked at the challenges posed by mixed-ability classes and who have sought to develop a form of teaching that sees learning in heterogeneous groups as a process of communication. With such groups, they have demonstrated that competence in a language is not absolute and that a uniform level of language ability is neither possible nor necessary among learners whose needs for language competence are not the same (Edelhoff 1983).
Japanese firms, for example, Kobe Steel, have long recognized English as a tool for international business and employ language teaching professionals to provide teaching materials and methods that are responsive to learners’ cultural and social, as well as linguistic, needs in the realm of international business (Baird and Heyneman 1982).

In Egypt, resistance to the English language and the cultures with which it is associated poses a need for reassessment of language attitudes on the part of both teachers and learners and a need for a curriculum and methodology that will enable learners to develop a competence in English that will be their own, for their own purposes, not the purposes of American or British native speakers of English (Lizabeth England, personal communication).

In Brazil, sociocultural realities of English language learning, such as contact with culture-specific concepts and phenomena and cultural values characteristic of people who use English, have led to a rethinking of English language pedagogy and a search for a language teaching methodology “that would promote critical thinking through cross-cultural contrast and comparison” (Busnardo and Braga in press).

In India, goals for English language teaching have been redefined as a result of the need for approaches and methodology that do not stress the literary and formal content and rote learning of traditional approaches. This need reflects increased demand for the learning of English as a tool of communication intranationally and internationall (Sridhar 1982).

In referring to functional linguistic theories in general and to the British tradition as represented in the work of Halliday in particular, I have emphasized the interactive nature of language use. While interaction and communication are familiar and accessible concepts, they have implications for language teaching which must be carefully considered. Each of these terms implies a two-way process in which misunderstanding or misinterpretation, as well as comprehension or interpretation, whether genuine or feigned, can occur.

It is certainly true that “parts of messages in oral or written communication are misunderstood or given false values due to the fact that sociocultural experiences have not been shared by listener and speaker, or writer and reader”(26). However, acknowledgment of this fact does not guarantee that its implications are fully realized and applied to language teaching. If, as the authors appear to agree, language use is essentially a social phenomenon, that is, an institution that serves purposes of human beings as social beings, and if the forms and functions of language have developed from the role language serves as an instrument of society, it follows that the teaching of a language should have as its very cornerstone a perspective of
language consistent with the relationship between language, culture, and society.

These insights on communication imply a broad view of culture, one which does not limit classroom techniques for development of cultural insights to a concern with the teaching of cultural items such as eating habits and holidays, as Finocchiaro and Brumfit’s treatment of culture suggests (128–132). While an awareness of such aspects of culture may be relevant in a few teaching contexts, such knowledge is of little importance for the large number of learners for whom English is a second language or who are unlikely to visit England, the United States, or any other country in which there is a large community of native speakers of English. Examples of such learners in the latter category are Indian or Zimbabwean children, for whom competence in English is nonetheless essential for employment within their own country.

Differences in the attitudes held about language can even suggest a valuable basis for developing cultural insights and an appreciation of the sources of cross-cultural misunderstandings (Busnardo and Braga in press). An example is the difference of ideas on language described by one Japanese observer:

For the European peoples language is the most important, and often the sole, means of communication, and through the medium of language they try to convey their thoughts and feelings as precisely as possible . . . Yet for the Japanese, language is merely a means of social and cultural communication . . . Together with atmosphere, attitudes and so on, language is no more than one of the tools to give a suggestion with (Otani 1978:119).

Related insights are offered in studies of world cultures (e.g., Saville-Troike 1982, Berns 1983, Chishimba 1983, Clyne 1983, Kachru 1983, Pandharipande 1983, Nelson 1984). These studies have demonstrated that culture is hardly incidental to language learning and use and that sociocultural norms of speech communities play a crucial role in the construction and interpretation of texts. Concepts such as the social and cultural basis of language use and development are not only within the capabilities of teachers (wherever they may find themselves) to understand and interpret; they also become essential in the evolution of a given teaching framework. Teachers from Europe, Asia, Africa, South and North America, and Australia with whom I have worked have repeatedly responded to this perspective on language, finding it a valuable frame of reference for addressing the unique problems posed by their own teaching situations.

Thus far, I have focused on the contributions of teachers, applied linguists, and methodologists whose ideas are available in the literature. No less valuable as a resource in the definition of goals and in the
negotiation of means for achieving a variety of teaching objectives are those teachers who are sure neither about what communicative language teaching is nor about how the goal of communicative competence can be met in their teaching contexts.

In a book that purports to guide such teachers trying to understand both the how and the what of communicative competence and that ultimately attempts to school them in how language teaching can be approached in notional-functional terms, a reader expects consistency in the use of such terms as approach, method, and technique. Likewise, one expects consistent and principled use of the terms syllabus and curriculum, especially in light of the pains taken in the recent literature to avoid the confusion in terminology that can result from differences in British and American usage.

Finocchiaro states that she and Brumfit “have attempted to follow the definitions of these terms which have been suggested by Anthony (1963)...” It is unfortunate that they have been unsuccessful, given the careful scholarship evident in Anthony’s delineation. In my review, I noted one instance of the interchangeable use of approach and curriculum: “An F-N [Functional-Notional] curriculum, like many approaches before it” (27). Additional examples include: “An F-N curriculum, as is true of other humanistic approaches” (27) and “this does not apply more to the F-N curriculum than to other approaches” (43). Although the authors do offer definitions of syllabus and curriculum that distinguish one from the other (49), elsewhere these terms have also been used interchangeably, as in “the F-N curriculum differs from a structural or situational syllabus in several respects(40)”.

Such contradictions and inconsistencies can be attributed primarily to the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical inadequacies of the authors’ discussion of functional linguistics and language teaching. An additional source of the confusion generated by the text may well have been the authors’ desire to avoid the use of language that is “too academic and formal” and thus to make their discussion accessible to a large number of non-native speakers. To make such an effort is admirable, but simplification at the expense of clarity and accuracy in the treatment of such complex issues does a disservice to native and non-native speakers alike.

As indicated in my review, my experiences as a teacher and researcher have made me keenly aware of the need for a clear, concise, and comprehensive presentation of a rationale for a functional approach to language teaching. However, to be useful, such a discussion should be not only readable, but also theoretically and methodologically sound. Dedicated and knowledgeable language teaching professionals around the world deserve no less.
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