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Editor's Note

Effective with the March 1986 issue, the TESOL Quarterly will be edited in conformity with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (Third Edition). This change, which has been endorsed by the TESOL Publications Committee and approved by the Executive Board, will make the editorial style of the Quarterly consistent with that of a large number of other journals in education. We hope that the change will stimulate contributions to the Quarterly from colleagues in related fields and provide all potential contributors with a much more comprehensive set of guidelines for the preparation of manuscripts than has previously been possible.

All manuscripts submitted to the Quarterly after January 1, 1986, should be prepared in conformity with APA editorial style. TESOL members in the United States and Canada will find the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (Third Edition) in most libraries and bookstores. For the convenience of TESOL members, the TESOL Central Office has agreed to maintain a supply of copies of the Publication Manual, which will be sold on a prepayment basis only at the cost of $16.50. TESOL members who wish to obtain a copy of the Publication Manual through the TESOL Central Office should send a U.S. Postal Money Order, a check drawn on a U.S. bank, or a foreign bank draft on a U.S. bank in the amount of $16.50 to the TESOL Central Office, 201 D.C. Transit Building, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057, U.S.A.

Also effective with the March 1986 issue, the Quarterly will begin listing in the Contents contributions to the Brief Reports and Summaries section and The Forum. In this way, we can acknowledge more appropriately the contributions which we hope our readers will continue making to these sections of the Quarterly.

The Quarterly will soon be entering its twentieth year of publication. We look forward to this milestone with the hope that our readers will continue to react to our efforts to address the range of our professional interests.
In This Issue

This issue of the TESOL Quarterly contains articles with important implications for ESOL course design and classroom practice. In different ways, each article brings together several strands of research and critical thought and offers a new perspective on issues and practices in our field. Readers will find thought-provoking discussion of a variety of issues in second language teaching and learning, including self-assessment in placement testing, the role of ESL in bilingual education and in refugee resettlement, and the teaching of grammar, reading, writing, and listening skills.

- Asserting that for a variety of reasons, “the role of ESL in bilingual education has frequently been misunderstood,” Robert Milk reviews recent research on bilingual education and ESL to show that “the most efficient way to implement effective ESL instruction in the context of a bilingual classroom might be to integrate that instruction into ongoing development of the regular curriculum”—a practice which, as Milk points out, has been taking place in many quality bilingual education programs for several years. Implications of these findings for teacher preparation programs are discussed.

- Raymond LeBlanc and Gisele Painchaud describe a three-stage investigation which explored the feasibility of learner self-assessment in language program placement. The authors contend that self-assessment, which is widely used in psychology, sociology, and business, has been underutilized in language programs. They report that the use of a self-assessment instrument which they developed—a 60-item questionnaire in which subjects choose, for each item, the one statement out of five which best describes their functional language ability—resulted in fewer changes from initial placement in six-level programs in English/French as a second language than had taken place the previous year, when conventional proficiency tests were used for placement.

- Building on research which has shown that field-independence—that is, the tendency to differentiate objects from their surroundings—is related to success in second language classrooms in which deductive learning is emphasized, the study reported in Roberta Abraham’s article sought to discover whether less rule-oriented teaching might prove beneficial to field-dependent students in learning one particular grammatical structure—participial phrases. Teaching in the study was done by means of two computer-assisted instruction lessons; one lesson took a traditional deductive approach, while the other presented many examples of participial phrases in context. Abraham’s findings offer preliminary evidence that for field-dependent students, less rule-oriented teaching may be a useful alternative to the conventional practice of teaching grammar deductively.
• Ruth Spack discusses the resurgence of interest in the role of literature in ESL programs and argues that “ESL students have much to gain when literature is the reading content of the composition course and the subject matter for their compositions.” She describes a one-semester literature and composition course for ESL college freshmen in which students write literary analyses of the short fiction which they are first assigned to read and then discuss in class. Such a course, Spack writes, helps students to “understand better why and how writers write” and “to depend on their own powers of analysis.”

• Patricia Carrell describes a controlled study of the effect of explicit training on text structure on ESL reading comprehension. After summarizing research on the role that familiarity with text structure plays in reading ability, Carrell reviews research on the effect of explicit teaching of text structure in first language reading and points out the need for comparable research in second language reading. Carrell’s study found that explicit, overt teaching about the top-level rhetorical organization of texts can facilitate ESL students’ reading comprehension, as measured by the ability to recall major topics, subtopics, and supporting detail. These results thus provide preliminary evidence to confirm the value of the overt teaching about text structure which many teachers already incorporate into ESL reading lessons. Carrell cautions, however, that such training should be seen only as “one part of a comprehensive instructional program in reading,” that it must “occur in conjunction with helping students, in a number of ways, to acquire meaning from text.”

• James Tollefson summarizes the major findings of research since 1980 on Southeast Asian refugee resettlement in the United States. Arguing that studies of refugees’ adjustment and continuing needs provide the kind of information necessary to help refugee programs better serve the individuals who participate in them, Tollefson discusses the implications of research in five areas: the role of ESL in resettlement, the special challenge posed by nonliterate adult refugees, employment and pre-employment training, cultural orientation, and health issues. According to Tollefson, five years of research on refugee resettlement underscore very forcefully both “the overwhelming importance of learning English and the need for classroom study to accomplish this” and the desirability of organizing classroom instruction “to help students discover their own ability to communicate successfully in English.”

• Mary Call reports the findings of a study which examined the relationship between auditory short-term memory and listening skill. Call’s research on the contribution of short-term memory for each of five types of auditory input to differences in performance on a test of listening comprehension revealed that memory for syntactically arranged words was the best predictor of test performance. The author concludes from these findings that students might “benefit from a formal introduction
to the syntactic structures of the target language, taught at first for recognition, so that they could use this knowledge to process input more efficiently." What is needed, Call asserts, is “a listening curriculum that includes aspects of both formal learning and informal acquisition.”

Also in this issue:

● Review

● Brief Reports and Summaries

● The Forum: Brent Bridgeman comments on Kyle Perkins and Barbara Jones’s article, “Measuring Passage Contribution in ESL Reading Comprehension,” and the authors respond; and Bernard Choseed comments on Thomas W. Adams’s review of Rogova’s Methods of Teaching English.

Stephen J. Gaies
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The Changing Role of ESL in Bilingual Education

ROBERT D. MILK
The University of Texas at San Antonio

The role of ESL in bilingual education has frequently been misunderstood, sometimes because of nonpedagogical issues and sometimes as a result of our inadequate understanding of how second language development can best be achieved in bilingual classrooms. This article reviews recent research in two separate areas, bilingual education and ESL, in an attempt to arrive at some generalizations about what characterizes effective bilingual and ESL instruction. The bilingual education research literature is finding support for an “integrative approach” to second language development, with classroom applications focusing on grouping strategies that allow children to receive appropriate input in the second language. These findings complement current views on ESL teaching that stress proficiency in speaking and writing as outcome goals and that conceptualize instruction in terms of developing communicative competence. Given the essential interrelatedness between second language development and other curricular goals, the conventional conceptualization of ESL as an isolated element within bilingual programs is challenged. Implications for bilingual teacher preparation, where ESL and content-area instruction are often dealt with separately, are also examined.

INTRODUCTION

Disagreements regarding the appropriate role for ESL in bilingual education have generated considerable conflict over the past 15 years, much of it taking place at the practitioner level, where individuals with competing interests must sometimes work side by side. A careful examination of the context within which specialists from these two areas operate offers numerous possible explanations for the palpable strain that currently exists and has existed for a number of years, such as 1) different background variables for the teachers (including, in many instances, ethnicity); 2) different areas of specialization (e.g., linguistics versus curriculum and instruction); 3) differing philosophical orientations toward the phenomenon of cultural pluralism in our society; and 4) a
different level of emotional commitment to such fundamental issues as the use of the home language as an integral part of the child’s educational experiences.

Despite these real and significant differences, a strong argument can be made that the role of ESL in bilingual education need not, in fact, be conflictual. Simply stated, at the most fundamental levels of educational policy, ESL and bilingual education professionals share certain insights regarding the education of language minority children that place them firmly in the same camp. In the first place, daily contact with language and cultural minority students often leads them to challenge the common perception that a similar educational treatment can adequately meet the needs of all children. Many contemporary models of public schooling in the United States are founded on an ill-conceived supposition that “one best system” will optimally serve the needs of all schoolchildren (see Tyack 1974). The inadequacy of such a model, which assumes that instruction and materials designed for “average, typical” students (i.e., white, middle class schoolchildren) can serve as the norm for all children, is immediately evident to teachers responsible for the education of children who are not fully proficient in English. Both ESL and bilingual education teachers are in a position to observe firsthand the extent to which this widely held assumption is damaging to the educational interests of their students.

Second, and more significant, recent research in ESL and bilingual education, proceeding along quite independent lines and motivated by a completely different set of questions, has been arriving at similar conclusions about second language learning in a classroom context. This article examines recent research into what constitutes effective bilingual and ESL teaching for language minority children and then attempts to identify common conclusions that have been reached in each field. Out of these conclusions arises a deep concern that our currently polarized conceptualization of ESL in bilingual education leads inadvertently to a high degree of confusion as well as to serious misapplications in our classrooms. The implications of these observations for teacher training are discussed, and concrete suggestions are offered for improving the preparation of teachers serving limited English proficient (LEP) children.

1 Although the issues raised in this article are relevant to all levels of ESL teaching in the public schools, the primary focus is on bilingual education at the elementary-school level. Moreover, although there is tremendous diversity in bilingual education programs in the United States, I am assuming in this article that bilingual education implies, at the very least, some use of a non-English home language as a medium of instruction in the classroom. A commonly cited definition is that bilingual education involves “the use of two languages, one of which is English, as mediums of Instruction for the same pupil population in a well-organized program which encompasses part or all of the curriculum and includes the study of the history and culture associated with the mother tongue” (U.S. Office of Education 1971:1).
EFFECTIVE BILINGUAL TEACHING

Over the past five years, a massive amount of research, generated by Part C of the 1978 amendments to the Bilingual Education Act of 1978, has been undertaken at a number of different sites across the country. A portion of this research has focused primarily on policy issues and on information-gathering activities, but an important segment of the overall research plan has involved an in-depth examination of bilingual instruction. The fundamental question that has motivated this research is, Do certain features seem to characterize effective bilingual instruction in different settings? The strategy for addressing this question has been to identify classrooms at different U.S. locales where bilingual teaching has led to successful outcomes and then to investigate closely the instructional features that seem to characterize each classroom. The researchers’ task has been to search for significant commonalities in successful bilingual instruction, regardless of the differences in such variables as teacher personality and background, students’ home language, and geographical location of the program.

These studies have yielded a number of interesting results. Among the “significant bilingual instructional features” (SBIF) identified have been 1) use of “active teaching” behaviors that result in high accumulation of Academic Learning Time (ALT) for the students; 2) both responding to and actively using “cultural referents” from the LEP students’ home culture during instruction; 3) use of two languages to mediate instruction; and 4) integration of English language development with regular in-class instruction (Tikunoff 1983a).

This latter feature is particularly relevant to a discussion of ESL in bilingual education. An ongoing debate has revolved around the issue of whether the ESL component should be delivered through an “integrative” approach or as a separate “pullout,” or “isolated,” approach. In the latter case, the focus is exclusively on ESL, and LEP students leave the regular instructional setting to receive their English lessons.2 One of the outcomes of the SBIF studies has been to affirm the apparent effectiveness of an “integrative language development approach” within which teachers “integrated English-language development with regular basic skills instruction” (Tikunoff 1983b:29).

---

2 Pullout ESL programs have often been developed in schools where students come from a number of different language backgrounds or where there is only a small number of LEP students—that is, in settings where bilingual programs are difficult to implement. Criticisms of pullout programs center on three concerns: 1) The LEP students may be missing important concept development during the time they are absent from the regular classroom; 2) there may be a damaging stigma attached to being pulled out of class, since this tends to signify the presence of some kind of problem in the eyes of students; and 3) an ESL component conceived exclusively in terms of pullout instruction may not be sufficient to meet the needs of most LEP students, as there may be an additional need for second language development to be taking place during regular content-area instruction.
The Integrative Language Development Approach

The notion of integrating ESL into regular subject-matter instruction is not a new one. An important argument in earlier rationales for bilingual education was that bilingual instruction allowed the second language to be developed naturally as a vehicle for learning and communication, instead of being artificially focused on as an object of study (Macnamara 1977). Subsequent research-based arguments have contended that ESL needs to be conceptualized in connection with subject-matter instruction (Widdowson 1978, Kessler and Quinn 1981, Penfield and Ornstein-Galicia 1982). The actual label used in reporting the SBIF findings—“integrative approach” (Tikunoff 1983b:30)—is not, however, widely used in the ESL literature. It seems that the label refers specifically to a phenomenon that appeared with some frequency in the voluminous SBIF data set and is not intended to refer to an approach previously described and discussed in the literature on second language teaching. In the ESL literature, the term content-based ESL (Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares 1985:17) appears to refer to an approach highly similar to the instructional strategy described in the SBIF data.

Exactly what is implied, then, by an “integrative language development approach” in the context of bilingual education? Tikunoff (1983b:29-30) describes it in the following terms:

This integrative approach [involves] developing English-language acquisition during on-going instruction in the regular classroom . . . Students learn the language of instruction when engaged in classroom instructional tasks using that language. Thus, if one intended outcome of bilingual instruction is to develop LEP students’ English proficiency . . . then such proficiency is best developed in relation to learning the language of instruction while learning to participate competently in instructional activity.

According to this conceptualization, then, the first element of an integrative language development approach (ILDA) is the integration of second language instruction into the ongoing development of the curriculum. If this strategy is to generate the appropriate kind of language input for LEP students to learn English, however, an additional element must be present—the classroom must be organized to enable learners to obtain the kind of linguistic input that will stimulate second language acquisition (Milk 1982, Wong Fillmore 1982, Johnson 1983).

3 In some programs, this means English; in others, it may mean both English and a non-English home language.
Although the first element in this conceptualization of ILDA has been discussed by a number of authors (Cantieni and Tremblay 1969, Jacobson 1979, Kessler and Quinn 1981, Fillion and Wright 1982), the second element, heterogeneous grouping, has not been dealt with systematically in the literature. What little we do know has been derived from empirical studies relating to the interpersonal and intergroup dynamics for interaction in bilingual classrooms.

In her study of child/child interaction between Chicano Spanish-speaking and Anglo English-speaking elementary children, Johnson (1983) found that structured, inter-ethnolinguistic peer-tutoring sessions that focused on natural language practice in the target language led to significant increases in vocabulary comprehension for LEP children. Because young children vary greatly in their ability to establish and maintain social contact with peers who can provide them with the necessary input for second language acquisition, we find tremendous individual differences in the amount of time required by children to acquire a second language informally in a natural setting (Wong Fillmore 1976). Based on findings from her experimental study, Johnson argues that “some learners may need assistance in gaining access to input and creating opportunities for practice” (1983:57).

The treatment sessions developed for Johnson’s experiment involved peer teaching activities in areas such as cooking, science, or art, with the LEP students functioning as tutors for the monolingual Anglo students. The interfactional techniques in these sessions were carefully selected for their potential to provide a structured setting for a meaningful, natural exchange of information between the tutoring partners. These techniques provide one example of the kind of structured natural language practice that can yield positive gains in a student’s second language.

The issue of adequate input for second language acquisition in bilingual classrooms was addressed more directly in a second study (Milk 1980). This study examined in depth the language use patterns that emerge spontaneously in bilingual classrooms where students are consistently grouped according to language dominance. Findings showed that homogeneous grouping leads to relatively little use of the weaker language for communication purposes. Moreover, the grouping strategies used by teachers mitigated against meaningful interaction in the weaker language and consequently worked against the students’ obtaining appropriate input for second language development. In addition, group setting was found to have a very strong effect on the students’ language use, with small-group settings, not surprisingly, providing a remarkably rich environment for language development.
The groups of students in both of these studies were characterized by a certain degree of heterogeneity in their relative language proficiency, with some of the children more proficient in English and others more proficient in Spanish. In many instances, however, such heterogeneity is not present, and fluent English speakers are not available as interaction partners for LEP students. Wong Fillmore (1982) points out that in these situations, the more traditional means of organizing classrooms (i.e., with the teacher actively directing the instructional activity for the whole group) may be the only means available for LEP children to receive adequate linguistic input in their weaker language. In settings where heterogeneity does exist, however, learner-centered organization of the classroom, whereby instruction is accomplished in large measure through student-student interaction, seems to generate a significant quantity of linguistic input for second language learners (Wong Fillmore 1982).

The common-sense appeal of this argument is quite strong from a second language learning perspective. But heterogeneous grouping strategies, upon closer examination, are much more complex to implement than might be initially assumed. Miller makes this point very effectively when he emphasizes that teachers must ensure that interaction takes place among students from different language backgrounds:

There are strong indications that non-English speakers profit from having classmates who are native-speakers of English. But, as our examination of these classrooms has shown us, it is not enough simply to have English-speakers in the same classroom; teachers have to create opportunities for interaction between the language learners and target language speakers. This calls for teacher awareness of individual differences in likes and dislikes among the students, and a kind of deliberate matching of children in order to increase the likelihood of interaction. Pairing children who can draw each other out, and who complement one another socially may be a key to language learning (1983:7).

From these studies, one can draw two important conclusions regarding language development in bilingual classrooms: 1) Appropriate input for second language development will not automatically be generated in bilingual classrooms, for a number of reasons, and 2) classroom management strategies that emphasize heterogeneous clustering of students into small problem-solving groups appear to provide an exceptionally rich potential for second language development.

On the face of it, these two points appear to contradict one another, for the desirability of setting up heterogeneous groups to pursue second language development goals during instruction is frequently
offset by social reality. Educators must frequently deal with certain external, socially created obstacles to natural interaction between children from different ethnic groups or between children who, despite being from the same language group, have different language dominance profiles. (An example of this phenomenon is provided by those schools in the Southwest where Chicanos and “Mexicanos” do not interact freely.) Hence, the dilemma: Although there is a potentially effective pedagogical strategy that would provide optimal input for second language development, critical social obstacles appear to inhibit the implementation of this strategy.

One means of addressing this dilemma is provided by the extensive research on cooperative learning by Cohen (1972) and a number of her associates over the past 15 years. Through this research, Cohen has demonstrated the need for teachers to create classroom climates that permit students to overcome socially determined obstacles to interaction. Research on cooperative learning in desegregated schools emphasizes the need for activities that directly promote prosocial interaction in heterogeneous groups (Sharan, Kussel, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Bejarano, Raviv, and Sharan 1984).

To summarize, two elements appear to be critical for conceptualizing an integrative language development approach in bilingual education: 1) the integration of second language development into regular content-area instruction and 2) the creation of classroom conditions which will enable pupils to receive the kind of input in the second language that will stimulate acquisition. As noted, there are a number of reasons why these two elements tend not to co-exist in bilingual classrooms, although cooperative learning in heterogeneous small-group settings may provide an optimal model for conceptualizing an acquisition-rich language environment for LEP children in bilingual education.

A concrete example of an instructional strategy consistent with this conceptualization of ILDA is provided by the Finding Out/Descubrimiento (FO/D) curriculum (Wilson, De Avila, and Intili 1982, De Avila and Duncan 1984), which has been effectively implemented in a number of bilingual classrooms. FO/D, which is designed around a math/science curriculum that stresses thinking skills, includes a large number of multiple learning-center activities for groups ranging from two to five students. The activities, which stress basic intellectual skills, are intrinsically interesting and are tied to traditional conceptions of academic achievement. They are constructed to minimize the importance of language differences:

By presenting the activities in two languages, making them accessible to all students, they help facilitate a great deal of discussion between students
of different linguistic backgrounds. This increased verbal interaction will hopefully facilitate oral language development for both native and limited English speakers alike (Wilson, De Avila, and Intili 1982:5).

In a research study (Wilson, De Avila, and Intili 1982) which examined the implementation of this curriculum in nine bilingual classrooms containing students from heterogeneous language proficiency backgrounds, a number of positive gains were reported. What is particularly interesting is that although the curriculum focuses on academic skills and cognitive development, important gains in language proficiency were observed. According to the investigators, this was accomplished “by giving students ample opportunity. . . to practice oral language through the medium of talking and working together” (22–23). Moreover, the investigators stress that by organizing the classroom so that children have the opportunity to talk with each other while engaged in active learning, “linguistic heterogeneity acts as an important learning resource. Children with limited proficiency in English gain the chance to practice speaking about schoolwork in an informal, peer context with proficient English speakers” (23).

An important common thread that characterizes both the SBIF and the FO/D research is that in addition to stressing language development goals during regular content-area instruction, these two approaches incorporate both of the languages of the classroom into the concept-teaching part of the curriculum. From the perspective of the FO/D researchers, this characteristic is of critical importance in enabling language proficiency gains to be a by-product of group-based problem-solving activities, for it ensures that language itself never becomes the primary focus of the instructional process during this portion of the school day:

By providing simultaneous access to both languages, children who are “limited” in one or another language are able to use what verbal skill they do have to acquire needed concepts which, in turn, they are able to express in either language. What seems to be critical to the process is that all of these elements be allowed to interact simultaneously . . . In summary, the bilingual character of the curriculum and the access to English speakers are both conditions for the language gains of less proficient English speakers (Wilson, De Avila, and Intili 1982:23–24).

In my view, this conceptualization of second language development as an integral part of regular content-area instruction, combined with conscious strategies on the part of teachers for promoting adequate input in the weaker language(s) during the instructional process, are the necessary defining characteristics for an integrative language development approach to bilingual education.
EFFECTIVE ESL INSTRUCTION

The primary intent of the SBIF research summarized in the previous section was to identify important variables that appear to characterize effective bilingual instruction. Within the ESL professional literature, there has been a parallel concern in recent years with what features might characterize effective ESL teaching. Although there is clearly no consensus on this issue and several possible answers could legitimately be offered, a number of trends, some of them empirically based and others not, might provide a preliminary answer.

One term that appears, in much of the recent literature, to represent a shifting focus in both goals and techniques for ESL instruction is communicative language teaching (see Stern 1983: 111–114). This approach to second language teaching, which strives to develop communicative competence in the learner, draws heavily on theoretical insights derived from such diverse areas as the ethnography of communication, discourse analysis, and speech act theory. Stressing language use rather than simply usage and focusing on proficiency rather than metalinguistics skills as the primary goal, many contemporary language teaching theorists are arguing that language is learned in large part to be used purposefully in communication, either spoken or written, and that our teaching methods should therefore reflect these goals (Widdowson 1978, Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Littlewood 1981, Savignon 1983).

Communicative competence, however, is a complex term which, given the extremely diverse needs of ESL learners of varying ages in different settings, necessarily needs to be conceptualized differently for the multiple contexts within which ESL teachers operate. McGroarty (1984) makes this point effectively by comparing what communicative competence, as a concept, means for three different groups of ESL students: occupational students of ESL, university teaching assistants, and students in elementary and secondary schools. She concludes that

students in elementary and secondary schools need more diverse language skills, some related to literacy, in order to make progress in school. Of particular importance in the school setting is mastery and use of context-reduced language, a text-related type of language observed principally in formal school contexts. Furthermore . . . full communicative competence for ESL learners of different ages may consist of different combinations of skills within the oral and the written modes (1964:257, 265).

In any consideration of the ESL needs of students in bilingual programs, then, it is important to define communicative competence in a manner that is appropriate to the subject matter and ages of the students involved and that includes the “types of listening comprehension, oral production, and literacy skills which must be learned in

ESL IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION
Second language acquisition research has also had a considerable influence on current thinking regarding effective ESL teaching. Native speakers have been found to modify their speech and discourse patterns when they are addressing less than proficient second language learners (see Long 1981, Gaiés 1983, Hatch 1983). This research, combined with hypotheses generated by such writers as Krashen (1981), has led to widespread acceptance of certain requirements (based perhaps as much on common sense as on empirical findings) for an optimal classroom environment for second language acquisition:

1. The acquirer must receive “comprehensible input”; 2. the speech must contain a message, which there must be a need to communicate; and 3. the input must be supplied in low-anxiety environments (Terrell 1981:119–120).

Drawing from these writings, practitioners could come to certain conclusions about what constitutes good ESL instruction in the elementary school classroom: “The best classroom lessons in [ESL] are... those where pupils understand what is said to them and where they are directly and actively involved in a natural process of communication with others” (Sharan, Kussel, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Bejarano, Raviv, and Sharan 1984:48).

Interestingly, although the term integrative does not appear with great frequency in current writing on effective ESL instruction, as it does in the SBIF research, it does appear in psycholinguistically grounded critiques of earlier language teaching approaches (such as audiolingualism) that attempted to teach specific language skills (e.g., grammar or pronunciation) as discrete items and in an isolated fashion. The notion of “integrative second language teaching” is wholly consistent with the communicative approach summarized above. Thus, it is not altogether surprising to find that in defining a contemporary approach to ESL to be implemented for the treatment phase of a teacher-training study in Israel, one group of researchers did in fact use the term integrative:

This approach to language teaching is integrative [italics added] rather than analytic, with various language skills acquired simultaneously—grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. Acquisition of skills without set sequences conforms more to natural language acquisition and less to learning according to a syllabus. The learner moves from one stage to another by understanding messages that include structures yet unknown,
and the learner acquires a “feel” for the grammar through the meaning of the message (Sharan, Kussel, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Bejarano, Raviv, and Sharan 1984:48).

**IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION**

Despite addressing fundamentally different sets of concerns, therefore, researchers attempting to arrive at some global sense of what constitutes effective teaching in bilingual education and ESL have reached remarkably complementary conclusions. Effective bilingual teaching, as it relates to second language development, implies integrating second language goals into regular content-area instruction, combined with an awareness of the kinds of strategies and techniques that can lead to successful attainment of those goals. Effective ESL teaching, according to most contemporary accounts, implies creating the conditions whereby students can engage in meaningful interaction in the target language and can thereby be exposed to the appropriate kind of linguistic input. It means, in other words, devising strategies that encourage students to focus on message rather than form and to strive for oral and written proficiency in English rather than merely to attain knowledge about different aspects of English usage. Clearly, effective bilingual education instruction (as it relates to second language development) and effective ESL instruction, based on these global summaries, are not in the least contradictory. Indeed, it can be reasonably argued that the most efficient way to implement effective ESL instruction in the context of a bilingual classroom might be to integrate that instruction into ongoing development of the regular curriculum.

These observations have profound implications for teacher preparation. Clearly, the training needs of a teacher responsible for ESL in the context of a bilingual classroom are not identical to the needs of a teacher responsible for teaching ESL in a pullout context. In a recent survey (McGroarty 1985) of teacher training needs as perceived by active practitioners, 133 junior and senior high ESL teachers from California indicated that their highest priority was in the area of ESL instruction in the content areas. In reflecting on the implications of the SBIF research findings for teacher preparation, Tikunoff (1983b:43) states that “one recommendation made [by practitioners reacting to the SBIF study] was that teachers be taught the integrative approach to language development.” In a similar vein, Blanco (1983) argues that regular ESL methods courses are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to prepare a teacher to address in a satisfactory manner the ESL needs of students in bilingual classrooms following an integrative language development approach. Blanco (1983: 98-99) advocates that
prospective teachers be trained in the use of an integrative approach for ESL . . . to include strategies that use academic subject matter as a vehicle for teaching a second language . . . Teacher trainers need to stress the development of strategies by which teachers become knowledgeable and skillful in emphasizing, explaining, and providing practice in those linguistic elements that are troublesome or that hinder the students' comprehension of the lesson—all within the context of instruction in regular academic subjects.

A major implication of this discussion is that conventional teacher preparation programs that rely on separate courses for ESL methods and bilingual methodology to prepare teachers for their role in bilingual classrooms may require some rethinking. I would not argue that a radical overhaul is necessarily called for because each of these two courses covers extremely valuable knowledge and skills for bilingual teachers: The ESL methods course focuses on basic methods for second language teaching, and the bilingual methodology course covers techniques for teaching content area in the child's first language as well as strategies for effectively using two languages in the classroom.

I would argue, however, that the gap between these two courses needs to be closed—at some point, the question of how second language development can be effectively integrated into content-area instruction needs to be systematically addressed. Whether this is done within the context of one of the above courses or through a separate course that focuses exclusively on the design and implementation of an integrative language development approach in bilingual education is a matter for institutions to resolve locally.

The elements to be included in such a training module would vary, depending on local needs, but minimally should include 1) grouping strategies for maximizing access to appropriate linguistic input in heterogeneous settings (Milk 1980); 2) alternative ways of providing input (e.g., the use of volunteers, aides, or older peer tutors) in classes where second language levels are fairly homogeneous; 3) techniques (such as context embedding, paraphrasing, use of synonyms and graphics) for promoting comprehension of subject matter by LEP students; and 4) discussion of means for providing students with "ample opportunities to be exposed to and to develop the language of the classroom, or what Cummins (1980) calls cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP)" (Blanco 1983:98).

CONCLUSIONS

There was a time when the role of ESL in bilingual education was conceived primarily in terms of a separate course in the curriculum
through which LEP children could receive specialized instruction in developing their English language skills. In practice, however, quality bilingual education programs have been integrating second language development into subject-matter instruction for many years. The findings reported by the SBIF study reflect perhaps not so much a recent trend as a description of what may have been occurring all along in good bilingual instruction.

There is a potential danger, however, that by creating a stronger push for integrating second language development goals into regular content-area instruction, the role of ESL will become greatly diminished in the minds of both practitioners and program developers. This would be ironic, indeed, since the motivating factor toward greater integration of ESL into other areas of the curriculum has been, at least in part, the concern that one period of ESL a day does not provide sufficient linguistic input for meaningful acquisition to take place.

ESL has always been conceptualized as a separate component within bilingual education, which, in the U. S. context, must necessarily be present in all programs at all levels. How this component is defined (i.e., as a pullout, as a separate course within the classroom, and/or as ILDA) and implemented depends greatly on both program goals and on local sociolinguistic conditions. But in all cases, it must be explicitly defined as a distinctive component with its own separate identity and with fully elaborated goals for the various groups of students served by the program.

Although much of the research discussed in this article is quite recent, the ideas and conclusions arrived at are certainly not new. From the outset, advocates of bilingual education have argued that “the use of a language as a medium of formal schooling is a far more powerful way of teaching and of developing effective bilingualism in its learners than is the study of language as a school subject” (Gaarder 1977:101). From this framework, development of second language proficiency of students in bilingual education programs was a natural by-product of the ongoing instructional process.

Researchers familiar with both bilingual education—in which “the second language is acquired exclusively or at least to a large extent as a result of being used as a medium of instruction” (Politzer 1977:1)—and second language teaching—in which “the second language is learned in the process of formal instruction” (Politzer 1977:1)—have, however, been careful to point out that overt second language teaching may be necessary in bilingual education programs, particularly in contexts where the students have limited contact with a peer group of native speakers. This insight is effectively summarized by Politzer...
(1977:12), who nearly a decade ago stated: “Bilingual education as such does not and cannot always replace second language teaching. For the purposes of developing second language skills we should think of Bilingual Education and Foreign or Second Language teaching as natural allies rather than alternatives.”

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THE AUTHOR
Robert Milk, Assistant Professor in the Division of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio, taught ESL and Spanish for five years before completing a Ph.D. at Stanford University. He currently directs a Title VII bilingual teacher preparation project and co-directs a bilingual counselor training program at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

REFERENCES


Self-Assessment as a Second Language Placement Instrument

RAYMOND LeBLANC
University of Ottawa

GISELE PAINCHAUD
University of Montreal

Although self-assessment has been prevalent for a number of years in such fields as psychology, sociology, business, and so on, its use in second language teaching/learning has remained rather rare. Whether this situation stems from skepticism about students’ capacity to provide meaningful information about their ability to use the language or from an inappropriate use of self-assessment is difficult to assess. This article reports a sequence of experiments leading to the use of self-assessment as a placement test. These experiments dealt with such questions as, Do students have the ability to meaningfully evaluate their own performance? Does the type of instrument used effect that ability? Can students be satisfactorily placed by self-assessment results alone? The conclusion is that at least under the conditions described, self-assessment must be considered a very valuable tool as a placement instrument.

It has now become a commonplace belief that to be efficient, a teaching/learning strategy requires that students have some input in the complete learning cycle. In other words, students should not see their role restricted to the study of content chosen by others, through techniques imposed by others, and for purposes established by others in their name. And being part of the complete learning cycle should imply being involved in the assessment process, since evaluation is now recognized as a component in the educational process. But while this makes sense in theory, in practice learners have not often been involved in language testing mostly because it has been felt that they did not have a great deal to contribute. And so, the question of students’ ability to provide meaningful input into the evaluation of their performance in the use of the second language must be raised. In other words, do students know enough about their abilities in relation
to the language they are learning to make a useful contribution to their evaluation?

The foundation for an answer to that question lies in the capacity to self-assess one’s performance. This ability is indeed at the very root of any approach to language teaching/learning if students are to have meaningful input. In this article, we begin by examining the concept of self-assessment as it relates to the field of second languages and then report on an ongoing research project in which a self-assessment questionnaire is being used as a placement instrument for students registering for language courses at the Centre for Second Language Learning of the University of Ottawa.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND SECOND LANGUAGES

At the outset, two points should be made about self-assessment. First, self-assessment is not self-grading (although the latter may be part of the former). Self-grading, by allowing students to determine their own grades for some classroom work, purports to encourage students to assume more responsibility for their learning process. But while this has been shown to be true for well-motivated students, McGeever (1978:329) reports that “others are motivated to take it easier and learn less—and that these two tendencies pretty well balance one another off in the statistics.” In fact, to be efficient, self-grading requires that the various groups share a common body of knowledge about what should have been learned and relate this to their individual situation. While this may make sense in fields for which the content seems much better defined, such is not the case for second languages, for which we still do not know very well what must be learned.

Second, self-assessment, as understood here, is not an informal exercise based loosely on the student’s intuition—even if this is something that students do all the time. Indeed, at times during and after a course, any student is likely to ask such questions as “How good was the course? The teacher? The materials? In fact, [the student] frequently gets right down to the crux of the question and asks How much did I learn?” (Fellenz 1976:256). But although these questions constitute a form of self-assessment, the answers can only be useful in a one-to-one relationship with the teacher, not in terms of a graded instrument. The point is, however, that some form of self-assessment is very often taking place in a classroom environment. Indeed, that type of self-assessment is present in all aspects of life. How else would one know whether one’s performance meets the expectations of others? But while the preceding discussion reinforces the idea that the
ability to self-evaluate is indeed basic to self-directed learning, it does not really provide any clues as to how to turn self-assessment into reliable instruments.

In the case of adult learners, as pointed out elsewhere (Painchaud and LeBlanc 1984), there are two important considerations. First, when adults place themselves in a classroom learning situation, they have a very fair idea of why they are doing so, of what they expect from the course, and so on. Expectations and needs may not always coincide exactly, but mature students must be given the opportunity to evaluate their situation vis-à-vis their objectives.

Second, adult students, before being learners of a second language, have thoroughly mastered a means of communication, their native language, and they know in a more or less implicit way why and how they use it. Chances are their intended use of the second language will not differ significantly from that of their first language. This is why it is important that adult students be the ones to evaluate their situation, as stated above, for they are the only ones who know, be it intuitively, the relationship between the objectives of the task at hand and their knowledge at any given point in time (Huart 1978).

But as Fellenz (1976:257) points out, “Self-directed learners are not produced simply by telling adult students that they are to be responsible for their own learning.” This also applies to the self-assessment of learning which is sufficiently detailed to be useful as an evaluation instrument. A fine-tuned self-assessment ability certainly does not come automatically to all students. Research has shown, for instance, that when left to their own resources, students simply do not have the tools to cope with a self-assessment situation that requires them to describe with some precision their level of proficiency (LeBlanc and Painchaud 1976). Jordan (see Lewkowicz and Moon 1985:51), discussing learners at the lower end of the scale, asserts that, especially for writing, “it is wrong to place the responsibility on the student for assessing his own competence in English. In all probability he has no reliable yardstick with which to compare himself.” These same authors also cite McLeod’s claim that good students tend to underestimate themselves (because they have some notion of all that remains to be learned) while students who have arrived at a plateau tend to overestimate their ability (because, having stopped learning, they cannot perceive a need for improvement).

At the same time, however, Van Passel (1974), Oskarsson (1978), and Von Elek (1982), among others, report good results obtained with the help of self-assessment questionnaires. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss why such contradictory results have been obtained, but the mere fact that these discrepancies exist shows that
all the answers are far from being known regarding the use of self-assessment in the general scheme of second language evaluation.

Lewkowicz and Moon (1985:50), taking exception with Oskarsson’s (1978) distinction between formal (answering a questionnaire) and informal (real-life interaction) self-assessment, suggest that “perhaps a more illuminating distinction could be based on whether evaluation is a result of self-motivated and spontaneous involvement in a real-life situation, or part of a planned learning procedure, i.e. concentrating on the purpose rather than the form of the evaluation.”

This distinction seems in line with some research findings. As reported elsewhere (LeBlanc in press), when a learning situation does not include an appointed evaluator (self-teaching or self-directed learning, for instance), students have been found to use various ways to assess their progress: peer judgments, use of grids when available, trials in real-life situations, and so on. What learners seem to be doing is collecting information on their performance. They then have to examine that information in light of their objectives to determine whether or not those objectives have been reached. If they are able to process their data correctly, they make the right decisions about their learning, but the opposite can happen if the data are misinterpreted. In the research alluded to here (Serre 1978, Tough 1979, Tremblay 1983), the content was not language, so the question of the ability to gather meaningful information and to interpret it correctly remains largely unanswered for such a complex activity in real-life situation self-assessment.

On the other hand, a certain number of experiments have been conducted with self-assessment as a planned procedure. In most instances, these have involved answering questions on the ability to use the language or certain aspects of it. The use of a questionnaire of some sort makes sense in many respects. First, if a questionnaire is to be used, its preparation implies the involvement not only of the student but also of all those who are taking part in the teaching/learning process (teacher, academic adviser, program director, and so on).

In turn, this involvement leads to a broad definition of the areas to be evaluated. For instance, some decisions have to be taken as to whether the productive skills and the receptive skills will receive equal treatment. Since those decisions obviously have to be based on the general objectives of both the student and the program, all participants can find out how closely student needs and program offerings match. A first set of decisions can then be made on the basis of the match between the candidate and the program.

This exercise puts all those concerned in a situation in which they have to negotiate and then clearly define their objectives, not only the
terminal ones as above, but also the intermediate and the immediate objectives. This concerns not only the what of the learning process but also the how, taking into consideration psychological, sociological, and personal variables such as the age of the students, the environment where the new language is to be used, the amount of time available for their studies, and so on. In that way, all objectives are made explicit and are thus clearly understood by all participants in the process, which insures continuous and meaningful feedback at all levels.

The basic requirement for any questionnaire is to give learners the opportunity to indicate what they think they can do with the language they are studying. A questionnaire can take many forms, both in terms of the types of questions and of scoring scales used. The questions can be formulated as statements that cover very wide areas (“I understand everything I am told in French”) or very restricted ones (“I can distinguish between a question and an order”). In another type of question, learners are asked to imagine how well they think they could perform a given task. Oskarsson (1978:46) gives an example “Imagine that someone with no knowledge of English comes to you with an English daily paper and asks you to give as detailed an account as possible of what is on the front page.” Real questions can also be used: “Can you tell someone how to go from the Registrar’s office to the University Centre?”

The scoring scales are mostly dependent upon the kinds of questions chosen. Some scales present a continuum on which students are asked to place themselves. Although the number of points on such scales varies, most consist of either 5 points or 10 points. The points of a 5-point scale could be described in the following terms: (5 points) I can do this all the time; (4) I can do this most of the time; (3) I can do this about half the time; (2) I can seldom do this; (1) I can never do this. In other instances, the item itself tells students what score to give themselves. For instance, in Oskarsson (1978:51), an affirmative answer to the following statement is worth 4 points on a 5-point scale “I understand everything or nearly everything written in the language within non-specialized fields. There may be words I do not understand in difficult texts.” Finally, the answers may be of the yes/no variety, as would be the case with “Can you...?” questions. (For a more detailed description of types of questions and of scales, see Oskarsson 1978 or Lewkowicz and Moon 1985.)

As can be seen, the literature on the self-assessment of second language proficiency is still rather sparse, but a number of authors have examined its feasibility in their own contexts. Their findings led us in the direction of planned self-assessment when we began looking
for alternatives to our own standardized proficiency tests. In the following sections of this article, we describe the three main stages of our research and discuss some of the results obtained.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The research was conducted in three different steps, each corresponding to what we considered crucial questions: 1) Can students registering for our second language courses actually assess their own proficiency in that language? 2) Does the type of instrument used influence the quality of this assessment? 3) Can self-assessment be used as a placement instrument?

Students' Ability to Assess Their Own Proficiency

To answer the first question, we randomly selected a sample of 200 students for both French and English as second languages. Since the University of Ottawa is a bilingual university, its students must meet some form of second language requirement. Although these requirements vary somewhat from faculty to faculty, they are all related in some way to the English Proficiency Test or to the Test de compétence en français, the two standardized tests in use at the Centre for Second Language Learning. All new students entering the University of Ottawa have to take one of the two tests to determine their standing in relation to the second language requirements of their own faculties. If they do not meet the standard set for them, they are placed in groups at one of six different levels of proficiency and take courses until they have completed their second language requirements.

The randomly selected students were asked to fill out a self-assessment questionnaire prior to taking the proficiency test in their second language. The questionnaire contained four parts covering the four basic skills; each part consisted of 10 statements graded for difficulty level. These statements had the following form (example from the Reading section):

I understand short and simple written communications (posters, schedules, announcements).

I understand a text on a known topic (even though I have to use a dictionary).

I read specialized articles concerning my fields of study fluently.

The students were asked to read each of the 40 statements and to give themselves a score on a scale ranging from 1 (“I cannot do this at all”)
to 5 ("I can do this all the time"); the scores 2, 3, and 4 were left without a specific description. The minimum score was therefore 40, while the maximum score was 200.

The total scores on the self-assessment questionnaire were correlated with those on the proficiency tests, and correlations were also established between each subtest of the proficiency tests (Listening, Reading, Cloze) and each part of the self-assessment questionnaire (Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing). These first two sets of results are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Although the results are not of the highest level, the correlation of .53 between the two total scores, which is in keeping with the .50 result deemed acceptable by Oskarsson (1978), shows that students can assess their own knowledge of the second language to some extent.

### TABLE 1
Correlations Between Total Test Score and Self-Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Test Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All results are significant at the .05 level.

### TABLE 2
Correlation Matrix by Subtest*

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>TL</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>TC</th>
<th>S-AL</th>
<th>S-AR</th>
<th>S-AS</th>
<th>S-AW</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.85</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening (S-AL)</td>
<td>.52</td>
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<td>.38</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading (S-AR)</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking (S-AS)</td>
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<td>.38</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (S-AW)</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All correlations whose absolute values are >.34 are simultaneously significant at the .05 level.
The Influence of the Type of Questionnaire Used

In the second part of the research, we asked two questions. The first was whether questionnaire content very closely tied to the students’ situations as potential second language users could improve the results of self-assessment of second language proficiency. The second question was whether variations in the formulation of statements for a given task could have some effects on the results.

To answer those questions, we used the same general procedure as in the first part of the research; that is, we established correlations between the results of the two proficiency tests and those of the self-assessment questionnaire. Since the University of Ottawa had in the meantime reformulated its second language requirements in terms of the receptive skills, the self-assessment questionnaire was modified accordingly.

For each questionnaire to be as closely related as possible to the students’ potential needs as language users, the format used was a general statement followed by five more specific situations regarding the statement. For instance, in the Listening section:

If I found myself in conversation with a French-speaking student, I would be able to understand

1. conventional greetings and farewells.
2. personal information given to me (name, address, phone number, etc.).
3. informal exchanges on subjects such as weather, health, current events, courses, etc.
4. any compliments or invitations addressed to me.
5. expressions of personal opinions, personal preferences, etc., addressed to me.

Again, students were asked to assess their ability on a 5-point scale. The Listening part was made up of six blocks, as above, for a total of 30 items, while the Reading part consisted of four blocks, for a total of 20 items. The minimum and maximum scores were thus 50 and 250.

To determine whether the type of formulation could affect the results, we prepared two different questionnaires. In the first one, Questionnaire A, we included some metalinguistics vocabulary, using Munby’s (1978) *Communicative Syllabus Design* as the main source for a communicative description of the language. For instance, a block in the Listening section

When listening to an oral presentation (such as a lecture) in French, I can

1. recognize parts of sentences which show that the speaker is presenting a new idea ("And another thing"; "On the other hand"; etc.).
It was felt that the use of some metalinguistic language might have some influence on the students’ ability to assess their own performance. Questionnaire B was also prepared from situations that the students were likely to encounter in their university life, but it did not include any metalinguistic vocabulary. For example, in the Reading section:

I would be able to read and understand the following in French when encountered on campus:

1. signs on doors, etc. indicating entrance, exit, danger, etc.
2. posters, announcements and advertisements.
3. written instructions for the use of various equipment (language lab, photocopier, projector, etc.).
4. information in a university calendar such as policies, course descriptions, etc.
5. articles in the student newspaper.

In this second stage of the research, all students taking part in the September registration procedure were asked to fill out a self-assessment questionnaire before taking the proficiency test in their second language. Questionnaires A and B were printed in equal numbers and distributed randomly to the students as they entered the testing area. The numbers of students who completed each of the self-assessment questionnaires are as follows:

| Questionnaire A, French as L2 | n = 861 |
| Questionnaire B, French as L2 | n = 878 |
| Questionnaire A, English as L2 | n = 662 |
| Questionnaire B, English as L2 | n = 660 |

Since the results were similar for both languages, only those for French are presented (see Tables 3 and 4). As the results indicate, the two focal questions for this stage of the research yielded different answers. To the question of whether results will improve from using a questionnaire closely related to the students’ situations as potential second language users, the answer was highly affirmative. The correlations increased by about .30 to levels of .80 and .82, for the total scores, for each questionnaire used.

On the other hand, the expectation that the formulation of the questions might have some effects on the students’ ability to assess
their own performance was not borne out, the difference between .80 and .82 not being significant. It therefore seems that as long as students can understand the language used in the questions (the fact that the population was made up of first-year university students should be kept in mind here), the format itself does not have any bearing on the quality of the answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Test</th>
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<th>Reading</th>
<th>Cloze</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Assessment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaire A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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<td>.69</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The results are significant at the .0001 level.

Self-Assessment as a Placement Instrument

Since the first two stages of the research showed, at least to our satisfaction, that not only could students adequately assess their level of performance but also that well-constructed questionnaires seemed
to produce high quality results, we decided to prepare an instrument that would be used for the placement of our second language students in lieu of the standardized proficiency tests.

Given the diversity of second language requirements referred to above, the notion of proficiency levels is an important one for the institution. If self-assessment was to be used as a placement test, each of our six recognized levels had to be clearly defined so that students’ answers could be properly interpreted. Because of this circumstance, a complete revision of the level descriptions was initiated in which administrators, teachers, and students took part.

The 100 language teachers from our unit were first asked to supply what they considered to be representative descriptors for each of the six levels in both listening and reading. The exercise produced well over 1000 descriptors, taking all kinds of forms. These ranged from “Can understand an address and a phone number” to “Can distinguish between preterit and present perfect” and all the way to “Le Français International, Book 2, Lesson 8.” Although the descriptors varied enormously both in form and content, it was possible, simply by using the most frequently given ones, to establish a preliminary description for each level. These were then given to the administrators, who set up committees that would examine them with other specialists and then try out the descriptors in classrooms where students deemed representative of a particular level were registered.

At the same time, a matrix that could be used to describe all levels was produced. This matrix took into account such components as types of texts, genres, registers, length, and norm and types of presentation (e.g., speed, number of repetitions, and so on for the oral texts). These components were considered in relation to a number of operations: development of specific abilities, critical listening/reading at the identification level and at the evaluation level, and so on. The components found relevant for each level were then listed, producing a formal description for each level. An example from Level 2 in listening “Is able to understand, in a dialogue of the social conversation genre between two students at the familiar register and spoken at regular speed, the topic of the conversation with one or two details.”

With such descriptions in hand, the preparation of the questionnaire became in part a matter of “translating” such language into words that students could properly interpret. This meant identifying real-life situations that could eventually yield the desired type of language use. A large number of items were designed and tried out in classes at the proper levels. The final outcome was an experimental instrument consisting of 36 listening items and 24 reading items.

Once again the students were asked to assess their performance on a 5-point scale. The items had the following format:
1. I understand a professor who tells me in French at what page to open my book.
2. Over the phone I can understand some basic information in French such as the name of the caller and the number where he can be reached.
3. If an adviser explains to me in French how to register for an elective course, I will understand, provided some details are repeated.
4. If I need help with an assignment and the only help available is in French, I understand enough for it to be very useful.
5. I am sufficiently fluent in French to understand most of the popular expressions used by today’s teenagers.

1. I can understand unilingual traffic signs in French.
2. When I get a postcard in French, I understand the usual formulae people write in postcards.
3. When I read a short report of an accident written in French, I can tell how many persons were injured and what their general condition is.
4. When I look at a well detailed table of contents of a book written in French, I can tell whether the book will be useful to me or not.
5. I know written French well enough to be able to spot mistakes and misprints in a text.

The experimental version was tried out during the May and July 1984 registrations. For those trials, it was decided that the Self-Assessment Questionnaire results would be used to place students in the various groups but that the proficiency tests would also be given in case they were needed. As it turned out, this precaution was not necessary because the self-assessment results placed the students at least as well as the standardized tests previously used. It was therefore decided that student placement for the September 1984 registration would be done solely on the basis of the self-assessment results. One could consider this a major decision, since it meant placing upward of 2500 students in groups at various levels.

In preparation for this change, statistics had been kept at the Centre for Second Language Learning for 1983–1984 concerning the number of students who were moved from one group to another following their first placement with the proficiency tests. The same type of data was gathered for 1984–1985 following the placement of students using self-assessment results. We believed that a comparison of the two sets of figures would supply us with the type of information we needed to make a final decision on using self-assessment as the sole means of placing students. Table 5 shows the results of that comparison in percentage form. While all changes in groups were not caused by poor placement (course conflicts being another possible cause, for
instance), all changes were teacher-initiated, and the total number has been fairly constant throughout the years when proficiency tests were used. The fact that the number of “changes” decreased constituted a very welcome bonus but a bonus nonetheless, since we believed at the outset that the numerous advantages linked to the use of a self-assessment questionnaire would justify accepting at least the same number of changes.

DISCUSSION

Self-assessment questionnaires offer several advantages. A 60-item self-assessment questionnaire of the type described takes about 20 minutes to complete, compared with the 100 minutes needed to complete the proficiency test. And since students are asked to indicate up to what point they feel they can do something as opposed to having to show that they can indeed do it, choosing how to gather the data becomes much simpler.

The use of a self-assessment questionnaire also eliminates the need for safeguards against cheating, which must be taken into account when standardized tests are being given. In fact, students can take the questionnaire home, fill it out at their leisure, and bring it to the proper office to be processed. No longer is it necessary to establish tight testing schedules, to find the appropriate types of room and audiovisual equipment, to recruit proctors, and so on, all of which is a great advantage to an institution that registers and places large numbers of language students.

And certainly not to be forgotten, self-assessment involves students to a much higher degree than other placement instruments, since candidates find themselves with the responsibility of their own placement. Admittedly, this does create problems with some students,
who feel that any type of evaluation should be the responsibility of someone in authority, of someone “who knows.” The number of these students has been small, however, and in most instances the problem was solved when the whole process was explained in more detail.

Finally, we believe that the results, already quite acceptable, can be further improved by changing some items which have not shown the expected predictive value, particularly in the Level 3 and 4 range. This is not overly surprising, since all testing instruments seem to have difficulty dealing with intermediate levels. This problem may be somewhat alleviated if we find good descriptors for the level, which will in turn produce good predictive items.

Self-assessment is now being used with interesting results in many situations in which candidates have nothing to gain by being less than truthful. It does not constitute a panacea for all testing problems. However, the mere fact of its working under some conditions traditionally reserved for standardized tests indicates untapped resources and opens possible avenues for further research about the place of self-assessment in the complete measurement and evaluation process.

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THE AUTHORS

Raymond LeBlanc is Associate Professor at the Centre for Second Language Learning of the University of Ottawa. He teaches in Linguistics and Teacher Education as well as in French as a Second Language. His current research interests include listening at the beginning level, French-English homographs and paragraphs, and self-assessment. Gisèle Painchaud is Associate Professor of Education at the University of Montreal, where she teaches in the Andragogy Department. She is conducting research and has published in several areas, including adult second language acquisition, teacher training, and self-directed learning.
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The cognitive style of field independence (the tendency to differentiate objects from their surroundings) has been shown in a number of studies to be related to success in second language classrooms in which deductive teaching dominates. The purpose of the study reported in this article was to discover whether less rule-oriented teaching might prove more beneficial for field-dependent students. A pretest/post-test design was used to compare the effectiveness of two ESL lessons on participle formation for subjects at various points along the field independent/dependent continuum. One lesson was based on a traditional deductive approach; the other provided no rules but directed attention to many examples of participles in context. A regression analysis showed a significant interaction between field independence and lesson, with field-independent subjects performing better with the deductive lesson and field-dependent subjects better with the example lesson. Examination of individual items on pre- and post-tests provided evidence that the majority of subjects in both lessons had engaged in step-by-step rule building. Implications for teaching and further research are discussed.

The interest of both teachers and researchers in the field of second language learning has increasingly focused on the learner—including the strategies which an individual uses in learning and communicating and the individual differences that may affect both strategy use and success. One learner characteristic that appears to be related to a number of second language performance measures is the cognitive style of field independence. The field independence/dependence continuum is described by Messick (1976:14) as follows:

[Field independence] refers to a consistent mode of approaching the environment in analytical, as opposed to global, terms. It denotes a tendency to articulate figures as discrete from their backgrounds and a facility in differentiating objects from embedding contexts, as opposed to a countertendency to experience events globally in an undifferentiated fashion.
Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesee (1976) found that a trait factor including field independence was a significant predictor of scores of seventh grade students of French on the *Test de Rendement en Francais, Niveau 5*, a standardized, multiple-choice achievement test of spelling, listening comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar. In a study of eighth, tenth, and twelfth grade learners of French, Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978) found that field independence was related to success for twelfth graders on two measures of ability in spoken French—the Listening section of the *IEA French Achievement Test* (see Carroll 1975) and an imitation test. Bialystok and Fröhlich (1978) and Bialystok (1978a) reported a study of high school students of French in which field independence was shown to be significantly related to foreign language aptitude, as measured by the Modern Language Aptitude Test (Carroll and Sapon 1958).

J. Hansen and Stansfield’s (1981) study of college-level students in first-semester Spanish showed field independence to be significantly correlated with scores on tests of linguistic, communicative, and integrative competence. The most marked relationship was between field independence and performance on the integrative measure, a multiple-choice cloze (see discussion in Stansfield and J. Hansen 1983). L. Hansen (1984) further studied the relationship between field independence and cloze test performance for ESL learners from Pacific island cultures. She found a significant correlation between these variables but noted sizable differences among subgroups in the sample in the relationship between field independence and cloze.

Abraham (1983) found significant correlations between field independence and the use of the strategy of monitoring by ESL students on each of three tasks—fill-in-the-blank, proofreading, and composition. Chapelle and Roberts (1984) found field independence to be a significant predictor of success on a multiple-choice grammar test given to ESL students after study in an intensive English program. Field independence was found by d’Anglejan and Renaud (1985) to be one of a number of learner characteristics significantly related to achievement in French by adult immigrants, as measured by the *Test de Rendement en Francais* and teacher evaluations.

To summarize this body of research, field independence has been shown to be significantly and positively related (albeit in most cases modestly) to scores on several standardized paper-and-pencil tests, to language aptitude, to use of monitoring, and to success on the integrative measures of imitation and cloze. At least the first three of these correlates of field independence (and perhaps also the fourth) are associated with language learned in a classroom setting, in which rules are typically taught and practiced deductively. These studies
therefore suggest that field-independent students are more adept at learning and using rules than field-dependent students. The question thus arises as to whether a method of teaching that does not emphasize rules might be more beneficial for field-dependent students. If so, instruction could be individualized to accommodate students who differed along this continuum of cognitive style.

The study reported in this article was designed to provide partial answers to this question by comparing two different methods of teaching the formation of participial phrases. Participial phrases were chosen for several reasons. First, students in university programs need to be able to understand and use this structure. Second, since participial phrases are not common in conversational English, they are not likely to be “acquired” in the sense that this term is used by Krashen and Terrell (1983). Participial phrases thus need to be the focus of instruction. Finally, the formation of participial phrases is governed by a rule which, although including several steps, is not difficult. Thus, students who are generally able to learn and apply rules should be able to work with this linguistic item, while students who find rules difficult can be provided an opportunity to internalize knowledge of the item in some other way.

THE STUDY

Subjects

The 61 subjects in this study (45 males and 16 females) were all students in the high-intermediate levels of the Intensive English and Orientation Program at Iowa State University. They came from a variety of language backgrounds, the largest groups being Spanish (22), Indonesian (14), Arabic (6), and Chinese (6). All of the subjects demonstrated, by their performance on the pretest, that they did not fully understand how participles are formed in English. The highest score on the pretest was 47 out of a possible 60 points. The mean score was 27.7.

1 A participial phrase does not contain a subject but does include a participle—the *-ing* form of the verb (an active participle) or the third basic form of the verb (a passive participle). (Participles beginning with *having* are occasionally encountered, but these were not dealt with in this study.) The remainder of the phrase may include an introductory adverbial connector (e.g., *although, when*), the object(s) of the participle, and modifiers which can occur in verb phrases. The following sentences begin with an active and passive participial phrase, respectively:

After reading the instructions for assembling the bicycle, Joe realized he did not have all the parts.

Named for a 17th century astronomer, Halley’s comet is approaching the solar system and will swing around the sun in 1986.
Lessons

Teaching in this study was done by means of two computer-assisted instruction (CAI) lessons written by the investigator. One took a traditional deductive approach; the other presented many examples of participial phrases in context. In the latter, students were required to note the phrases, but at no time were they supplied a rule or required to formulate one. Subjects along the entire field independent-dependent continuum were assigned to both lessons, which were taught on Digital Equipment Corporation’s VAX GIGI system.

Deductive lesson. After a short introduction on the nature and usefulness of participial phrases, the deductive lesson explained in a step-by-step tutorial that 1) participial phrases are derived from relative or adverbial clauses, which in turn are derived from simple sentences; 2) passive participles are derived from passive verbs simply by omitting BE; and 3) active participles are formed from active verbs by changing the active form, whatever it may be, to the *-ing* form. A total of 8 example sentences and 22 practice sentences, in which students were asked to change full sentences to participial phrases, were included. Error feedback provided hints for correcting the response, e.g., “Use only the *-ing* form of the verb.” After three incorrect responses, the correct answer was supplied.

Example lesson. The example lesson began with the same introduction as the deductive lesson. It then provided 60 examples, each within the context of a paragraph, illustrating passive and active participial phrases derived from both relative and adverbial clauses. Passive participles were presented first in each case, since their formation is more straightforward. For all 60 examples, the participial phrase was highlighted in a color different from that used in the rest of the paragraph. Students were told to read the paragraph and remember the participial phrase. When they thought they knew it, they signaled the computer to “erase” it, and then they retyped it. To reduce the memory load for details extraneous to the purpose of the lesson, the sentence from which the participial phrase was derived was displayed in yet another color at the bottom of the screen. Feedback was similar to that provided in the deductive lesson.

Of the 60 examples, 18 illustrated passive participial phrases derived from relative clauses, 22 active participial phrases derived from relative clauses, 8 passive participial phrases derived from adverbial clauses, and 12 active participial phrases derived from adverbial clauses.
Instrumentation

Pre- and post-tests. The pre- and post-tests (paper-and-pencil) each contained 20 pairs of sentences. The following instructions were provided on each test:

Each item below contains two sentences. Combine them to make one good sentence. If possible, change the first sentence into a participial phrase. For example

1. Mary was sitting behind a woman with a big hat.
   Mary could not see the speaker.
   Sitting behind a woman with a big hat, Mary could not see the speaker.

2. The report was finished yesterday.
   The report will not be mailed until next Monday.
   Although finished yesterday, the report will not be mailed until next Monday.

Notice that it is sometimes necessary to begin the phrase with a word like when, after, although, if, etc.

The two tests were constructed to be parallel by preparing pairs of items that appeared to the investigator to be equivalent, pilot testing these with students in ESL composition courses, and then revising those that seemed to present difficulties unrelated to participle formation. The final versions of each test contained 9 sentences to be converted to passive participial phrases and 11 to be converted to active participial phrases. Two of the latter contained active verbs in progressive aspect, so that, as with the passive verbs, the only change required was the deletion of BE.

The items in each test were assembled in random order with respect to whether the participle should be active or passive. However, the same order of presentation was used in both tests, so that, for example, if one member of an equivalent item pair appeared in fifth position on the pretest, the other member appeared in fifth position on the post-test.

Each item was scored on a 0-3 basis, each level representing a step in the rule which governs the formation of participial phrases. A score of 0 was given if the student had not attempted to use a participial phrase. A score of 1 indicated that the student had omitted the subject of the sentence to be converted but had not changed the verb. A score of 2 indicated that the subject of the sentence had been omitted and...
the verb had been changed in some way but that the correct form had not been produced. A score of 3 indicated that the participial phrase had been correctly formed. Other errors (in spelling, choice of connector, and so on) were ignored.

**Measure of field independence.** The Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT), developed by Oltman, Raskin, and Witkin (1971), was used to assess subjects’ degree of field independence. In each item of the GEFT, subjects are asked to find a single geometric shape embedded in a complex design. Scores on the GEFT can range from 0 (highly field-dependent) to 18 (highly field-independent).

**Procedures**

Prospective subjects were first given the pretest, for which they were allowed as much time as they needed. Those whose scores indicated that they did not know all of the steps in forming participial phrases (a total of 73 subjects) were then given the GEFT and classified as field-independent (a score of 11 or above) or field-dependent (a score below 11). The cutoff of 11 was chosen on the basis of earlier research (Abraham 1981) with Spanish-speaking subjects; in that study, the mean GEFT score was 10.4. Approximately equal numbers of subjects from each group were assigned to each lesson.

After completing a short on-line introduction to the computing system, subjects proceeded at their own pace through their assigned participle lesson. The investigator or a research assistant was available when they began work and at regularly scheduled times thereafter to help with problems. However, subjects were permitted to work alone in the CAI lab during their free time. A total of 30 subjects completed the deductive lesson, and 31, the example lesson. The remaining 12 subjects did not complete the lesson assigned them.

When the subjects had finished their computer work, they were given the post-test, again with no time limit. The large majority of subjects (51) completed all testing and CAI work in two and a half weeks or less.

Statistical analysis of the data was carried out by means of the General Linear Models procedure and other supporting programs in the SAS (Release 82.4) package (SAS Institute 1982).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Pre- and post-test scores were examined to determine whether 1) there was an overall difference in effectiveness between the two lessons and 2) there was an interaction between field independence
and lesson, that is, whether field-independent students performed better with one lesson and field-dependent students performed better with the other.

When the data were analyzed, 5 subjects were discovered to have very low post-test scores (less than 20 out of a possible 60 points) because they had not even attempted, in 13 or more of the 20 items, to use participial phrases, opting instead for some other method of sentence combining. While one cannot be certain why these 5 subjects did not follow the instructions, it seems likely that they were reluctant to try to produce a relatively unfamiliar structure when they knew how to produce a correct alternative. The data for these 5 subjects were therefore dropped in further analysis, leaving a total of 56 subjects, 28 for each lesson.

A regression analysis was then carried out with pretest scores, lessons, GEFT scores, and the interaction between GEFT and lesson (in that order) as independent variables and post-test scores as the dependent variable. The total $R^2$ value for the model was .26 ($F = 4.53, p = .003$), indicating that slightly over one fourth of the variation in the post-test scores was accounted for by the model.

Both pretest and GEFT scores were shown to be significant predictors of post-test scores, the GEFT scores interacting with lesson. Equations showing these relationships are as follows:

For the deductive lesson, post-test score = $53.59 + .174(\text{pretest score} – 28.607) + .545(\text{GEFT score} – 11.232)$.

For the example lesson, post-test score = $51.08 + .174(\text{pretest score} – 28.607) – .591(\text{GEFT score} – 11.232)$.

Lines representing these equations (with pretest scores set to equal the sample mean), along with the data points for post-test versus GEFT scores, are shown in Figure 1.

A t-test comparing the slopes for the GEFT scores for the two lessons showed them to be significantly different ($t = 2.87, df = 51, p = .006$), indicating that subjects with higher GEFT scores—field-independent subjects—performed better with the deductive lesson, while subjects with lower GEFT scores—field-dependent subjects—performed better with the example lesson.

To determine whether one lesson was more effective overall than the other, the post-test scores were adjusted to the value they would have had if each subject had received the average pretest and GEFT

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2 The numbers subtracted from the pretest and GEFT scores in each equation are the sample means for these variables. The pretest score coefficient is statistically significant at the .006 level. The GEFT score coefficients for the deductive and the example lessons are significant at the .057 and .042 levels, respectively.
FIGURE 1
Interaction Between GEFT Scores and Lessons

Legend:
- ○ = Example Lesson Subject
- ● = Deductive Lesson Subject
- △ = Group 1
- △' = Group 2
- △'' = Group 3
- △''' = Group 4

The graph illustrates the interaction between GEFT scores and lessons, showing how different groups performed on post-test scores with varying GEFT scores. The data points suggest a trend where higher GEFT scores correlate with better post-test scores.
scores. A t-test comparing the means of these adjusted post-test scores (53.59 for the deductive lesson, 51.08 for the example lesson) showed the difference to be nonsignificant ($t = 1.36, df = 51, p = .179$).

One potential source of error inherent in the design of the study is the possibility that subjects might have obtained information about participle formation from sources other than their assigned CAI lesson during the period between the pretest and the post-test. However, since this period was relatively short for most subjects and since subjects were told that their performance in the study would not affect their standing in the English program, it seems unlikely that outside information caused significant contamination of results.

It would be interesting to know how subjects internalized knowledge about the formation of participial phrases as they worked through each of the lessons. While such information could not be obtained directly, the pattern of individual item scores on the pre- and post-tests provides some clues about subjects’ mental processes. It will be recalled that a 0–3 scale, with each level representing a step in the development of the rule, was used in scoring each item. If subjects actually went through these steps, their scores at each stage of development would show the hypothetical pattern presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**

Test Scores Corresponding to Stages in the Development of the Rule for the Formation of Participial Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Number of Items Receiving Score of</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1: No attempt to Form Participle</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Omit Subject, No Change in Verb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: If Verb Contains BE, Omit It</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Change Active Verbs to ing Form</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 There are also stages intermediate between 2 and 3 and between 3 and 4, in which some items would receive scores of 2, indicating that subjects were aware that the verb had to be changed but did not know what form it should take.

2 These 11 items would include the 9 with passive verbs and the 2 with active verbs in progressive aspect.

For both lessons, approximately one third of the subjects in the analysis (10 for the deductive lesson, 9 for the example lesson) demonstrated on the pretest that they had reached Stage 3 of the rule; in other words, they had correctly formed at least 9 participles which
required only *BE* deletion, but had incorrectly formed (or not attempted to form) most, if not all, of the remaining participles. (This much of the rule could be inferred from the examples provided at the beginning of the tests.) The remaining subjects were at other stages of development.

Scores for all 56 subjects were higher on the post-test than on the pretest, and many subjects provided evidence of having achieved mastery of all four parts of the rule—9 subjects on each lesson received post-test scores of 59 or 60. The majority of the remaining subjects in both lessons, at points all along the field independent-field dependent continuum, tended to form participles requiring *BE* deletion correctly; their errors occurring in the formation of participles derived from nonprogressive active verbs.

This suggests that subjects in both lessons were internalizing and applying the rule according to the stages described in Table 1. That subjects assigned to the deductive lesson should follow this pattern is not surprising, since that lesson explicitly taught these stages, and one might expect the rule to be stored in memory in that form. However, the fact that subjects in the example lesson showed evidence of having stored the rule in this same form raises some interesting questions. Did they consciously and explicitly formulate the rule from the data provided in the examples, or was this formulation carried out at a lower level of consciousness? Was the process of internalization the same for all subjects? If not, did subjects’ degree of field independence influence the process? Unfortunately, the data do not provide answers to these questions.

A minority of subjects (three in the deductive lesson, five in the example lesson) correctly formed at least as many participles from nonprogressive active verbs as from verbs containing *BE* on the post-test, apparently not having internalized the rule in the stages outlined above. Four of the five subjects completing the example lesson seemed to be working with some kind of rule, albeit an incorrect one (e.g., “Participles always end in *-ing*.“). The responses of the other subject in this lesson and the three in the deductive lesson were not consistent enough to suggest guidance from any kind of rule. Presumably, their answers were based on some combination of judgment about what “sounded right” and guessing. It is interesting to note that the GEFT scores for all eight of these subjects were low to intermediate (13 or below) and that two of the three in the deductive lesson were quite low (2 and 4). This latter point is consistent with the view that field-dependent students may have difficulty working with explicitly stated rules.

While examination of the patterns of scores for individual items raises questions beyond the scope of this study, these patterns are
consistent with two familiar models of second language acquisition/learning, those of Bialystok (1978b) and Krashen (1981). Both models provide for two means of internalizing knowledge of the forms of a language: one explicit, or conscious, and the other implicit, or unconscious. It is likely that subjects who were assigned to the deductive lesson and who demonstrated control of the rule being presented had internalized it consciously and explicitly, while subjects in both lessons who produced answers without obvious guidance from any rule had internalized some kind of knowledge about participle formation implicitly and unconsciously.

**IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Implications for both teaching and further research can be drawn from this study. The finding that field-independent subjects performed better with the deductive lesson is consistent with earlier studies of this cognitive style; moreover, the additional finding that field-dependent subjects performed better with the example lesson suggests a useful alternative, at least for some students, to the usual classroom approach of teaching grammar.

Of course, the model tested here, with pretest scores and field independence as the only predictors of success, accounted for only one fourth of the variance in post-test scores. Obviously, as in earlier studies, other factors need to be considered. These probably include students’ language background (although subjects from different language backgrounds took part in this study, the number from any single language group was too small to make this variable a meaningful predictor), attitude toward and motivation for learning English, willingness to take risks in using new structures, and other cognitive styles interacting with field independence. In addition, to determine the generalizability of these findings, the two methods of presentation should be compared for other grammatical structures.

Questions concerning the manner in which grammatical knowledge is stored in memory have already been noted. It would also be interesting to discover what specific aspects of the lessons cause them to be differentially effective for field-independent and field-dependent students. For example, do field-dependent subjects find encounters with explicit rules formidable, and do they as a result feel more comfortable with the example lesson? Since the example lesson required significantly more time to complete, was the relative length of the lessons a factor? Answers to questions such as these are necessary for those who wish to design effective individualized instruction.

Another issue is the extent to which students working through the two lessons apply the knowledge gained to writing in other formats,
for example, in their own compositions. Bruner (1961) suggests that discovery learning of the type used in the example lesson in this study facilitates better organization of material and that such organization makes information more readily available for later use. Hermann (1969), citing a number of studies involving a variety of material to be learned, concludes that while better retention of rules results from deductive learning, better transfer to new situations is obtained from discovery. While using a structure in one’s own writing presumably requires transfer of learning, carefully controlled research is needed to determine whether this principle holds for second language acquisition/learning.

This study, then, provides insights into how students along one continuum of individual differences internalize knowledge about one grammatical item in the second language. In raising new questions to be addressed, the study points up once again both the complexity of the entire process of learning a second language and the need for careful, cumulative research to achieve a coherent and accurate picture of that process.

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THE AUTHOR

Roberta G. Abraham is Assistant Professor of English at Iowa State University, where she coordinates ESL instruction and teaches in the MA/TESL program. Her research interests include the relationships between cognitive styles and learner strategies, and the evaluation of computer-assisted language learning.

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For a long time, literature, which once played a prominent role in language study, has been excluded from both ESL programs and first language composition programs whose central aim is the achievement of linguistic proficiency. In recent years, however, many educators in both fields have again acknowledged the academic, intellectual, cultural, and linguistic benefits of the study of literature. An examination of research on the activities of reading, composing, and responding to literature reveals that these three areas of study, usually taught separately, can be viewed as similar processes. After discussing these findings, this article describes a literature and composition course which demonstrates how ESL students can profit from instruction which focuses on the interrelationship of reading and writing. The course also shows that ESL students have much to gain when literature is the reading content of their composition course and the subject matter for their compositions.

Those of us who teach composition at the college level want our students to be able to think logically and to write good academic prose. We also want them to be able to use language to explore and express ideas and to communicate those ideas clearly. What we do in the classroom to achieve those goals depends on our individual expertise, taste, and outlook; on our students’ knowledge, abilities, and goals; and on the context in which we are teaching. Therefore, we cannot reasonably expect that we can follow a prescription to design a writing course. Nevertheless, since what students read and write about is so crucial to the success of a writing course, this article recommends a variety of assignments which actively engage students in the process of exploring and discovering meaning through reading and writing and which result in the production of the kinds of academic texts students need to write for college courses.
Because ESL college-level writing programs are modeled, more or less, on college-level writing programs designed for native speakers, a brief overview of the history of the emergence of composition courses in English-speaking universities is presented. This summary should help shed light on the reasons why we teach composition the way we do and should cause us to question the common practices of emphasizing form and correctness and of treating reading and writing as separate areas of study.

In particular, the study of literature (fiction) and the writing of literary analyses are discussed. Literature as the exclusive reading matter for a composition course may not be suitable or even advisable in all learning situations. However, the study of literature can be beneficial to ESL students, even those in technical fields, and writing about literature can be an appropriate assignment for a composition class.

THE PLACE OF LITERATURE IN ESL PROGRAMS

Although literature once played a significant role in language study, its prominence faded as linguistics became the focal point of language programs (Widdowson 1982). Linguists such as Topping (1968) argue that literature should be excluded from the ESL curriculum because of its structural complexity, lack of conformity to standard grammatical rules, and remote cultural perspective. In other words, these linguists believe that literature does not contribute to ESL students’ practical goal of achieving linguistic proficiency.

A renewed interest in literature has surfaced, however, as teachers search for resources that will take their students beyond the elementary level of intensive language instruction offered by most linguistic approaches to a level which will enable them to function effectively in the second language (Topping 1968). Numerous teachers now believe that the literary heritage, whose study fosters habits of “seeing feelingly on the one hand, and skeptically, rationally, on the other” (Oster 1985:75), should not be denied to ESL students who are intellectually and emotionally, if not linguistically and culturally, ready to examine literary works (see, for example, C. Scott 1965, Ashmead 1967, Povey 1967,1979, Arthur 1968, Marshall 1979, Gregg and Pacheco 1981, DiPietro 1982, McKay 1982, Gilroy-Scott 1983). Some have published literary anthologies for ESL students (McKay and Petitt 1984, Mullen 1984a, Povey 1984).

According to Povey (1967), the linguistic difficulty of literature has been overstated; readers do not need to experience total comprehension to gain something from a text. In fact, literature, with its extensive
and connotative vocabulary and its complex syntax, can expand all
language skills (Povey 1967). Likewise, the cultural benefits of studying
literature are hard to ignore, since literature mirrors national culture
(Harris and Harris 1967a, 1967b) and can therefore acquaint students
with the aesthetic, moral, and spiritual values of the nation and the
rules of the social system (C. Scott 1965, Adeyanju 1978). Even in
countries where English is learned primarily for practical communi-
cation or for specific purposes rather than for general education,
literature in English—including non-native English literature (see
Sridhar 1982)—can play an important role. Because literature expresses
both cultural values and universal human values, its study can promote
internal as well as international communication among all English-
speaking peoples (Marckwardt 1978).

Nevertheless, Widdowson (1975) warns that literature is misrep-
resented when it is used to teach something else. When the purpose
of teaching literature is, for example, to teach culture, literature
tends to become simply “a repository of factual data” (78) and the
essentially “literary nature of literature” (79) is lost. By the same
token, students who study literature for the purpose of learning
language usage will not develop “an awareness of the way language
is used in literary discourse for the conveying of unique messages”
(76).

While literature can aid language learning, it must first succeed as
literary experience (Povey 1967, Arthur 1968). Widdowson mocks
those who, having banished literature from the curriculum because
of its alleged irrelevance to the purpose of language learning, invent
their own brand of fiction to display language usage: “Textbooks
are full of fiction. Mr. and Mrs. Brown, son David, daughter Mary
pursuing the dreary round of their diurnal life” (1982:205). Students
read such texts but do not become humanly engaged in them; they
do not view them as a meaningful use of language. ESL students
deserve to discover that “English can be a beautiful language,” not
just a “practical and utilitarian” one (McConochie 1982:232).

Widdowson therefore suggests that rather than limiting the focus
of literary study to either language usage or cultural content, we should
view literature as discourse and the study of literature as “an inquiry
into the way a language is used to express a reality other than that
expressed by conventional means” (1975:80). The student’s aim should
be to learn how the language system—the structures and vocabulary
of English—is used for communication. To those concerned about
the utilitarian aim of language learning, Widdowson points out that
something useful can be gleaned from the study of literature. It can
develop “a sharper awareness of the communicative resources of the
language being learned” (1975:83).
Those composition teachers who might object that literature does not provide a model or input for the kind of academic discourse students need to write can compare literature in the classroom to other forms of discourse. If students read literary works and are then asked to consider nonfiction essays, or vice versa, they can become aware of the different ways writers create texts to engage readers. An awareness of the difference between these two forms, particularly in the reader/writer relationship, is crucial to an understanding of why and how texts are put together.

By leaving some things unexplained, imaginative literature differs rather consistently from discursive prose. The essayist characteristically wants to supply as much detail as possible so that his meanings are direct and clear. But the writer of literature leaves much for the reader to conjecture and imagine (Irmscher 1975:108).

The study of literature, because it demands this search for meaning, provides students with another useful tool which is a critical feature of language learning: the ability to interpret a discourse (Widdowson 1983). Interpretive procedures are valuable to learners; they can be applied to “a range of language uses, both literary and non-literary, which they encounter inside and outside the learning situation” (Widdowson 1975:84).

By interpreting texts and considering alternative interpretations, students come to understand in a fundamental way how meaning can be created through reading. Recent schema theory helps to explain this phenomenon. According to this theory, reading comprehension is not simply a straightforward act of retrieving information from a text but is “an interactive process between the reader’s background knowledge and the text” (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983:556). The text, then, does not contain a static or inviolable meaning; it provides readers with directions for constructing meaning from their own cognitive frameworks (schemata), which are formed by previously acquired knowledge, feelings, personality, and culture (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983).

This understanding of reading can help make students aware that when they write texts, they need to consider the reader’s point of view. An active exploration of this writer-reader interaction can lead students to realize and internalize the idea that what they write becomes another person’s reading and must therefore anticipate a reader’s needs and meet a reader’s expectations. This concern for the reader does not preclude concern for the integrity of the writer or of the text. The writer’s intentions and the text’s structural features play a powerful role in shaping readers’ interpretations of what they read.
THE PLACE OF LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION IN FIRST LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

While the ESL field has been struggling to define the aims of the study of literature and its role in ESL programs, English departments have been struggling to determine literature's role in composition programs. Literature and composition have traditionally been taught separately, but the tradition is not long-standing. Not until the mid-nineteenth century, in fact, was English literature—including history and biography, expository and didactic works, scientific writing, and poetry and fiction—studied as a distinct subject (Homer 1983). In the eighteenth century, the purpose of English studies had been to unite the teaching of classical rhetoric—persuasive oral and written discourse—with an understanding of literary culture (P. Scott 1980).

But in the nineteenth century, the field of English studies was fragmenting: Literature, once concerned primarily with the study of the creative act, became more concerned with the study of reading, or the interpretive act; rhetoric, once concerned primarily with discovering and communicating truth, now became almost entirely concerned with form and correctness (Corbett 1983, Horner 1983).

The reasons for this fragmentation were both socioeconomic and pedagogical. As once-elite college training was offered to greater numbers of people from various backgrounds and geographical areas, a desire to "set standards of propriety in language" grew (Connors 1985:65). Grammatical instruction, once the domain of the elementary school, found its way into the college curriculum. The concern for genuine communicative competence was replaced by a concern for the avoidance of error. Nineteenth century professors, faced with lecture-sized writing courses, were forced to concentrate on the mechanical act of correcting errors in student papers (Connors 1985). Responding effectively to each paper as communication was clearly impossible.

By the twentieth century, literary scholars had dissociated themselves from the field of rhetoric, no longer considered a scholarly discipline, and had created reader-centered courses limited to scholarly criticism of poetry, drama, and fiction. Soon graduate students and part-time faculty were called upon to teach composition courses. These time-consuming courses focused on expository and scientific writings and emphasized grammatical correctness as the central aim of writing (Corbett 1983, Horner 1983, Connors 1985).

Since about the middle of this century, efforts have been underway in the first language field of instruction to release the teaching of composition from the grip of its emphasis on form and correctness (see, for example, Donovan and McClelland 1980), to re-evaluate...
the role of critical theory in the study of literature (Purves 1979), and to reintegrate the study of composition with the study of literature (see, for example, Rubinstein 1967, Memering 1977, Miller 1983). Part of the reason for this movement is purely political: With declining enrollments in literature courses, tenured English faculty are now having to teach composition courses. They are, by and large, more comfortable with literary texts than with expository essays and are “uncertain about how to teach writing at a rudimentary level” (Corbett 1983:168). But numerous studies have pointed to the need for changes in the way we teach composition and literature.

Recent composition research has reminded us that composing is far from being a simple matter of fitting correctly phrased ideas into a form. It is a recursive series of complex intellectual and cognitive processes in which the writer uses language to explore and communicate ideas (Emig 1971, Perl 1979, Pianko 1979, Flower and Hayes 1980, Sommers 1980). Krashen’s (1984) review of over 50 years of research on grammar instruction reveals that competence in writing—the knowledge a proficient writer has about writing—does not come directly from a study of grammatical structures and discourse rules. But a writer’s performance—the ability to put knowledge about writing to use in an actual piece of writing—can be improved if efficient composing processes are taught and practiced, as students write and revise drafts, they interact with their own texts and learn that the act of writing can itself generate ideas (Murray 1968). Emphasis on error has been replaced in the process-centered classroom by a concern for meaning.

A similarly radical change in thinking about response to literature has taken place in recent years. Early in this century, literary theorists assumed that there was only one correct way to read a work of literature (Purves 1979). In Literature as Exploration, Rosenblatt (1938) reacted against this ritualization of response to literature by exploring the interactive relationship between individual readers and literary texts. But her subjective perspective was “soon lost in the onrush of formalist exegetical criticism which emphasized the objectivity of knowledge” (Bleich 1980:351). The object of study—the work of literature—was believed to be unaffected by the reader’s attempt to understand it. Not until two or three decades later did response theorists and researchers recognize what Rosenblatt had tried to tell them: that individual responses to literary works could be as valid as authoritative, formal techniques of literary interpretation (Bleich 1980). If the meaning of a literary work is dependent on the individual reader, so too is it dependent on the text’s language, structure, and tone and on the audience or the situation in which an individual is asked to respond to a text (Purves 1979).
Petrosky (1982) links this research on response to literature, recent composition research, and recent reading research (schema theory), all of which focus on the process of making meaning. These processes share the “act of constructing meaning from words, text, prior knowledge, and feelings” (22). The activity of composing, then, once artificially separated from the activity of reading, can justifiably be taught in conjunction with the teaching of literature.

Literature can be taught as “a way of exploring, understanding, and reflecting on the strategies by which readers . . . generate meanings in the act of reading” (Salvatori 1983:659). Writing about reading is one of the best ways to get students to “unravel their transactions so that we can see how they understand” (Petrosky 1982:24). Furthermore, writing is “not only a record of understanding, but an act of understanding” (Rubinstein 1967:83); the writing process can therefore aid the reading process.

There is also compelling evidence that extensive reading for genuine interest and/or pleasure, reading in which the reader focuses on the message, contributes to the development of writing ability (Krashen 1984). Salvatori’s research suggests that her students’ improved ability to manipulate syntactic structures is the result of their “increased ability to engage in, and to be reflexive about, the reading of highly complex texts” (1983:659).

A LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION COURSE FOR ESL STUDENTS

The benefits of studying literature clearly make it appropriate reading matter for ESL students. These students, who share many of the same composing strategies used by native language students (Taylor 1981, Lay 1982, Zamel 1982, 1983, Raimes 1983), should also be able to benefit from instruction which focuses on the connections between literature and composition.

Given those premises, we must ask how we can teach literature and composition in the classroom so that students can benefit from their interrelationship and how we can avoid the tendency to teach a literary seminar with little instruction in how to write (Corbett 1983). The remainder of this article describes the one-semester literature and composition course I teach to ESL college freshmen and offers some practical suggestions for answering those questions.

In the course, students read primarily short fiction—short stories and novellas—and their writing assignments are literary analyses of the works studied in class. The topics for their papers grow out of class discussions and notes, in-class writing exercises, literary journals, and, occasionally, research.
Few of the students know how to create a written analysis of literature, even though all have taken a previous writing course; they need guidance early in the term and throughout the semester. There are several reasons for this. First, literary analysis is a unique form of writing; it requires that writers know the meaning of literary terms such as theme, plot, character, setting, and point of view. It also demands that they look beneath the surface of words to determine from a variety of complex clues the insights the author wishes to share with the reading audience. Second, ESL freshmen, even the most sophisticated, have relatively little experience in reading literature in English. A few have never read Western literature at all, even translated into their native languages. A number of students have educational backgrounds in which the study of technical and scientific subjects has taken precedence over the study of the humanities.

To fill in some of the gaps resulting from study in other countries and to give students a broad exposure to the world’s fine literature, I choose fiction masterpieces by American as well as foreign authors. Short fiction is assigned precisely because it is short: It is easier for students to read when they have less to read and easier for them to write when the work is short enough for them to absorb and study closely. All works are read and discussed in English.

I have discovered over the years that it is best to choose stories which I most like to read and teach. I select stories that I believe will interest students most, such as those which have intriguing opening lines (“As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect” [Kafka 1915/1976:67]) and equally intriguing plots or which deal with dilemmas concerning adolescents and young adults. Stories which have been made into films are also good choices because the films provide students with a visual interpretation of the stories and present the costumes, scenery, and sounds of the works.

Write-Before-You-Read

While I understand the importance of providing background information and previewing content to maximize comprehension for the ESL reader (Gatbonton and Tucker 1971, Johnson 1981), I do not provide too much information for fear of spoiling the pleasurable literary experience of reading a masterpiece of fiction (see Leki 1984). I do prepare students for some difficult vocabulary words or

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1 One fine source is The American Short Story series, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. For a catalog, write to Perspective Films and Video, 65 East South Water Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or contact a university film library.
for some culturally specific details which may severely limit their ability to comprehend a text. But I do not teach them much about a specific literary work before they read it. Instead, I often ask students to do an exercise called write-before-you-read (Sadow and Spack 1984), similar to a creative writing exercise described by Moran (1981), and I write with them.

In this exercise, students write from their own experience about an idea or a happening contained in the work they are about to read. No reference is made to the story itself. They write in class for 10 to 15 minutes without focusing on the mechanics of writing, so that priority is given to idea development. One advantage of this technique is that it gives students a fresh, uninhibited approach to a literary work. It also seems to help them comprehend challenging prose.

For example, a previous class had been confused by the opening of James Thurber’s “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty.” This story, which deals with a commonplace, henpecked man who seeks escape from reality through daydreaming, begins in the middle of a daydream. So before assigning the story to this class, I asked the students to write out a daydream, and I wrote with them. Quite a few of the students readily shared their daydreams, and we discussed the differences between the fantasy daydreams that some of them had written about and the goals and aspirations (daydreams of future success) that others had described. Then they read the story. None of the students had any difficulty understanding what Thurber was doing when he began,

“We’re going through!” The Commander’s voice was like thin ice breaking. He wore his full-dress uniform, with the heavily braided white cap pulled down rakishly over one cold gray eye... “The Old Man’ll get us through,” [the crew] said to one another. “The Old Man ain’t afraid of Hell!”...


What pleased and surprised me, though, was that the write-before-you-read exercise seemed to result in more than simple comprehension. One student, for example, understood that Mitty’s daydreams were like B-movie scripts, for she had written a part for herself in a film when she wrote her daydream in class and had even included dialogue. All of the students felt connected to Mitty by their own experience with daydreams and empathized with his plight. I, too, benefited from writing. Being unwilling to reveal my daydream to the class so as not to embarrass myself, I felt, upon rereading the story, compassion for Mitty because of his vulnerability and resentment toward Thurber for so openly exposing his main character. Students were able to see
that Mitty, unlike some of them, had no real goals and aspirations but was withdrawing from the real world, which he found oppressive, into a world of fantasy.

The brief story reprinted below, along with the instructions for writing, constitute the exercise that I use to introduce the write-before-you-read procedure and to guide students to an awareness of the unique relationship between writing and reading. The story and instructions are followed by samples of student writing, generated in a 10- to 15-minute period in class. Remember that the students had not yet read the story at the time they were asked to write.

Reading Assignment: “Zen and the Art of Burglary” from The Sayings of Goso Hoyen by Wu-tsu Fa-yen

If people ask me what Zen is like, I will say that it is like learning the art of burglary. The son of a burglar saw his father growing older and thought, “If he is unable to carry on his profession, who will be the breadwinner of the family, except myself? I must learn the trade.” He intimated the idea to his father, who approved of it.

One night the father took the son to a big house, broke through the fence, entered the house, and, opening one of the large chests, told the son to go in and pick out the clothing. As soon as the son got into it, the father dropped the lid and securely applied the lock. The father now came out to the courtyard and loudly knocked at the door, waking up the whole family; then he quietly slipped away by the hole in the fence. The residents got excited and lighted candles, but they found that the burglar had already gone.

The son, who remained all the time securely confined in the chest, thought of his cruel father. He was greatly mortified, then a fine idea flashed upon him. He made a noise like the gnawing of a rat. The family told the maid to take a candle and examine the chest. When the lid was unlocked, out came the prisoner who blew out the light, pushed away the maid, and fled. The people ran after him. Noticing a well by the road, he picked up a large stone and threw it into the water. The pursuers all gathered around the well trying to find the burglar drowning himself in the dark hole.

In the meantime he went safely back to his father’s house. He blamed his father deeply for his narrow escape. Said the father, “Be not offended, my son. Just tell me how you got out of it.” When the son told him all about his adventures, the father remarked, “There you are, you have learned the art” (Stubbs and Barnett 1983:228-229).

Writing Assignment: Write-before-you-read (This will be collected.)

Try writing a true or imaginary story which illustrates that teaching is not always a matter of stuffing knowledge into a student. Show how you or
someone else has learned (or can learn) without being taught in school. Don’t worry about grammar, punctuation, or spelling.

Student Writing, Example 1

I think I am a cunning person in my family, and this does not mean that I am the smartest of all. I have older brother and sister. I am the youngest son. Since I was young, I tended to observe what my brother and sister were doing with great curiosity. What they have done really interested me because each time they did something they were rewarded or punished according to what they did. I can’t come up with particular example, but suppose my brother did something wrong and punished by my parents, I tried to avoid to do what my brother did as possible as I could. So, I hardly can’t recall the memory of parents punishing me for my wrongdoing. Maybe all I had when I was young were a kind of conditioning of situation set by my brother and sister associated with rewarding and punishment of my parents.

Today, college taught me this in psychology class, but I knew and learned long before I went elementary school.

Student Writing, Example 2

My father best friend never went to school. And I think he is a perfect example of someone who has learned without being taught in school. When he was 16 years old, he was already working to help his parents to live. One day, when he was trying to stick an advertising on a latter, on a top of a 8 feet wall, he thought, “Why am I doing that?” “It’s raining, and besides that no one is going to have the great idea to look at my work!” Then, something popped out of his mind—he was to put the advertising on the sidewalk where everyone would have to see them—sun or rain. After asking his “small” bank to let him some money he decided to do the “abribus” “a shelter-bus.” What is to say. On the 2 sides of the shelter there would be advertising. People would have to see them. They are now in all over Europe. And he didn’t have to go to school to have that great idea.

After they wrote, the students discussed what they had written—again, before they had read anything. The first student discovered through writing that he had learned behavior by observing his family and not by studying a textbook. The second student realized that great ideas live within people; they need inspiration, not school, to bring them forth. It may appear that each of these students discovered different things, yet both of their discoveries are embedded in the text which they then read. Like my student who learned by observation, the son in this story by Wu-tsu Fa-yen has learned behavior by observing his father. And, like my student’s father’s friend, the son has perceived a knowledge which was within him all along (“a fine idea flashed upon him”). Wu-tsu Fa-yen is, of course, espousing Zen
philosophy, with its emphasis on enlightenment. My students, too, experienced a kind of enlightenment as they came to realize while they wrote that writing itself is not knowledge that I can “stuff” into them, but something which is already inside of them, ready to be set in motion.

The write-before-you-read technique may help make students better readers because “efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one’s own knowledge” (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983:556-557). They learn, too, to trust the validity of their own ideas and experiences and to recognize that literary works deal with real, relevant issues that they themselves can and do write about. This writing activity stimulates interest in the assigned reading and makes it possible for students to compare the texts they have themselves put together with the texts professional authors have constructed. The results are never identical, of course, and sometimes not even similar. Class discussions, however, can focus on the different routes taken and then analyze why a writer makes certain choices—in language, vocabulary, style, and content (Moran 1981).

The write-before-you-read technique works best if the writing assignment consists of a question or discussion statement which the students can easily write about in class, even if the assigned reading is complex. For example, in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s (1843/1967) story “The Birthmark,” the main character, Aylmer, an eminent scientist, interferes with nature when he precipitates his wife’s death by attempting to remove her only flaw, a birthmark on her cheek. The moral of the story is, ostensibly, that we must recognize that humans are by their very nature imperfect and that we must learn to appreciate what nature has given us. The story is more complex than that, however, for Aylmer is not presented as a murderous villain but is clearly admired by Hawthorne for his intelligence, accomplishments, and aspirations. To prepare students to grapple with this moral ambiguity, I ask them to write, before “The Birthmark” is assigned, about their own goals and the sacrifices they are willing to make to achieve them. The instructions for this write-before-you-read exercise and the results of one student’s ten-minute musings are presented below:

**Writing Assignment: Write-before-you-read**

Think of a goal that you feel you must achieve. Describe that goal and your efforts to achieve it.

**Student Writing**

The pursuit of a goal or an ideal is the major aim of many people’s lives. It is a challenge that must be overcome. People strive to achieve their goals and ambitions in many ways. For some, major goals may be to become
rich, or become a doctor. My goal in life is to achieve excellence. It does not matter in what field or profession it is—the important thing is to be the best at what I am doing. As I mentioned it is not important for me to become a doctor or a carpenter for this matter. But if I do become one of the two I would like to be the best one of the best in my field of concentration. As far as making sacrifices is concerned, I feel that I should give the best of me to achieve this goal. I am willing to give up most of my material belongings to succeed in reaching my objective. I feel that sacrifices are inevitable when it comes to making major decisions in one's lives, in this case, the decision being to pursue our goal no matter what.

Together, the students discussed the importance for human beings of having something to strive for in order to lead a meaningful life, even if the sacrifices are great. Such an assignment allows students to examine their own ideas before they confront those presented through a story. This examination helps prepare them for a close reading and an enlightening, exciting class discussion of the literary work. In this case, it helped sensitize them to the dilemma of the main character, who, though trained in rational thinking, was the victim of his own human passion and tendency to strive for perfection.

Some write-before-you-read assignments, because of their potentially personal nature, can be given as private writing, that is, writing that will not be read aloud or collected. Students can thus be assured that they will not have to reveal what they have written; they can simply talk about their own writing in class discussions or choose to remain silent. Many students, however, are quite willing to share, and all are interested in hearing what other students have written. As a result of writing before they read, sharing their writing with their peers, and comparing their writing with that of professionals, students develop a healthy respect for their own texts and a better understanding of how language can be used to comprehend—and sometimes to create—a piece of literature.

Responding to Literature

Class discussions. By writing before they read, students do not, of course, produce a finished composition which sheds light on a literary work. To create a sophisticated, written literary analysis, students must undergo a recursive process of discovery, writing, rewriting, and editing, which all writers experience when they confront a writing task.

Much of the discovery stage takes place in classroom brainstorming sessions on the story assigned for that day’s class. Students read the story before class but are not expected to be able to interpret it or
even fully comprehend it. The act of understanding takes place in the classroom (Rubinstein 1967). Since all students will ultimately be writing on one of the stories, any discussion gives them the chance to get ideas from others, to test out their ideas on others, to ask questions, to take notes, to write in the margins of their texts, to underline key passages in the story, and so on.

During class discussions, I explain difficult vocabulary words, culturally specific items, and the subtlety of the language used. Students need to know what licorice is, for example, in order to understand the significance of a character's bittersweet comment, “Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you’ve waited so long for” (Hemingway 1927/1979:283). One of the advantages of using literary masterpieces in an ESL classroom, in fact, is that class discussions can focus on the masterful use of language by writers whose every written word is carefully chosen.

Response heuristics. Even comprehensive class discussions do not guarantee understanding or the ability to write a sophisticated essay. According to Petrosky (1982:20), “in order to help students understand the texts they read and their response, we need to ask them to write about the texts they read.” He recommends Bleich's (1978) response heuristic as a good beginning point for teaching students how to represent their comprehension in writing: “They are asked to write, first, what they perceive in the text, and then how they feel about what they see, and finally what associations—thoughts and feelings—inform and follow their perceptions” (1982:25). This, says Petrosky, produces a structured response which more accurately represents comprehension than multiple-choice questions or quick-and-easy answer type discussions.

Other heuristic, or discovery, procedures, such as focused free writing and some invention strategies which have been successfully employed in ESL composition courses (Spack 1984), can give students a means of generating meaning. Such writing assignments can be given in class, either before or after a class discussion. Students should see such writing not as a test of what they have learned, but as a mode of discovering what they know and understand about a story. One student's in-class written brainstorming on “The Birthmark,” done just after a class discussion, is presented below, along with the instructions for the exercise:

Writing Assignment: Free writing on “The Birthmark by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Put down any idea that comes into your head about “The Birthmark. This technique allows you to explore the story to see what you know or
think about it—without making any decisions about whether the ideas are good or bad.

**Student Writing**

When I finished reading the story I did not like it because when you read the story once without really analyzing it you don’t get the point the author wants to express. After discussing the story I found it really interesting and with a lot of issues that can be discussed forever. I think we are not the people to decide if Aylmer was right or wrong because what is involved in this issue about science and nature is very profound. We can say that it was bad for Aylmer to do this to his wife because she died and the same could do any scientist with a whole race, but at the same time if human beings do not want to test new things nor have curiosity for what can happen in the future then the nature of men would be destroyed.

Because such writing may well form the basis for an essay later in the semester, I collect it, respond to it, and return it. I read some of it aloud to stimulate further discussion and to make students aware that there are many possible interpretations. I help them elaborate on and clarify their responses.

After they had generated material on “The Birthmark,” for example, students were asked to create a tentative thesis on the story. The student whose free writing was presented above reread her own text and my response to it (“I think you have captured Hawthorne’s dilemma quite well, especially in your last sentence”) and then produced a thesis. The instructions for this assignment and her thesis are given below:

**Writing Assignment: Create a tentative thesis**

Create a tentative two-sentence thesis for a paper on “The Birthmark.” In the first sentence, state what you believe to be Hawthorne’s central idea (his comment on life or his view on a subject or his insight into human nature). In the second sentence, state how Hawthorne gets his point across (does he reveal his message through a certain character, the interaction of characters, the setting, etc.).

**Student’s Tentative Thesis**

Being curious and striving for progress is an important part of human nature. Hawthorne makes his point clear by means of his main character, Aylmer.

A tentative thesis will undergo numerous transformations as students work on their papers; it would be counterproductive to ask students to adhere to an idea developed too early. But through such structured brainstorming exercises, the instructor can intervene to help students move from reaction to ideation, and students can learn to use writing to discover what a literary work means to them.
Literary Journals. In addition to these techniques for responding to literature, I have students regularly keep literary journals. They write the journals both in and out of class on dittoed handouts, which I collect at each class meeting. By carefully sequencing the journals, I can get students to begin thinking in literary terms about theme, plot, character, setting, point of view, and tone as they write. In the journals, students are directed to write plot summaries or brief character analyses, to discuss an idea suggested by the story or to explicate a passage from the story, to discuss the effect of the setting on a character or to attempt to explain the implications of the story’s ending, and so on. They are asked to select details and quotations from the text as evidence to support their ideas, that is, to practice logical, objective reasoning.

Students benefit from literary journals not only because they learn to use literary terms and to do a close reading of the text, but because they get feedback on their ideas. I read the journals for ideas and write comments at the bottom which respond to what the students have written. In some cases, I might mention that the journal contains the seed of a good idea for a longer paper, encourage the student to expand on the idea, and give concrete suggestions on how to go about accomplishing that task. Sometimes I point out discrepancies or inaccuracies and guide the student toward a more accurate reading of the story. By encouraging them when they are on the right track and setting them straight when they are not, I can help students gain confidence in their ability to interpret literature and to write about it in a meaningful way.

Since the journals are often turned into papers, I correct them but without grading them individually. In this way, I can catch blatant errors in mechanics which would be likely to turn up in their papers. I can also detect mistakes in literary techniques, such as not using literary terms accurately, not integrating quotations properly into their own text, or not providing ample evidence for the points made.

Some students are initially afraid to voice their own opinions about what they have read. The literary journals, like the write-before-you-read exercises and the response heuristics, enable them to risk expressing their ideas without fear of a grade and to trust their own instincts about what they have read. I often read some of the journals aloud to the class to let students know that what they and their fellow students have to say is valuable. By writing literary journals frequently, students get into the habit of writing about literature. The papers seem less of a hurdle because the journals serve as a source of valid and appropriate approaches to literary works.
Composing the Final Paper of Literary Analysis

What follows the procedures described above is similar to what happens in most process-centered composition programs. Students write papers about stories of their choice on topics they themselves have generated, usually through their journals. They bring trial drafts of their papers to class and, following a set of guidelines, discuss with each other ways to develop and clarify their ideas.

On the day the second draft is due, three or four students hand out mimeographed copies of their papers, read them to the class, and receive oral feedback from their classmates, with teacher guidance. The student presenters speak first, evaluating their own work, and then other students begin by telling the writers what they like in the papers and what they feel should not be changed, such as the introduction, an original idea, a certain turn of phrase, and so on—whatever they can find. They then ask questions and make suggestions. At this point, all of the students are quite familiar with the stories, having read them, discussed them, and written journals and papers on them; they are more than ready to challenge any assumptions made by a student writer. They demand proof of an assertion and make suggestions on which passage or quotation might substantiate a point.

I collect these drafts, make concrete suggestions for changes or additions, and return them. These drafts, I should point out, are often lacking in focus, disorganized, and underdeveloped, in spite of all the previous class and individual work. I find it necessary to spend class time to discuss them, to leave time for individual conferences, if the students want them, and to give the students at least a week to revise their papers. This revision is edited in class and then later turned in for a grade. While some papers may need yet another revision, a few are of very high quality, and most are quite respectable analyses of complex texts.

CONCLUSION

Because writing has no subject matter of its own, it can be difficult for composition teachers to find appropriate material for their writing classes. One advantage of having literature as the reading content of a composition course is that the readings become the subject matter for compositions and the basis for analyses. The study of literature demands that students search for “a reasoned understanding of distanced problems” and eliminates much of the “prefabricated position-taking” required by freshman rhetoric anthologies which cover controversial, “provocative” subjects such as capital punishment (P. Scott

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Scott found that his students wrote better when they were “writing about a real subject they had struggled to understand” and worse when they were “cooking up an essay on a topic unrelated to their serious subject” (1980:7) or about which they had very little special understanding.

In freshman rhetoric books which present their readings as models of “normal” or “normative” patterns of writing, the text itself, unlike a literary text, is not assumed to be aesthetically interesting; it is “valued and analyzed in relation to conventions . . . rather than studied for its own sake” (Miller 1983:221). Students who are assigned to imitate such patterns do not learn that readings are primarily vehicles for communication. Their own writing in response to such assignments is unlikely to be communicative either in purpose or in product. By studying literature, on the other hand, students can learn that written texts are meant to be read, reflected on, and responded to.

While training in teaching literature is desirable, ESL teachers should not be disinclined to teach literature because they are not literary scholars. Literature does not have to be studied through formalist criticism that is bogged down in technical terminology and complex symbolism. Today it is acceptable, even preferable, to teach literature as an exploration of meaning. We can experience literature along with our students and learn from our own writing about what we have read. Of course we should prepare each literary work assigned, but we should realize that something new can be learned about a literary work each time we examine it and each time our students share their unique perspectives with us.

ESL teachers should not be reluctant to teach literature simply because their students are engineers and science majors; they should not assume that these students are interested only in reading matter directly related to their fields of endeavor. Experience has shown that literature does appeal to the interests of many ESL students who study science and technology (Mullen 1984 b). Such students’ writing surely suffers from prolonged exposure to too much scientific and technical writing in English which, as Marckwardt (1978:18) reminds us, is “notorious for its clumsiness and stylistic infelicity.” Therefore, because “it is in literature that the resources of the language are most fully and most skillfully used” (Lee 1970:1), students should have the opportunity to see how the language is used—and then to use the language—with the greatest possible skill and effect. The focus of their college education should not be limited to vocational skills, for such a program may impede the full development of the educated mind:

The irony of the emphasis being placed on careers is that nothing is more valuable for anyone who has had a professional or vocational education
than to be able to deal with abstractions or complexities, or to feel comfortable with subtleties of thought or language (Cousins 1978:15).

In a composition course whose reading content is literature, the kind of interpretation students learn to do—to make inferences, to formulate their own ideas, and to look closely at a text for evidence to support generalizations—teaches them to think critically. Such training helps them in other courses which demand logical reasoning, independent thinking, and careful analysis of text. They also benefit from what I consider to be an extraordinary growth in vocabulary, a growth which I have not found as evident in courses which use nonfiction essays as prose models or stimuli for topics of papers. This may be the result of students’ becoming responsible for the appropriate use of words when they quote a passage to support an idea. For example, in a paper on James Joyce’s “Araby,” a student quoted the last seven words—“my eyes burned with anguish and anger”—(Joyce 1914/1983:325) in order to make a point about that story. I knew he had assimilated the vocabulary when later in the term he described a character in Richard Wright’s (1940/1983) “The Man Who Was Almost a Man” as “driven by anger and anguish.” I could cite numerous such examples of students’ accurately using language that they had come in contact with purely through reading and writing about what they had read.

The goal of an English course which incorporates the study of literature should not be to teach a body of knowledge or of rules but “gradually to elaborate the linguistic and intellectual repertoire of our students, a process that is more fluid than linear” (Applebee 1974:255). The focus of instruction is on how written language is used to explore meaning.

ESL students who take such a course understand better why and how writers write. They learn that they can use writing to get at the heart of the written work they are studying. They learn, too, to depend on their own powers of analysis and can feel confident in bringing their own experience to bear on what they read in English. They take pride in doing the same challenging academic work that their native English-speaking peers engage in. Perhaps most important, they share in the “celebration of language” (Widdowson 1982:204) which the study of literature engenders.
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THE AUTHOR

Ruth Spack is Adjunct Lecturer/Special Instructor for Foreign Students in the English Department at Tufts University and Lecturer in the English Department at Boston University. She teaches composition to native and non-native speakers. Her articles on ESL composition instruction have appeared in the TESOL Quarterly.

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Facilitating ESL Reading by Teaching Text Structure

PATRICIA L. CARRELL
Southern Illinois University

Recent research has shown that the rhetorical organization of narrative and expository texts interacts with the formal schemata of native English-speaking readers (the readers’ background knowledge of and experience with textual organization) to affect reading. Researchers have recently shown that formal, rhetorical schemata have similar effects on reading in English as a second language. Moreover, the research in native English reading has shown that explicit teaching of various aspects of text structure can facilitate first language reading.

This article reports a controlled training study designed to answer the related question for second language reading, Can we facilitate ESL reading by explicit teaching of text structure? The results indicate that training on the top-level rhetorical organization of expository texts significantly increased the amount of information that 25 intermediate-level ESL students could recall.

INTRODUCTION

A number of research studies have provided empirical evidence that the rhetorical organization of a text interacts with the reader’s formal schemata—that is, the reader’s background knowledge of and experience with textual organization—to affect reading comprehension. This effect of text structure on reading comprehension has been shown to be operative for both narrative and expository texts. Furthermore, the influence of text structure on reading has been demonstrated via different measures of comprehension—written recall protocols, summaries, retelling, and question-answering. Since research on expository prose has provided further evidence that knowledge and use of textual organization discriminates good readers from poor readers, it is reasonable to ask whether instruction which focuses on text structure improves comprehension for poor comprehenders.
In second language reading research, relevant research is lacking. Some recent research has begun to investigate the effects of rhetorical organization on second language reading comprehension. Based on this research, some investigators have begun to suggest a variety of pedagogical techniques for teaching various aspects of text structure to improve reading comprehension. And, of course, ESL reading teachers have for some time included varying amounts and types of instruction on text structure. However, no empirical research has ever been reported as to whether explicitly teaching text structure facilitates ESL reading comprehension.

This article reviews the relevant research on text structure and its effects on reading comprehension in both English as a native language and English as a second/foreign language. It then reviews studies which have shown that explicitly teaching text structure facilitates first language reading comprehension. Finally, based on this research, it reports recent results from a research project designed to answer the question, Can we facilitate ESL reading comprehension by teaching about text structure?

EVIDENCE THAT TEXT STRUCTURE AFFECTS READING

Within the theoretical framework of what has been labeled story grammars (if looked at from the perspective of a narrative text as a linguistic object), or story schemata (if looked at from the perspective of the mental processing of narrative text), a large number of empirical studies have demonstrated that narratives typically have a hierarchical schematic structure, that child and adult native readers are sensitive to such structure, and that when the structure is used to guide comprehension and recall, both are facilitated (Kintsch 1974, 1977, Rumelhart 1975, 1977, Kintsch, Mandel, and Kozminsky 1977, Mandler and N. Johnson 1977, Thorndyke 1977, Glenn 1978, Kintsch and Greene 1978, Mandler 1978, Adams and Collins 1979, Stein and Glenn 1979, Adams and Bruce 1980, N. Johnson and Mandler 1980).

Similarly, in the realm of expository prose, the research of Meyer (1975, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1979), Meyer, Brandt, and Bluth (1980), Meyer, Haring, Brandt, and Walker (1980), Meyer and Rice (1982), and Meyer and Freedle (1984) has shown effects on reading comprehension of differences in the rhetorical structures of expository prose. In her research on what is learned from expository texts, Meyer has gathered evidence that what she calls the “content structure” (1977a:307), or the way the information in a passage is organized, is an important factor in reading comprehension. Specifically, her research has shown that information located high, or at top levels, in the hierarchical
organization of a passage is recalled better than information at lower levels, both immediately after reading or listening, and also over time. Since this research has been reviewed recently in this journal (see Carrell 1984b), it is not repeated here.

By now, several studies have shown the effects on ESL reading comprehension of differences in the rhetorical organization of text. In the realm of narrative prose, Carrell (1984a) has demonstrated the effects of a simple narrative schema on reading in ESL. In the realm of expository prose, Hinds (1983a, 1983b) has compared Japanese and English speakers in their reading, in their respective native languages, of texts with a typical Japanese rhetorical structure. His findings show that not only is the Japanese structure generally more difficult for the English readers, but that particular aspects of that rhetorical organization are extraordinarily problematic for English readers, especially in delayed recall. He concludes that the traditional ki-sho-ten-ketsu pattern of contemporary Japanese expository prose is more difficult for English readers because of its absence in English expository prose. That is, native English readers lack the appropriate formal schema against which to process the Japanese rhetorical pattern.

The research of Connor (1984) and Connor and McCagg (1983a, 1983b) is also relevant here. Connor (1984) has compared the reading comprehension of Japanese and Spanish readers of ESL to that of a group of native English readers. She used an expository text with Meyer’s problem/solution type of top-level structure. In analyzing the recall protocols produced immediately after reading, Connor found that although the native English readers generally recalled more propositions from the original text than the non-native readers, the difference was in the number of low-level ideas rather than in the number of top-level ideas. That is, the non-native readers recalled about the same number of top-level ideas as the native readers but far fewer low-level ideas. The non-natives tended to be unable to elaborate on the main ideas with supporting details. This turned out to be a significant disadvantage when their recall protocols were holistically evaluated by ESL writing teachers, as reported in Connor and McCagg (1983a). Although not reported by Connor and McCagg (1983a) as a systematic finding, the native and Spanish recall protocols receiving the highest ratings by the ESL writing teachers reflected the problem/solution organization of the original text; neither of the Japanese protocols discussed by Connor and McCagg—neither the highest-rated nor the lowest-rated—reflected this top-level content structure.

Finally, a study by Carrell (1984b) shows the effects of four different English rhetorical patterns on the reading recall of ESL readers of
various native language backgrounds. That study showed that the more tightly organized patterns of comparison, causation, and problem/solution generally facilitate the recall of specific ideas from a text more than the more loosely organized collection of descriptions pattern. In this finding, ESL readers generally appear to be similar to the native readers tested by Meyer and Freedle (1984). However, that study also found significant differences among the native language groups (Arabic, Spanish, and Oriental) as to which English discourse types facilitate greater recall. For example, the Arabic group found the collection of descriptions type far less facilitative of recall than any of the other three. The Oriental group (predominantly Korean, plus a few Chinese) found the causation and problem/solution types about equal, and both of these facilitated recall more than the comparison and collection of descriptions, which were about equal.

TRAINING STUDIES-ENGLISH AS A NATIVE LANGUAGE

In the domain of training on narrative prose, three different studies have been conducted—by Singer and Donlan (1982), Gordon (1980), and Short (1982). Singer and Donlan (1982) showed that readers can improve their comprehension of narrative prose by being taught the schema for simple stories as well as a strategy for posing schema-general and story-specific questions to guide their interaction with the text. Singer and Donlan reasoned that the reader needs to be taught not only about the story schema (for the reader may very well already possess that knowledge), but also a strategy for applying this knowledge to the story. They taught a group of American eleventh graders a general problem-solving schema for short narratives (e.g., that a story involves a leading character who wants to accomplish a goal; the character adopts a plan for achieving the goal; on the way to the goal the character encounters obstacles which he or she overcomes, circumvents, is defeated by, and so on). Singer and Donlan then taught these students how to formulate general questions related to this schema (e.g., Who is the leading character? What is the character trying to accomplish?). Then they had the students practice deriving their own story-specific questions from these schema-general questions (e.g., Is this story going to be more about the officer or the barber? Will the barber kill the officer with the razor?). The readers’ ability to use these tools to comprehend short stories typically read at the high-school level was then tested. Using criterion-referenced tests, the comprehension of this experimental group was compared with that of a control group taught to comprehend short stories through the traditional method of teacher-posed questions. The results showed
statistically superior performance by the experimental group, thus
demonstrating the benefits of explicitly teaching schema for simple
narratives as well as strategies for applying the schema.

Gordon (1980) compared the effects of three different instructional
strategies on the comprehension of narrative selections in natural
classroom settings. Fifth grade children of average and above average
reading ability, who were using the same basal reader in one school,
were randomly assigned to one of three treatment groups: Content
and Structure, Inference-Awareness, and Control. Each group received,
on a daily basis, 10 minutes of differential treatment related to each
basal reader selection and 20 minutes of the regular basal reading
program. During each 10-minute period, the Content and Structure
group received instruction to improve pre-existing content schemata
and knowledge of the macrostructure (Kintsch and van Dijk 1978) of
text. The Inference-Awareness group was given training in the use of
a metacognitive strategy designed to improve their ability to make
text-based inferences and to relate prior knowledge (content schemata)
to textual elements. Given the focus of this group on content schemata,
this group might also be referred to as a “content” group. The Control
group received differential instruction in language-related literature
appreciation or creative activities pertinent to the basal reader story.
Among a number of specific findings in this study, Gordon reports that
the Content and Structure group significantly exceeded (p <.01)
both other groups on the overall written recall on the final test. Thus, a
group taught both text structure and content strategies for compre-
hending narrative text not only outperformed a control group, it also
outperformed a group taught content strategies only.

Short (1982) designed a self-instructional program for fourth graders
to remediate less skilled readers’ limited use of story schema. After
only three training sessions, she found that story grammar strategy
training significantly enhanced less skilled readers’ free and prompted
recall performance; those receiving the strategy training were indis-
tinguishable from skilled readers. Short observed that “the marked
changes in story recall brought about by three training sessions indi-
cated strategy training appeared to change passive poor readers into
active, strategic learners” (1982: abstract).

Thus, all three studies involving explicit training in the structure of
narrative texts (story grammar) yielded positive results, showing the
beneficial effects of explicitly teaching the schema for simple narra-
tives and strategies for applying the schema.

Let us now turn to training experiments with expository texts. In
two studies, Geva (1983) trained students in a text-mapping strategy
to help them understand and remember text information. Both studies were designed to train less skilled readers to pay closer attention to hierarchical aspects of text. Community college students were taught to represent prior knowledge and text structure in nodes-relation flowcharts, which represent the ideas as nodes and the relations among the ideas as labeled connectors. In Geva’s first study, students in the experimental group received 20 hours of instruction focused on the identification of causation and process descriptions in factual expository texts. Students in the control group received individualized teaching related to speed reading, text skimming, looking for key words, and identifying conjunctions in text. At the end of a five-week training period, the experimental group showed significant improvement not only on the flowcharting task but also on the Nelson Denny Reading Test (Nelson and Denny 1973). Yet, there were no differences between the experimental and control groups on the Nelson Denny Reading Test—both groups showed similar gain scores.

In her second study, however, with similar subjects, materials, and procedures as in her first study, Geva showed that less skilled readers had benefited from the instruction more than moderately skilled readers: The gain scores of the less skilled experimental students on the Nelson Denny Reading Test significantly exceeded the gain scores of the moderately skilled experimental students and of the less skilled control students. Geva speculates that “students with higher initial reading abilities had at least an implicit knowledge of text components before the experimental intervention” (1983:395); for them, the training program may have been redundant as a means of improving reading comprehension. Geva concludes: “The results seem to support the conjecture that learning to recognize text structure through flowcharting transferred to more careful reading of expository texts by less skilled readers” (1983:384).

Taylor and Beach (1984) recently studied the effects of text-structure instruction on 114 seventh graders’ comprehension and production of expository text. Each student was assigned to one of three groups: 1) an experimental group, which received instruction and practice in a hierarchical summary procedure used after reading social studies material; 2) a conventional group, which received instruction and practice in answering and discussing questions after reading; and 3) a control group, which received no special instruction. They found that the instruction and practice in the hierarchical summary procedure enhanced students’ recall for relatively unfamiliar, but not relatively
familiar, social studies material and had a positive effect on the quality of students’ expository writing.

Through direct comprehension instruction, Mosenthal (1984) trained sixth and eighth grade social studies and physical science students in a purposive reading strategy. This strategy involved identifying the writer’s general goal for a text, as well as subtopics, main ideas, and the relationship of main ideas across subtopics and to the writer’s general goal. The training relied on formal aspects of expository text (e.g., using the title to identify a main topic and using that topic to infer a writer’s general goal, using headings to identify subtopics) and utilized a text-mapping strategy Mosenthal calls a “planbox”—a simple diagram of a text labeling topic, subtopics, subtopic function, and main ideas. Data from question-answering tasks and summarizing tasks, collected once a week over a six-week training period, revealed that trained students wrote more structured summaries as a result of training and in other ways performed better than control students on all comprehension measures.

In a study spanning narrative and expository texts, Reutzel (1985) has shown that explicit training in the use of what he calls “story maps” (visual text maps) improved fifth graders’ comprehension of both types of texts. In this study, one group of students was trained in the use of story maps for both simple narrative and various types of expository texts (e.g., compare-contrast, cause-effect texts). The group trained on story maps recalled significantly more of both narrative and expository texts than a control group which used the directed reading activity approach.

Bartlett (1978) spent a week—five one-hour sessions—teaching a group of ninth graders to identify and use Meyer’s (1975) comparison, causation, problem/solution, and collection of descriptions text types. This group read and was tested for the recall of texts on three occasions: before training, a day after training, and three weeks after instruction. A control group participated in all the testing sessions, was exposed during training to the same instructor and the same texts for the same amount of time, but, instead of training on the text types, engaged in a punctuation activity as part of a grammar program. At the beginning and end of each training session, students in the experimental condition were informed of the objectives of instruction—that is, to identify top-level structure in prose passages during the reading of the passage and to use that top-level structure in organizing written recall of the passage. Bartlett’s results show that the trained group remembered nearly twice as much content on the post-tests as on the pretests—both one day after instruction and three weeks later. Furthermore, on the tests after instruction, the trained group did
twice as well as the control group. (According to the regular classroom teacher of the students in the experimental group, the students reacted favorably to the skills they learned, considered what they learned to be a valuable tool, gained confidence in themselves as learners, and also gained specific skills that carried over to subsequent units of study through the rest of the term.)

Thus, the five studies involving training on expository text structure—Geva (1983), Taylor and Beach (1984), Mosenthal (1984), Reutzel (1985), and Bartlett (1978)—all show that reading comprehension can be significantly facilitated by explicitly teaching readers about expository text structure and by teaching various strategies for identifying and utilizing that structure during the reading process.

**THIS TRAINING STUDY-ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

Some researchers have suggested that teaching various aspects of text structure ought to facilitate ESL reading comprehension (including Carrell 1984a), and some have even suggested a variety of pedagogical techniques to do this teaching most effectively—including text-mapping strategies like Geva’s flowcharts (see, for example, T. Johnson and Sheetz-Brunetti 1983). And, of course, many ESL classroom reading teachers already incorporate into their lesson plans varying amounts and types of explicit instruction about text structure and teach different strategies for relating text structure to comprehension. In the spirit of relating theory and research to ESL practice and pedagogy, on the one hand, and to demonstrate under controlled conditions that a particular pedagogical practice can yield a positive outcome, on the other hand, a training study was designed to answer the question, Can we facilitate ESL reading comprehension by teaching text structure?

**Subjects**

This study was conducted with a heterogeneous group of 25 high-intermediate proficiency ESL students, Level 4, enrolled in the intensive English program for foreign students at the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. The native languages represented included Chinese (5 students), Arabic (5), Bahasa Malaysian (4), Japanese (3), Indonesian (3), Korean (2), Spanish (2), and Turkish (1). The experimental group consisted of the 14 students in one section, and the control group of the 11 students in another section.
Training Procedures

Training was based loosely on Bartlett’s (1978) training procedures and was conducted during a one-week period in the Fall of 1984, in five successive one-hour sessions during the students’ regular CESL reading classes. The training covered four of Meyer’s (1975) major expository discourse types—the same four used by Bartlett (1978) and discussed in detail in Carrell (1984a). The sessions began simply, presuming no prior background and using several short and easy, illustrative text passages (sample training text passages are given in Appendix A). The sessions built during the week to longer and more subtle passages. All text passages were naturally occurring texts, selected from a variety of sources. Each session began and ended with reviews of the training program’s objectives, and each session reviewed the previous session’s main points.

The teaching style was intended to be highly motivating and engaging for the students and involved student interaction with the materials and individual corrective feedback. The teacher began by doing most of the talking, demonstrating, and so on, but quickly shifted the responsibility for learning to the students and allowed them to work at their own pace.

The basic objectives of the teaching program were explicitly communicated to the students. Specifically, we explained to them that sometimes it did not matter how they read—for example, when they were reading for pleasure—but that at other times, it did. They were told that sometimes, especially as students studying English for academic purposes and headed for the university, they would be called on to read a lot of information and to remember it—for example, in preparing for exams and class assignments. We explained that the efficiency with which students could read under such circumstances was important, that if they could get the necessary information quickly and effectively, it was likely they would perform well and feel better about the task. We told them that over the training period, we would be teaching them a strategy for reading that should improve their understanding of what they read and their ability to recall it. We emphasized that by teaching them a little about the ways in which expository texts are typically organized at the top level, we hoped to teach them how to use this knowledge to improve their

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Pilot testing of the training and testing materials with a similar heterogeneous group of 37 advanced proficiency students whose classes met only three times per week showed that significant positive training effects may be obtained with only three training sessions. However, I would not want to argue that this amount of time was ideal; only that with advanced students, it appears to be sufficient to detect an effect.
comprehension of what they read, as well as to teach them a strategy for using this knowledge to improve their recall of what they read.

During every training session, each student worked with a study packet, which was the focus of that session's activities (excerpts from the study packet for Session 5 are given in Appendix B). Every day as they left the session, the students were asked to apply what they were learning to all of the reading they did until the next session. This was intended to get the students to use the strategy outside their ESL reading classroom, in other nonteacher-supported reading situations.

The study packets included detailed explanations of the benefits of learning the strategy, along with checklists so students could monitor and regulate their own learning.

Control Sessions

While the experimental group was going through the training sessions, the control group also received special training with the same texts. However, they performed various linguistic operations with the texts, for example, grammar exercises, sentence combining, sentence analysis, work with discourse connectors, cohesion, and vocabulary work. They also focused on the content of the passages (e.g., using the texts as a basis for question-answering and discussion) and used the texts as the basis for various reading and writing assignments. The members of the control group were told that the special texts they were being given, over and above their regular CESL Level 4 reading curriculum, were part of an instructional program designed to get them to think about 1) the linguistic aspects of various texts, 2) the linguistic operations they could perform on texts to become more aware of the sentences which constitute a text, and 3) the content of a text and the connection between reading about a topic and writing about the same topic. The teaching style with the control group also attempted to motivate and encourage these students as they worked with the texts.

The only thing the control group did not receive was the training on top-level rhetorical organization and the strategy for using that information as a basis for reading and recalling expository text. The control group did not receive training in any specific alternate strategy for use in the reading and recall of text. However, because Level 4 students at CESL are university-bound, considerable emphasis is given at that level to reading and writing for academic purposes, that

\[\text{Since one individual taught the control group and another the experimental group (both were the students' regular CESL reading instructors), we were unable to control for any effects due to instructor differences. However, both were highly regarded, tenured teachers with equivalent experience.}\]
is, reading to learn from text, using a variety of approaches. While the experiment might have been more tightly controlled if we had included a specific alternate training strategy for the control group, we were more interested in comparing the top-level strategy to what is commonly taught in an ESL reading curriculum.

**Testing Procedures**

Both the experimental and control groups were administered a pretest during the class period prior to training (Friday) and a post-test during the class period following the week’s training (Monday). A second post-test was administered to only the training group, three weeks after the first post-test, to determine the persistence of the training effect. Due to time constraints, the pre- and post-tests covered only two of the four discourse types taught: *comparison* and *collection of descriptions*. Thus, the pre- and post-tests each included two texts, one of each of those two types. The length of the texts ranged from 230 words to 281 words. To control for any effects of content schemata, all of the texts used in testing were about energy and environmental issues. The tests consisted of reading each text, writing an immediate free recall, and identifying the text’s overall organization by answering an open-ended question (Appendix C is an example of one of the test packets, Post-Test 1).

**Scoring**

**Quantity of idea units recalled.** Each of the six texts used in the pre- and post-tests was first analyzed into idea units (see Appendix D for an analysis of one of the test texts into idea units). Basically, each idea unit consisted of a single clause (main or subordinate, including adverbial and relative clauses). Each infinitival construction, gerundive, nominalized verb phrase, and conjunct was also identified as a separate idea unit. In addition, optional and/or heavy prepositional phrases were also designated as separate idea units. Three separate raters were used to arrive at the idea unit analysis of each text, and all agreed on the final analyses.

Recall protocols were scored for the presence of each idea unit from the original text. In this scoring, each protocol was judged by two independent judges, with any discrepancies settled by a third

---

1 Standard reading texts for CESL Level 4 are *Reader’s Choice: A Reading Skills Textbook for Students of English as a Second Language* (Baudoin, Bober, Clarke, Dobson, and Silberstein 1977) and *Reading for College-Bound ESL Students* (Cowan, Moffett, Moore, Phans, Mahon, and Wenner 1982).
judge. The pairs of judges achieved a reliability coefficient of \( r = .96 \). Because the number of idea units varied slightly from text to text (from 37 to 47), the number of idea units recalled was transformed into a percentage of the total number of idea units in the original text.

Quality of idea units recalled. Each of the idea unit analyses of the six original test texts was organized into hierarchical levels (Meyer 1975, Meyer and Freedle 1964). Each idea unit was determined to be an Introduction, Top-, High-, Mid-, or Low-Level idea unit, according to the following criteria (see Appendix D for a categorization of idea units):

1. Introduction: represents the thesis statement of the text and reveals its top-level organization.
2. Top-Level: represents the main ideas being compared/contrasted (comparison text) or the main ideas being collectively described (collection of descriptions text).
3. High-Level: represents major ideas or main topics in the text.
4. Mid-Level: represents minor ideas or subtopics in the text.
5. Low-Level: represents minor detail in the text.

Organizing the idea units of each original text into a hierarchy enabled us to analyze the recall protocols in terms of the levels of idea units recalled and to determine whether the training was effective at all hierarchical levels or only for certain kinds of idea units—main topics, subtopics, or minor details. (Since most subjects had no difficulty recalling the central theses of Introduction and Top-Level, these idea units were not included in the qualitative analysis.)

Organization used. Each recall protocol was also analyzed to determine whether or not it utilized the text type of the original (i.e., collection of descriptions or comparison). To be classified as a collection of descriptions, the protocol had to have an overtly expressed topic plus associated comments on the topic; to be classified as a comparison, the overall structure had to contrast opposing points of view, either those of the original text or the subject's own point of view. The pairs of judges agreed 75 percent of the time in their scoring of the rhetorical organization used.

Organization recognized. The open-ended questions were also scored on whether or not the reader had correctly identified the discourse

---

5 Since the primary emphases of the study were the amount and type (quantity and quality) of information recalled from text, and not the rhetorical organization used to structure that recall, it was decided that the relatively low reliability of 75 percent could be tolerated on this secondary measure. Furthermore, a one-sample, chi-square test of the number of times the two judges agreed versus the number of times they disagreed yielded \( \chi^2 = 30.04, df = 1, p < .001 \). This 75 percent agreement rate is highly significant when calculated over 128 data points (128 recall protocols scored by each judge).
type. The pairs of judges agreed 86 percent of the time in their scoring of rhetorical organization recognized.

RESULTS

Although there appear to be some differences between the groups’ performances on the collection of descriptions texts and the comparison texts which warrant further analysis (see Carrell 1984b), the results reported herein are averaged across both text types. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups (N = 25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental (n = 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Percentage of Idea Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Subjects Using Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Subjects Recognizing Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control (n = 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Percentage of Idea Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Subjects Using Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Subjects Recognizing Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each test consisted of two discourse types: comparison and collection of descriptions.

First, the training enabled the experimental subjects to recognize the trained discourse types and to use them in their recall protocols. After training, the experimental group significantly increased in the proportions of those who recognized and used the text’s top-level organization, whereas the control group did not. Chi-square tests of proportions for paired observations (Glass and Hopkins 1984:291) yielded the following results: Recognition Experimental $X^2 = 12.25, p < .001$; Control $X^2 = .40$, n.s. Use: Experimental $X^2 = 4.00, p < .05$; Control $X^2 = .67$, n.s. Furthermore, the data from Post-Test 2 show the persistence of the training effect, even three weeks after training. However, the basic point of the study was to see if we could train subjects to recognize and use the text type to increase their reading
comprehension, as measured by the amount of the original text they were able to recall.

A one-way analysis of variance procedure showed no significant difference between the experimental group (X = 18) and the control group (X = 17) on the pretest (F = .001, n.s.). Although we were testing in already existing classrooms and were not able to randomly assign subjects to experimental and control classes, there were no differences between these groups prior to training.

In a research design such as this, involving comparable pre- and post-tests, one might suspect performance on the post-tests to be somewhat predictable from performance on the pretest. To the extent that this is the case, performance on the post-test could not be attributed to the experimental activities and would dictate use of an analysis of covariance procedure. Thus, the correlation coefficient between the pretest and the first post-test was checked, and an overall $r = .06$, n.s., was obtained. Since the pretest was not significantly correlated with Post-Test 1, an analysis of covariance was not appropriate.

A simple one-way analysis of variance was performed, and the results, reported in Table 2, show that the mean on Post-Test 1 for the experimental group is statistically significantly larger than that of the control group. In other words, the training sessions for the experimental group were statistically significant in increasing the total amount of information that students in that group could recall from the two types of texts they read. Moreover, this training effect for the experimental group was persistent.

### TABLE 2
Analysis of Variance— Idea Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2063.362</td>
<td>2063.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3342.986</td>
<td>140.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5306.348</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F = \frac{2063.362}{140.999} = 14.83, \, df (1, 23), \, p = .0009$

To determine whether the significant facilitating effect of the training applied equally to major topics (main ideas) as well as to subtopics and low-level details, the results were analyzed according to the hierarchical levels of the idea units within the original text. Table 3 presents these results. In a comparison of results on the pretest and the first post-test for both experimental and control
groups, an analysis of covariance procedure for the High-Level idea units yielded an F-value of 11.99, \( p = .0022 \). Thus, the Post-Test 1 mean for the experimental group is significantly larger than that of the control group for High-Level idea units. Results of the analysis of variance procedure for Mid- and Low-Level idea units yielded F-values as follows: Mid-Level: \( F = 12.32, p = .0019 \); Low-Level: \( F = 7.04, p = .0142 \). Thus, the Post-Test 1 means for the experimental group are significantly larger than those of the control group for Mid-and Low-Level idea units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3</th>
<th>Mean Percentages of High-, Mid-, and Low-Level Idea Units Recalled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups ((N = 25))</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental ((n = 14))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Percentage of High-Level Idea Units Recalled</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Percentage of Mid-Level Idea Units Recalled</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Percentage of Low-Level Idea Units Recalled</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control ((n = 11))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Percentage of High-Level Idea Units Recalled</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Percentage of Mid-Level Idea Units Recalled</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Percentage of Low-Level Idea Units Recalled</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each test consisted of two discourse types: *comparison* and *collection of descriptions*.

**DISCUSSION**

The training experiment yielded promising results, demonstrating that explicit, overt teaching about the top-level rhetorical organization of texts can facilitate ESL students' reading comprehension, as measured by quantity of information recalled. The results of the qualitative analysis show that the training facilitates recall of supporting detail as well as of major topics and subtopics. In addition, the persistence of the training was evident for as long as three weeks after training.

\(^6\) An analysis of covariance procedure was called for in this instance because of a significant correlation, \( r = .55, p < .001 \), between the pretest and the first post-test and a common within-group regression coefficient, \( F = .34 \), n.s.
It should also be mentioned that student reaction to the training was extremely positive. Students expressed the view that they had learned a helpful technique which benefited them. One very quiet student said that most of his life he had hated reading because he never knew what he was looking for and that now it made sense to him. All the training students expressed more confidence in themselves as ESL readers.

The findings of this study are noteworthy, since, as was mentioned earlier, no previously published research has shown that such explicit training does indeed enhance ESL reading comprehension. Although researchers have previously called for such teaching and although many ESL classroom reading teachers may already incorporate such training into their lesson plans, for the first time we have tangible evidence that such training studies can yield a positive outcome.

Obviously, many more such training studies need to be conducted 1) to refine the training techniques, 2) to determine the optimal length of training, 3) to discover whether there are differential effects at different proficiency levels of ESL, 4) to ascertain whether there are any differential effects of training due to differences in native language background, and 5) to determine the longer-range persistence of the training effect.

Such training on discourse types is obviously only one part of a comprehensive instructional program in ESL reading comprehension. As Tierney (1983:9) has said, “It is easy to forget that the mastery of the strategy should not displace reading for meaning.” Clearly a comprehensive instructional program in ESL reading comprehension should also include work in schema availability and schema activation (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983), metacognitive training (e.g., inference-awareness, analogy), comprehension monitoring skills, decoding skills, and soon (see Collins and Smith 1982 and Pearson and Gallagher 1983 for more on the latter). Teaching the prototypical patterns of different texts would be inappropriate unless such instruction occurs in conjunction with helping students, in a number of ways, to acquire meaning from text.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my research assistants, Elke Geisler, Pamela Griffin, Barbara (Kathy) Johnson, David Miller, and Takako Oshima, for their assistance with various aspects
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THE AUTHOR

Patricia L. Carrell is Professor of Linguistics/ESL and Psychology and Associate Dean of the Graduate School at Southern Illinois University. Her research in formal and content schemata and ESL reading has been published in the TESOL Quarterly, Language Learning, The Modern Language Journal, and forthcoming books co-edited with David Eskey and Joanne Devine.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Sample Training Texts

Advanced Adulthood

There are many physical changes that come with advanced adulthood. As in the earlier stages of human development, the physical changes in advanced adulthood vary greatly from person to person. And the ability to pinpoint these changes is made more difficult because of the effects of illness that are present in many people of this age group.

As a result of these physical changes, the muscles of people in advanced adulthood are not as flexible as they used to be. Seeing and hearing are often not as good as they were earlier. The body’s ability to resist infection and to recover from illness also decreases in advanced adulthood.

The Relation Between Man and Ape

Some people think that man came from apes. They believe this is so because man and apes share many characteristics. Both are mammals. Both are primates. Physically, early man and apes looked alike. Some think that modern man and apes look alike. But, the argument that men came from apes is not true. Most scientists believe that man did not suddenly arise from apes. Fossils have revealed many important differences in bone structure between early man and apes. Also, the social behavior of early man differed from that of apes. It seems that man and apes may have had common ancestors. But, the ape is not the ancestor of man. Altogether, facts show that
man is related to the ape, but only because he developed at the same time as
the ape was developing. The difference is that man developed more.
(Type Comparison, Training Session 3)

Forest Conservation and Forest Fires

One of the tremendous tasks facing the U.S. today is the preservation of
existing forests, both young and old, against fire. Fire destroys, in addition to
the trees and underbrush, the wildlife that inhabits the forest. Lightning is the
cause of some forest fires, but most are caused by people’s carelessness. Most
forest fires are caused by smokers carelessly throwing cigarettes and matches
in the woods, and by unattended camp fires and trash fires.

The United States is now making efforts to preserve the forests. Forest-
conservation programs include the planting of new trees, forest-fire preven-
tion, and the regulation of lumbering. The lumber industry itself is doing
much today to conserve forests. The United States Forest Service now
safeguards the forests. Trained rangers and foresters are on the lookout for
fires, and trained fire fighters stand ready to fight a fire once it starts.
(Type Problem-Solution, Training Session 4)

APPENDIX B

Excerpts from Study Packet (Training Session 5)

During the past few days, you have found that:
1. Picking out the organization in what you read is a key to understanding.
2. A strategy to improve memory is called using top-level organization.
3. The strategy has two (2) parts—picking the organization and using the
organization.
4. Picking the top-level organization needs your attention before, during,
and after reading.
5. To pick the organization, you ASK two questions before reading What is
this passage all about? (This gives the main idea.) How is this main idea
discussed? You ANSWER these questions while you read, and CHECK
your answers after reading.
6. There are many different top-level organizations, but four (4) are common
description, before-as a result, problem-solution, and favored view and
the opposite view.
7. Different words in the passage help you to pick the top-level organization.
Each of the common types of organization has a special way to pattern the sentences in a passage.

9. Description means most of the sentences are intended to describe persons, places, things, events, or qualities in the main idea.

10. Before-as a result means that there is a cause-and-effect relationship. Two main parts are involved. One tells about the cause or what happened before, and the other tells about the effect or result.

11. Problem-solution means that part of the passage tells about a problem (question, puzzle, concern), and the other tells about its solution (answer, reply).

12. Favored view and the opposite view means that different points of view are shown in different parts of the passage. It may be that one view tells what did happen, and the other tells what did not happen; or, one might tell what exists, and the other, what does not exist; or, each part might tell opposite arguments. But, the writer may clearly favor one view more than the other(s).

13. Once you have picked the top-level organization, you must use it to organize what you write.

14. Using the top-level organization needs your attention before, during, and after you write.

15. Before you write about the passage, write the name of the organization type and think about how it works.

16. While you write, keep your sentences relevant to the organization.

17. After you write, check that you used the proper organization correctly.

18. To use it, you should a) write its name on the top of the page you’ll be writing on (to help you get organized); b) write the main-idea sentence (to set up the top-level organization); c) arrange sentences to match the top-level organization (keep thinking about how the top-level organization works); d) check that you’ve used it (ask “Have I discussed the main idea that same way as in the passage?”); and e) write down anything you’ve only just remembered (often you think of more information as you are checking).

Your skill in using this information has shown that you can
a) still learn more about using the strategy.
b) find the main idea in the passage.
c) pick top-level organization in a passage.
d) use the same top-level organization to arrange your writing.
e) use the strategy effectively.

When should you use the strategy?
a) Only for reading Geography and English notes.
b) For reading that we don’t have to remember.
c) Only for what we read in this class.
d) For any reading we might want to remember.
To use the strategy, you must do these things:
1. **Before** you read ____________________________
2. **While** you read ____________________________
3. **After** you read ____________________________
4. **Before** you write ____________________________
5. **While** you write ____________________________
6. **After** you write ____________________________

Choose the best answer for the following questions:
1. In a *favored view and the opposite view* organization, sentences which follow the main idea sentence will be arranged:
   a) all mixed up.
   b) first one argument, then another.
   c) to show up different arguments, so, it could be either (a) or (b).

2. In writing down what I remember from a passage using a favored view and the opposite view organization, *I should first*
   a) write the name “favored view and opposite view” at the top of the passage.
   b) start writing straight away.
   c) use sentences that tell the problem, then sentences that tell the solution.

   *Second, I should*
   a) write down the main idea sentence.
   b) use sentences that tell what happened before, then sentences that tell what happened as a result.
   c) write the name “favored view and the opposite view” at the top of the page.
   d) use sentences that tell one argument, then sentences that tell another.

   *Then, I should*
   a) finish.
   b) check to see I’ve used the “favored view and the opposite view” top-level organization.
   c) use sentences that tell one argument, then sentences that tell another.

   *Fourth, I should*
   a) finish.
   b) check to see that I’ve used the “favored view and the opposite view” top-level organization.
   c) add anything else that I’ve just remembered.

   *Finally, I should*
   a) check to see that I’ve used the “favored view and the opposite view” top-level organization.
   b) add anything else I’ve just remembered.
   c) say or write the name “favored view and the opposite view.”
APPENDIX C

Post-Test 1

Name __________________________
class __________________________

This package contains two passages. Please read each passage. Read at your usual reading speed. Write down the time you start and finish. Then, write all that you can remember from the passage. Repeat these steps for the second passage.

Don’t worry about what others may be doing, as different packages and passages have been used. Therefore, some people may finish before you do. It is very important that you work through the package one page at a time. Do not look back at the passage once you start writing.

Nuclear Energy Versus Solar Energy

Two of the most promising sources of energy for the future are nuclear power and solar power. Both sources of energy have numerous advantages and disadvantages which must be considered in the development of energy programs.

For several decades, many governments have attached great hopes to nuclear energy as a less expensive alternative to oil and other fossil fuels. However, opposition to nuclear energy has increased in recent years. One of the main concerns of the critics of nuclear energy is the damage that the release of radioactive materials could inflict upon communities surrounding nuclear power stations. Harmful materials could cause serious health problems for individuals and could have disastrous effects on the environment. Another issue concerning nuclear energy involves using nuclear plants for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. This is especially a point of concern about countries with unstable governments, where nuclear materials could easily be used for nonpeaceful ends by terrorist groups.

Solar power is the other energy source over which there are differing opinions. One of the main advantages of solar energy is that the primary required resource—the sun—is abundantly available over most parts of the earth. Also, if a country’s main source of energy were to come from solar power, it would not have to depend upon other countries in order to maintain its energy supply. The main negative feature of solar power is that the technology is still being developed in this field and is not yet sufficiently reliable or cheap enough to compete with other sources of energy.

Write down as much as you can remember from the passage you have just read. Use complete sentences. You can use the words in the passage or your own words. Do not turn back to the passage after you start writing.
Nuclear Safety

Serious nuclear accidents in the past have led to the implementation of strict safety rules regarding the construction and operation of nuclear power stations. There are at least three goals of such safety rules.

First, the most obvious goal of any nuclear safety program is to reduce the probability of accidents. One effective way of reducing such probability involves using reliable, tested design practices in the planning of nuclear power plants. The construction of the power stations should be carefully supervised and inspected and the training of plant workers should be a high priority to ensure plant safety.

The second aim of nuclear safety is to minimize the release of radioactive materials if accidents should occur at a nuclear power station. The best way to protect against the release of dangerous materials into the atmosphere is to construct plants which are equipped with multiple barriers directed toward containing radioactive materials.

Finally, the third goal of nuclear safety rules is to minimize population exposure if radioactive materials are released. The most effective way of ensuring that as few people as possible are affected by radiation is to locate nuclear power plants in areas where the population density is low. Also, emergency response planning and preparedness are means by which the communities surrounding nuclear facilities can attempt to protect themselves from the dangers of radioactive materials released into the atmosphere.

Write down as much as you can remember from the passage you have just read. Use complete sentences. You can use the words in the passage or your own words. Do not turn back to the passage after you start writing.

What plan did the writer use to organize the passage you just read? Answer in about two sentences.
APPENDIX D
“Nuclear Safety”: Idea Unit Analysis

I* 1. Serious nuclear accidents . . . have led
I 2. in the past
I 3. to the implementation of strict safety rules
I 4. regarding the construction
I 5. and operation of nuclear power stations.
I 6. There are at least three goals of such safety rules.
L 7. First, the most obvious goal of any nuclear safety program is
T 8. to reduce the probability of accidents.
L 9. One way of reducing such probability involves
H 10. using reliable, tested design practices
M 11. in the planning of nuclear power plants.
H 12. The construction of the power stations should be carefully supervised
H 13. and inspected
H 14. and the training of plant workers should be a high priority
M 15. to ensure plant safety.
L 16. The second aim of nuclear safety is
T 17. to minimize the release of radioactive materials
M 18. if accidents should occur
L 19. at a nuclear power station.
M 20. The best way to protect . . . is
M 21. against the release of dangerous materials
M 22. into the atmosphere
H 23. to construct plants
H 24. which are equipped with multiple barriers
H 25. directed toward containing radioactive materials.
L 26. Finally, the third goal of nuclear safety rules is
T 27. to minimize population exposure
M 28. if radioactive materials are released.
M 29. The most effective way of ensuring . . . is
M 30. that as few people as possible are affected by radiation
H 31. to locate nuclear power plants in areas
H 32. where population density is low.
H 33. Also, emergency response planning
H 34. and preparedness are means
M 35. by which the communities surrounding nuclear facilities can attempt
M 36. to protect themselves from the dangers of radioactive materials
M 37. released into the atmosphere.

*I = Introduction, T = Top-Level, H = High-Level, M = Mid-Level, L = Low-Level.
Research on Refugee Resettlement: Implications for Instructional Programs

JAMES W. TOLLEFSON
University of Washington and Philippine Refugee Processing Center

Since refugees from Southeast Asia first began arriving in the United States ten years ago, a great deal of research on their resettlement has accumulated. Much of this research has implications for instructional programs in the processing centers of Southeast Asia and in the United States, but it may not be easily available to program planners. This article summarizes important research on resettlement reported since 1980 and outlines implications of that research for instructional programs in ESL, pre-employment training, and cultural orientation.

INTRODUCTION

During the ten years since U.S. involvement in the wars in Southeast Asia ended, over three quarters of a million refugees have been resettled in the United States. This historic movement of people has created an enormous challenge for educational and resettlement agencies. Ten years ago, planners setting up programs had to make decisions with little specialized knowledge of the unique circumstances, problems, and needs of refugees from Southeast Asia, but now all that has changed as a great deal of information about resettlement has become available. Several important studies of resettlement have traced refugees’ adjustment as well as their continuing needs. (The three studies most relevant to refugee instruction are Rubin 1983, Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984, and RMC Research Corporation 1984. ) In addition, there are now means for tracking the progress of recent arrivals and for monitoring their language, employment, and health concerns.

These developments mean that decision making in refugee programs has clearly become a policy-making matter. That is, instructional, administrative, and other programmatic decisions can be based upon evaluative feedback. By looking at what has happened to the people who have gone through programs, we can better shape these programs to serve the individuals who participate in them. Research on
resettlement is scattered among many sources, however, so that program planners may not have easy access to findings which have important implications for their decisions. This article attempts to fill that gap by summarizing certain major research findings and by outlining the most important implications of these findings for educational programs.

This survey of research is limited to topics related to instructional programs in the processing centers and the United States, namely to ESL, pre-employment training, cultural orientation, and related issues. Therefore, the list of references is not a complete bibliography of recent research on resettlement. For example, many technical studies of employment that are relevant to federal immigration and employment policy, as well as studies of secondary migration within the United States, are excluded because they do not directly relate to instructional programs. The survey is also limited to research since 1980, since earlier studies applied mainly to the 1975 arrivals, who differed significantly from later groups in their levels of education and literacy, their employment skills, and their previous exposure to Western culture.

The summary of research and implications for instruction are divided into five main sections: ESL, nonliterate refugees, employment and pre-employment, cultural orientation (CO), and health. Although health is a specific CO topic, research on the physical and psychological problems of refugees suggests that health issues deserve special attention.

ESL PROGRAMS

Research indicates that barriers to enrollment in ESL programs in the United States have limited the participation of certain groups. In general, the elderly, women, nonliterate, and the employed enroll in ESL classes less often than other refugees. Lack of child care is a major barrier for many women (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984), while employed refugees are often unable to take classes due to various constraints such as time, transportation, and child care. These major constraints are identified by TESL Canada (1981), Burton (1983), Conick (1983), Downing, Hendricks, Mason, and Olney (1984), and Strand (1984). Innovative solutions to these barriers have evolved in many programs and should continue. These innovations include special classes for the elderly, child care accompanying ESL classes, and specialized courses offered at work places employing refugees. Unless barriers to enrollment are removed, many refugees will continue to be excluded from existing programs.
For nearly one third of all refugees, the ESL class is the only opportunity to speak English regularly (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984; also see RMC Research Corporation 1984). A great deal of research has focused on the content of ESL classes and methodologies appropriate to Southeast Asian refugees. Like other learners, refugees will learn English more quickly if they feel that the topics are related to their life experiences and if the focus is on those topics rather than on language structures (Kleinmann and Daniel 1981). Unfortunately many commercial texts reflect Anglo, middle class values (Louie 1983). Nearly half of all class time in programs in the United States is spent on cultural orientation (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984), which is appropriate for beginning students as long as tangible objects and realistic contexts are used to create opportunities for English use.

Research on appropriate methodologies emphasizes that classes should include regular opportunities for natural interaction (speaking and listening); English should be the language of instruction; directions should be given in English; most activities should be aimed at encouraging natural spoken English; and explicit error correction should be avoided (Krahnke and Christison 1983, Louie 1983, Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984). Appropriate activities include role playing (without specifying utterances to be used); use of natural, unplanned English by the instructor; a planned method for eliciting responses without requiring production of specific structures; simulations; and tasks which require listening and/or speaking in English, such as following directions on a map, making simple objects, and so on (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984). Drills designed to elicit specific sentences are generally of little value. The implication for curriculum design is that curricula should not provide a list of structures, but rather should provide tasks and activities that encourage communication in English at the students’ own proficiency levels. Researchers have come to the same conclusion for most other groups of learners as well as Southeast Asian refugees (Krahnke and Christison 1983).

These findings in the areas of content and methods indicate that natural interaction in English is crucial in classroom activities. Teacher training in the processing centers should focus on developing teachers’ ability to 1) devise activities that elicit natural spoken English, 2) accept less-than-perfect English when it is understandable, and 3) improve refugees’ listening comprehension by using English at all times, including instructions to students. (Use of translators is currently common.)

Findings in two other areas are relevant to ESL programs (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984). First, class size is directly related to
opportunities for natural interaction in English; that is, smaller classes lead to greater use of English, which is essential for learning to take place. Second, U.S. classes with mixed ethnicity and nationality experience little conflict and promote greater use of English among students. A pilot study of mixed classes in the processing centers, where students are normally divided by nationality, might reveal similar benefits.

Research designed to identify variables associated with rate of learning and eventual level of attainment isolates two major factors: prior education and literacy. That is, literate refugees and those with more previous education are likely to learn English faster and to achieve higher levels of competence. In addition, English proficiency at the time of entrance to the United States is an important predictor of eventual attainment (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984, Strand 1984). At the present time, placement procedures in processing centers are based upon language proficiency and literacy. Since educational level also predicts rate of learning, it might be beneficial to take this factor into account in the placement process, so that refugees with similar English proficiency and literacy could be grouped by previous education.

Studies of language learning indicate that employment does not lead to increased language proficiency, nor does simply spending time in the United States. For most refugees, ESL classes are far more effective for improving competence (Finnan 1981, Cox 1983, Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984, Strand 1984). Moreover, English proficiency has the highest correlation with employment, and in general, a greater number of hours spent in ESL classes results in higher proficiency (Wilson and Garrick 1983, Downing, Hendricks, Mason, and Olney 1984).

Taken together, these findings suggest that ESL classes have no substitute. Without ESL, many refugees will find only entry-level jobs, which provide no opportunity for language learning; and without language learning, opportunities for employment will remain extremely limited. Fortunately, ESL programs in the processing centers have had a “pronounced” effect on the English proficiency of most refugees by the time of their entrance to the United States, while the ESL programs in the U.S. have a strong impact on eventual level of attainment (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984). Moreover, improved employment opportunities make ESL classes quite cost-effective in the long run, as refugees may pay back in income taxes more than the cost of their education (Kennedy 1981).
NONLITERATE REFUGEES

Nonliterate refugees are not as well served by existing programs as literate refugees (Kleinmann and Daniel 1981, Cox 1983, Louie 1983, Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984). The main problems for nonliterate areas follows: 1) Written materials are commonly used even when such materials may not be appropriate; 2) many beginning texts do not reflect the experiences of individuals from rural backgrounds in Southeast Asia; and 3) most teachers of nonliterate have no specialized training in literacy. In addition, nonliterate enroll in ESL programs less often than literates, as mentioned earlier, and they drop out sooner. Nonliterate begin ESL at lower proficiency levels, acquire English more slowly, and obtain little input in English outside of class. The severity of these problems is indicated by the fact that one third of U. S. ESL program administrators surveyed believe that a typical 50-year-old nonliterate will never learn enough English for an independent job search (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984; see also Hackett and Edwards 1983). Because nonliterate are faced with a much greater task, eventual attainment is likely to be less than for literates.

Nevertheless, many of the difficulties facing nonliterate can be addressed, thus providing reason for optimism. Steps which can be taken include careful review of materials to ensure that they are appropriate for nonliterate students from Southeast Asia; innovative solutions to the barriers which limit enrollment and lead to early withdrawal (child care, transportation, special classes for the elderly); and intensive teacher training in methods appropriate for nonliterate students. In the processing centers, classes could be divided by age group and focus on different literacy skills appropriate for each group, with very limited literacy as a practical goal for the elderly. In general, classes for nonliterate should be smaller, last longer, and include many opportunities to speak English.

EMPLOYMENT AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT

Studies of employment emphasize the overwhelming importance of English (e.g., RMC Research Corporation 1984:106). Early arrivals (late 1970s) now have employment levels matching the general U.S. population, but they often have insufficient income and have not recovered from the significant downward mobility experienced upon arrival (Bach and Bach 1980, Fragomen 1981, Haines 1983). Among recent arrivals, large numbers remain unemployed after they are no longer entitled to federal resettlement funds (Wilson
and Garrick 1983, Strand 1984). Moreover, job skills training and placement services seem to have only limited effect on employment (Strand 1984). Not even pre-arrival education seems as closely related to employment as English, which is the best predictor of employment (Strand 1984).

Pre-employment training should be viewed within the context of these findings. One major aim of pre-employment training is to provide refugees with the skills required for seeking employment in the United States. Getting any job other than an entry-level one, keeping a job, and advancing to a better job all depend to a large extent on English. The implication for pre-employment training is that classes should be organized so that ESL is central to classroom activities and language learning takes place on a regular basis.

Additional research provides insight into specific language skills related to employment. Although employers report (Latkiewicz and Anderson 1983) that refugees equal or surpass the general work force in many areas (e.g., politeness, honesty, good grooming, and clothing), they identify insufficient language fluency as the underlying cause of most instances of failure to get along with fellow employees as well as of most work-related difficulties. Among refugees' interfunctional problems on the job, employers consider refugees' failure to make it clear when they do not understand to be the greatest difficulty. In general, employers consider speaking skills important for asking questions and reporting problems, while listening skills are cited as the greatest overall need. These findings indicate that communicative activities in pre-employment classes should emphasize a range of listening skills as well as specific speaking skills such as asking questions, seeking clarification, and reporting problems.

Research on employment raises two additional points. First, some resettlement agencies may operate with an idealized view of male-dominated families (McGlaflin 1983). However, the facts are that as many as one third of all refugee families are headed by women, perhaps one third of all women are employed, and a majority of working women make a significant contribution to family income (Finnan 1981, McGlaflin 1983, Downing, Hendricks, Mason, and Olney 1984). Therefore, pre-employment training should carefully consider the specialized employment needs of women (Rubin 1983). Second, since employers report that refugees have difficulty in correctly filling out application forms (Latkiewicz and Anderson 1983), pre-employment classes could place additional emphasis on this area.
CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Approximately half of all class time in U.S. ESL programs is spent on CO topics such as housing, health, consumer skills, and employment orientation (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1984). The specific CO information presented in U.S. classes varies greatly according to the local situation. In addition, refugee family groups and the refugee social network provide aid and support in many ways, especially in housing, transportation, and medical care. Some members of the refugee communities are considered to be experts on specific topics and are consulted regularly. (For analyses of this complex process of self-help, see Holloway 1981, Jorgensen 1981, Faust 1982, Bui 1983, Burton 1983, Conick 1983, McInnis 1983, and Kerpen 1984.)

Taken together, these findings suggest that CO classes in processing centers are not the most effective place for presentation of information about CO topics. This is more effectively done in the United States. Pre-entry CO classes should develop generalized coping skills appropriate for a variety of situations and locales. These coping skills should be aimed at helping refugees handle a wide range of problems: general stress, changed family relations in which children play a dominant role due to their English competence, financial difficulties, and health concerns.

Many studies conclude that the most valuable skill for coping with many problems is English proficiency. For instance, studies at a Seattle clinic revealed serious communication difficulties which adversely affected refugees’ health; use of translators did not solve these problems (Faust 1982). Classes designed to improve refugees’ ability to cope with the problems of resettlement should emphasize language skills necessary for handling these problems. This implies that most classes should be conducted in English, and that simulations, problem solving, and other activities should be presented and carried out without relying upon refugees’ native languages. In addition to this general principle, there may be value in having refugees who have lived in the United States for several years provide cultural and employment orientation. This orientation could be aimed at developing generalized coping skills, as well as solving individual problems that may arise. This dual approach (using English for CO activities and having specialized orientation by members of U.S. refugee communities) would strengthen English language skills while making use of the network of individuals within the refugee communities who currently provide valuable aid.
Among all CO topics, health is perhaps the most important. A growing body of research indicates that serious health difficulties persist within the U.S. refugee community and that ineffective interaction with the American health care system is one of the main problems of refugees (Cohon 1981, Holloway 1981, Jorgensen 1981, Faust 1982, Brewer 1983, Bui 1983, K.-M. Lin and Masuda 1983, and E. Lin 1984). Refugees’ difficulties with American health care involve many failures of communication, As a result, a high proportion of their illnesses are not successfully diagnosed or treated. One study (Faust 1982) found that more than half of what took place during visits to clinics was incomprehensible to refugees, that 40 percent of patients had no understanding of the diagnoses of their illnesses and 13 percent had only partial understanding, and that 33 percent did not adhere at all to the prescribed medication. This breakdown of communication often disguises emotional and psychological problems which underlie many clinic visits. Studies which have followed up refugees who visited clinics reveal a high rate of previously undiagnosed depression. In one such study, E. Lin (1984) found that one third of all problems involved somatic illness. Among Mien and Lao, the proportion was 47 percent.

Because most resettlement programs generally emphasize employment, health problems have a lower priority. In addition, young children and adolescents, who are obviously not the targets of employment programs, nonetheless have serious health needs about which their parents must be informed (see Rubin 1983 for a survey of areas requiring additional investigation). Solutions to some of these problems require action by U.S. agencies (Parkins 1983, Union of Pan Asian Communities 1983, Weil 1983, Wong 1983), yet instructional programs can also contribute. CO and ESL lessons can focus on diagnosis and the importance of following prescribed medication. Health care professionals could aid in the design of such lessons. Lessons on somatic illness might help refugees understand the physical effects of the stress of resettlement. CO classes also could deal with two specific concerns of many refugees: the purpose and value of medications, and blood sampling and test procedures (Wittet 1983). Because members of U.S. refugee communities play such an important role in health issues, these individuals might be enlisted to provide 1) advice in curriculum and lesson design, 2) orientation to expected problems in obtaining satisfactory health care, and 3) a direct link between pre-entry and post-entry health care.
CONCLUSION

The data now available on refugee resettlement point to two general conclusions for instructional programs. The first conclusion concerns the overwhelming importance of learning English and the need for classroom study to accomplish this. With the exception of young children, most refugees do not “pick up” English while living in the United States, nor do they acquire English on the job unless they are reasonably competent when hired. Many adults simply do not speak English outside of their ESL classes. Yet English is the key to their gaining employment, to improving salary, to successfully dealing with health problems—in short, to the entire resettlement process. All instructional programs—ESL, pre-employment training, and cultural orientation—must be viewed within this context. Competence in English is by far the most important pre-employment skill and the most important coping skill for cultural adaptation.

The second major conclusion is that if instructional programs are to facilitate language learning most effectively, they must use communicative curricula and methods. The most important study of refugee language education yet completed (Reder, Cohn, Arter, and Nelson 1964:56) states:

Socially interactive activities seem to encourage students’ use of English, whereas recitation-type activities, such as structured pattern drills and structured question and answer sessions, are associated with a lack of student-generated speech. Use of native language in class was found to correlate negatively with student-generated speech in English.

Curricula containing sequences of structures and teaching methods relying on recitation activities assume that beginning students must be “given” English structures before they can produce English and that practiced structures will be “available” when learners try to speak English in the future. Neither assumption is supported by research. Moreover, such an approach leads to an unfortunate cycle: Structure drills, by definition, limit students’ production to a relatively small number of well-formed sentences, and this restricted output reinforces the mistaken belief that Indochinese refugees cannot produce English spontaneously. The alternative approach involves discovering ways to increase interactive language use and encouraging students to do their best to communicate at their actual proficiency level. This approach includes giving instructions in English, since trying to comprehend instructions is one of the most valuable of all experiences for all language learners. The challenge

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for teachers is to discover ways to make themselves understood and to help students discover their own ability to communicate successfully in English.

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THE AUTHOR

James Tollefson is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Washington. He is currently on leave, serving as a teacher trainer at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center.

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Auditory Short-Term Memory, Listening Comprehension, and the Input Hypothesis

MARY EMILY CALL
University of Pittsburgh

This article reports the findings of a study which examined the relationship between auditory short-term memory and listening skill. The study was designed to assess the contribution of short-term memory for each of five types of auditory input to differences in standardized listening scores. Memory for syntactically arranged words proved to be the best predictor of listening skill in this battery of tests. The significance of the results for comprehension-based teaching methodologies is discussed.

Many contemporary foreign language educators and researchers regard comprehensible input (written as well as spoken) as essential to developing the ability to produce the target language fluently (Diller 1981, Gary and Gary 1981, Winitz 1981, Terrell 1982, Asher, Kusudo, and de la Terre 1983, Krashen, Terrell, Ehrman, and Herzog 1984). Although some studies have undertaken to discover what makes input comprehensible (Chaudron 1983, Kelch 1985, Long 1985), this has not yet been clearly described (Brown 1984). The study reported here (Call 1979) focused on auditory short-term memory for five different types of input and the relationships of these components of memory to listening comprehension. Memory for syntax, it was thought, would play an important role in rendering input comprehensible.

LISTENING COMPREHENSION AND MEMORY

Until recently, listening comprehension attracted the least attention of the four skills, in terms of both the amount of research conducted on the topic and the benevolent neglect that it suffered in most foreign language programs (Paulston and Bruder 1976, Rivers 1981, Krashen, Terrell, Ehrman, and Herzog 1984). This
neglect may have stemmed from the fact that listening was consid-
ered a passive skill and from the belief that merely exposing the
student to the spoken language was adequate instruction in listening
comprehension. Comprehending a language as it is being spoken is
now recognized to be a complex, active skill involving many pro-
cesses that have become the focus of classroom-oriented (Taylor
as well as psychological studies.

Recently, H. Byrnes (1984:318) characterized listening compre-
hsion as a “highly-complex problem-solving activity” that can be broken
down into a set of distinct subskills. Two of these skills were described
by Rivers (1971) as the recognition of component parts of the language
(words, verb groups, simple phrases) and memory for these elements
once they have been recognized. Recognizing linguistic elements,
while essential to the process, is not sufficient for comprehending
what is heard. Listeners must be able to retain these elements in
short-term memory long enough to interpret the utterance to which
they are attending.

Fodor, Bever, and Garrett (1974) suggest that native language
words are held in short-term memory only long enough for the
listener to organize them into clauses and to extract the meaning that
they convey. As soon as the listener has interpreted the clause, the
elements that made it up are purged from memory in order to make
room for incoming sounds. Foreign language input seems to be
processed in the same way, but, as Rivers and Temperley (1978) point
out, short-term memory for target language words is often overloaded,
causing words to be purged before they can be organized and inter-
preted. Thus, even though language learners may be able to recognize
each word of an utterance as it is spoken, they may not be able to hold
lengthy utterances in mind long enough to interpret them. Since most
learners experience this frustration in learning to communicate orally
in a foreign language (Lee 1984, Rivers 1971), an understanding of
this relationship is important for the purpose of improving instruction.

Short-Term Memory and Language Comprehension

The act of listening to and understanding a spoken language can be
described as a series of processes through which the sounds associated
with a particular utterance are converted into meaning. As the sounds
impinge on the auditory system of the listener, they are briefly retained
(for about one second) in a sensory store called echoic memory
(Loftus and Loftus 1976). At this point, the listener imposes order on
this succession of sounds by means of previously learned patterns which segment the sound stream of the language into meaningful units. Once the patterns that the sounds form have been recognized, they pass into short-term memory, usually in the form of words.

The capacity of short-term memory is limited to about seven units, plus or minus two (Miller 1956, Klatsky 1975). The definition of a unit varies with the type of input and also with the listeners’ previous experience in dealing with the particular type of material that they are processing. For example, if a series of letters of the Roman alphabet were presented in random order to native speakers of English, they would be able to recall only about seven, plus or minus two letters. If, on the other hand, the letters were presented so that they could be patterned into English words, listeners would probably be able to recall many more letters. They would be able to group the letters into meaningful units according to their previous knowledge of English sound-symbol correspondence.

In language processing, units are usually defined syntactically as words, phrases, or clauses. Once sounds have entered short-term memory and have been patterned into appropriate syntactic units, they are retained only long enough to be interpreted semantically before they are purged from memory in order to make room for new input. The information that they carried may or may not pass into long-term memory, but the exact words in which the information was expressed are seldom retained for a long period of time. Once the meaning has been extracted, the exact words are forgotten. Jarvella (1971) offers evidence that only the last-heard sentence (or clause, if the sentence is lengthy) can be recalled verbatim. Thus, short-term memory, by using syntactic rules to chunk incoming linguistic data, plays a central role in the extraction of meaning and potential long-term retention of meaning from spoken language.

**Short-Term Memory and Language Learning**

To date, only a few studies have investigated the relationship between short-term memory and language learning. The earliest of these focused on the span of short-term memory, as measured by the amount of material that could be successfully retained for immediate recall. Length of span was then compared to measures of language proficiency to determine the relationship between proficiency in using language and short-term memory span. In the first of these investigations, Glicksberg (1963) found correlations of moderate strength between the scores of a group of ESL students on tests of
memory for linguistic input and their scores on tests of listening comprehension; there was a low correlation between their scores on a test of memory for random digits and their listening comprehension scores.

By comparing the students’ random digit memory spans in their native language with that of their target language, Glicksberg also found that after a few weeks of study, the target language memory span for random digits approached the native language span. These results offer evidence that short-term memory span for linguistic input and target language listening comprehension are related in a positive way. The findings also suggest that short-term memory for random digits contributes little to the process of listening comprehension, even when it approaches the capacity of native language memory for the same type of input.

Loe (1964) also probed the relationship between short-term memory and target language proficiency. She investigated target language memory span for lengthy and for grammatically complex sentences and found that long sentences are more difficult to recall than shorter ones. However, the relationship between grammatically complex sentences and short-term memory span is less straightforward. Native speakers and advanced students recalled sentences containing clauses better than sentences of the same length (measured in number of words) composed of a series of phrases. Less-proficient students, on the other hand, found the sentences made up of phrases easier to recall. These results suggest that more proficient speakers have learned to make use of increasingly complex syntactic patterns to group incoming linguistic data efficiently.

St. Jacques (1964), who related target language pronunciation scores to short-term memory span, found that students with high scores on tests of pronunciation also had high scores on an aurally presented digit memory task. He also found that differences in the lengths of native and target language short-term memory span were a better predictor of overall language achievement than the length of the span for target language input itself. These results suggest a positive relationship between target language digit memory span and language production. They also suggest that individual differences in length of target language memory span are important only when they are very different from the length of the individual’s native language span.

Harris (1970) studied the relationship between scores on a measure of short-term memory for target language input and scores on subtests of a standardized test of English proficiency. He found moderate to strong correlations between scores of grammatical and content accuracy in short-term recall and tests of listening comprehension and
usage. These results suggest that measures of short-term memory are good indicators of a student’s proficiency in the target language.

Taken together, these early studies help to clarify the relationship between short-term memory span and target language proficiency. First, memory span for target language input is shorter than for native language input. Second, the amount of target language input that can be successfully processed seems to increase as proficiency in the language increases. A corollary of this finding is that the length of memory span for linguistic input is a good indicator of overall language proficiency. Third, knowledge of target language syntax seems to be an important factor in increasing the amount of linguistic material that can be retained in short-term memory. Fourth, memory span for random digits, while correlating positively but weakly with memory span for linguistic data and with language proficiency, seems to be an aspect of short-term memory that is only marginally involved in language processing and is not a good indicator of overall language proficiency.

More recent studies of the role of short-term memory in language learning have concentrated on identifying the various components of auditory short-term memory and their contributions to the processing of linguistic input. Cook (1975) examined the processing of spoken English sentences, half of which contained single center-embedded relative clauses (The cat that likes the dog bites the horse) and half of which contained double center-embedded relative clauses (The cat that likes the dog that sees the man bites the horse). He found that foreign adults and native children had more trouble interpreting single embedding than did native adults but that double embedding were difficult for all groups.

Cook concluded that the processing systems of native children and foreign adults were overloaded by the single embedding and that to interpret the sentences, they had to rely on processing strategies that proved inadequate. Native adults were able to interpret most single embedding correctly, but the frequent inaccuracies in their interpretations of double embedding suggested that they, too, were relying on inadequate processing strategies. These results suggest that just as children’s processing capabilities expand as they mature, adult learners’ ability to process efficiently the more complex structures of the target language will increase as their language-processing capacity expands. This corroborates Lee’s (1964) findings that complex grammatical structures hinder beginners but help advanced students and native speakers to recall spoken language.

In an experiment designed to replicate the digit span data reported by Glicksberg (1963), Cook (1977) tested beginning and advanced
adult students of English. He found that they could hold from 5.9 (beginners) to 6.7 (advanced students) digits as compared with an ideal of 7.0 in the native language. Even in the early stages of learning, Cook concluded, memory for random digits is not significantly impaired in a foreign language. Since digit memory has been shown to increase with age, adult learners, in a test of this sort, would be expected to perform more like native adults than like native children.

This conclusion contrasts with the findings of Cook’s (1975) earlier study, which suggested that adult learners are similar to native children in processing complex linguistic input. To account for this discrepancy, Cook describes two different aspects of memory, which he calls primary memory and speech-processing memory. Primary memory is reflected in memory tasks not highly dependent on language and is therefore easily transferred from the native language to the target language. Speech-processing memory is, of course, highly dependent on language; the adult learner’s capacity is limited by a lack of facility in using the syntax of the target language. These findings led Cooke to conclude that short-term memory operates on target language input in the same way that it operates on native language input, even though short-term memory has a smaller capacity for target language input.

THE STUDY
Hypotheses

While the foregoing studies provide some understanding of the role of short-term memory in target language processing, many questions remain to be investigated. For example, two components of short-term memory have been discovered and described, and it has been suggested that both are related to listening comprehension. If this is the case, it might be expected that other components could also be isolated and identified and that these various components would relate to one another and to listening comprehension in predictable ways.

The purpose of this study was to test short-term memory span for various types of auditory input which seemed to be related to listening comprehension and to determine how much each type contributed to explaining the variance in standardized listening comprehension scores. Thus, it was hypothesized that memory for musical tones and memory for random digits were subcomponents of primary memory and that memory for random words, for isolated sentences, and for sentences in context were subcomponents of speech-processing memory. If this was the case, it was expected that memory for
musical tones and for random digits would relate differently to one another and to listening comprehension than memory for random words, for isolated sentences, and for sentences in context. More specifically, these components of short-term memory were expected to rank in the following order, with sentences in context contributing the most to an explanation of the variance in listening scores:

sentences in context > sentences > random words > digits > musical tones

Methodology

Forty-one students enrolled in classes at the English Language Institute of the University of Pittsburgh participated in the study. This sample was selected from the population of Spanish- and Arabic-speaking students who were willing to participate in the study. Of these, 22 were intermediate students (7 Spanish speakers and 15 Arabic speakers), and 19 were advanced students (8 Spanish speakers and 11 Arabic speakers).

To test the hypotheses, the short-term memories of these ESL students were assessed by means of a battery of tests designed to measure the progression of subcomponents described. Proficiency in processing auditory input in English was measured by the Michigan Test of Aural Comprehension (Upshur, Spaan, and Thrasher 1969–1972). To determine the contribution of each subcomponent of short-term memory to the total variance in listening comprehension scores, a multiple regression analysis was performed on the data.

Of the battery of five subtests, four were constructed for this study, and the fifth was a standardized test. Each successive subtest was designed to eliminate one identifiable component of short-term memory from the preceding task. The first four subtests were repetition tasks. The participants listened to the test items and were asked to repeat them exactly as they had heard them. These subtests were administered in a language laboratory, where the participants heard the items through headsets and recorded their responses on audio-cassettes. The fifth subtest was a paper-and-pencil task requiring the participants to listen to the test items and respond by marking an answer sheet.

The first subtest, designated the probe subtest, was designed to involve all the components of memory normally used in attending to spoken language. It required the participants to listen to a brief story in English which was interrupted at intervals a total of ten times. After each interruption, the participants heard a probe-word
cue (which was the first content word in the sentence last heard) and were asked to repeat the words that followed it in the story. Thus, just as in natural listening, the participants were focusing on the content of the narrative rather than on its linguistic form. Memory tasks of this type, in which the participants know that they will be asked to recall something but do not know how long the item will be or when they will be asked to begin to recall it, are said to tap running memory (Pollack, Johnson, and Knaff 1959).

The second subtest, the sentence subtest, eliminated the element of context from the task. For each of the 40 items, the participants heard a sentence equivalent in length, syntactic complexity, and vocabulary to a sentence in the probe subtest and were asked to repeat it. Like the probe subtest, the sentence subtest required the participants to repeat real sentences. However, in this case the participants knew that they would be required to repeat each sentence they had heard; they could therefore concentrate on its lexical and syntactic makeup without being distracted by its semantic content. Thus, the sentence subtest was a straightforward test of memory; it did not simulate natural listening.

The third subtest, the random word subtest, removed the element of syntax from the task by requiring the participants to listen to and repeat strings of content words arranged in random order. The 25 strings ranged from four to eight words in length and were made up of the content words that had occurred in the two previous subtests. While the input in this task remained linguistic, the participants were deprived of the extrinsic ordering of words provided by syntax.

The fourth subtest eliminated the element of lexical meaning from the task and was constructed to assess a component of short-term memory that might be called symbolic. This subtest required the participants to listen to and repeat 25 strings of random digits ranging in length from four to eight items. When a digit is encountered in isolation, its meaning, which is clear and unequivocal, should not

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1 The probe was always the first content word (and any determiner preceding it) in a sentence of the basic form NP + BE + V -ing + NP. These sentences differed in number (0-3), placement (NP or NP), and type (adjective, prepositional phrase, or relative clause) of noun phrase modification. Relative length was determined by counting the number of words in the sentence, the number of syllables, and the (approximate) number of morphemes and dividing the sum of these numbers by three. The content words used in the probe and sentence subtests were chosen from the list of content words used in the random word task. In the following examples, taken from the test, the numbers following the sentences indicate the relative length of each sentence. The first number in parentheses indicates the number of words, the second, the number of syllables, and the third, the number of morphemes.

John is reading a book. (5+6+ 7)/3=6
A big white dog is chasing a car. (8+9+ 10)/3=9
Mary is watering the flowers in the garden behind the garage. (11 +18+ 14)/3 = 14.3
The children are watching the kittens that are chasing butterflies. (10 +16 + 17)/3= 14.3
cause semantic interference for the listener who is trying to recall a string of random digits. However, a content word in isolation can have any one of a number of meanings, and upon hearing a word, the listener might retrieve several meanings from long-term storage, thereby affecting the efficiency of short-term recall. In addition, interference caused by idiosyncratic associations with a word may also affect performance. Such idiosyncratic associations are not usually connected to the names of digits and should not, therefore, affect their short-term recall. Thus, it can be assumed that random digit tasks tap an aspect of short-term memory slightly different from memory for random word tasks. The random digit task can be considered to test semi-lexical memory, as opposed to the random word task, which assesses lexical memory.

The final subtest, the tonal memory section of the *Seashore Measures of Musical Talents* (Seashore, Lewis, and Saetveit 1960), was chosen as a measure of auditory short-term memory capacity that does not depend on language at all. For each item, the participants heard two sets of tones, the second differing in the pitch of one tone from the first. The participants were required to hold the first group in memory long enough to identify which tone in the second group had changed and to mark its sequential position on their answer sheets. The test consisted of 30 items, 10 each of three-, four-, and five-tone sequences.

Each of these subtests was designed to tap a different component of auditory short-term memory. The scores of the first three subtests were expected to explain the largest amount of variance in standardized listening comprehension scores. Scores from the last two subtests were also hypothesized to contribute to an explanation of the variance in listening scores, but to a lesser degree than the others.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Simple correlation and multiple regression techniques were employed to test the hypotheses. Table 1, which summarizes the simple correlations of the scores on each subtest with the scores on the other subtests and the listening comprehension test, indicates that the scores have fallen into groups paralleling Cook’s (1977) categories of speech-processing memory and primary memory. The first group, which displays a moderately strong positive relationship with the listening comprehension scores, consists of the scores on the probe and sentence subtests. The second group, consisting of the scores on the random word, random digit, and tonal memory subtests, demonstrates a weaker relationship with the listening scores. These results corroborate Cook’s (1977) findings that primary memory does not
contribute as much to the process of listening comprehension as does speech-processing memory.

Table 1 also reveals that the expected hierarchy of relationships was not found. The sentence scores, hypothesized to produce the second highest correlation with the listening scores, demonstrated a slightly higher co-efficient of correlation ($r = .65$) with the listening scores than did the probe scores ($r = .57$), which were hypothesized to have the highest. However, these two sets of scores are highly interrelated ($r = .78$), suggesting that these subtests are tapping related capacities for processing linguistic input. The next two variables did demonstrate the hypothesized relationships to the listening scores. The sentence scores produced a higher co-efficient of correlation ($r = .65$) than the random word scores ($r = .39$), and the random word scores demonstrated a higher co-efficient of correlation than the random digit scores ($r = .34$). These last two co-efficients are of similar magnitude, yet the intercorrelation between the two sets of scores is not strong ($r = .46$). This suggests that the two subtests are tapping different components of short-term memory, corroborating Crannell and Parish’s (1956/1957) findings that memory for digits is different from memory for words. Finally, the tonal memory scores, predicted to have the weakest correlation with the listening scores, demonstrated the third highest co-efficient of correlation ($r = .42$).

A multiple regression analysis was performed to discover how much of the variance in the listening comprehension scores could be explained by the five independent variables measured by the subtests (see Table 2). The variables were entered into the correlation equation beginning with the variable having the highest correlation with the dependent variable (listening comprehension scores) and proceeding

---

**TABLE 1**
Correlations of the Scores on the Subtests and the Listening Comprehension Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Probe</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Random Word</th>
<th>Random Digit</th>
<th>Tonal Memory</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probe</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td></td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Word</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Digit</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal Memory</td>
<td></td>
<td>.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partial Correlations of the Scores of Each Subtest with the Listening Comprehension Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>Simple r</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Change in R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probe</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal Memory</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Word</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Digit</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The variables were entered into the correlation equation in descending order, from the highest simple correlation to the lowest.

to the variable with the lowest. Out of 47 percent total explained variance, the sentence subtest alone accounts for 42 percent. The probe subtest, which taken alone explains 32.5 percent of the variance, adds only 1 percent here, bringing to 43 percent the amount of variance explained by these two subtests. If the tonal memory variable is also taken into account, all of the explained variance is accounted for. This suggests that these first three independent variables are the most powerful. The random word and random digit subtests made no contribution to the explained variance in listening scores, once the other variables were controlled. Thus, the variables fall into two groups: Group 1, consisting of tonal memory, probe, and sentence subtest scores, and Group 2, consisting of random word and random digit subtest scores.

When the independent variables were entered into the correlation in reverse order of strength, with the weakest variable entered first, the results did not differ dramatically, as Table 3 demonstrates. The biggest contribution to the total explained variance again comes from the three variables in Group 1: tonal memory, probe, and sentence scores.

These data provide evidence that the independent variables measured by the sentence and probe subtests contributed most to an explanation of the variance in listening scores. The remaining three variables did not contribute as much, although the tonal memory scores explained more than the random word or random digit scores, whose simple correlations to the listening scores were of a similar magnitude to that of tonal memory. These results indicate that memory for sentences in isolation or taken from running discourse is the best...
TABLE 3
Partial Correlations of the Scores of Each Subtest with
the Listening Comprehension Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>Simple r</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Change in R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Random Digit</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Word</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonal Memory</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.14²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probe</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹The variables were entered into the correlation equation in ascending order, from the lowest simple correlation to the highest.
²The computed value of .13418 was rounded up to preserve the symmetry of the table.

Because this study investigated the process of listening comprehension, one of the two channels through which students take in language, these results have implications for the Input Hypothesis (Krashen 1980) and for the methodologies based on it. First, the data indicate that short-term memory for auditory input is an important component of listening comprehension. Second, memory for syntax, as measured by the sentence and probe subtests, emerged as the best predictor of listening skill in the test battery. On the other hand, memory for random words and digits explained only a small part of the variance in listening scores. This difference may contribute to a more precise description of what makes input comprehensible.

Comprehensible input has been described as i + 1 (Krashen, Terrell,
Ehrman, and Herzog 1984)—that is, material that is familiar to the
student (i) and a certain amount of unfamiliar material whose meaning
can be induced from the context (1). When students are presented
with input at the i + 1 level, they make use of “key vocabulary items
(nouns, verbs, adjectives, and sometimes adverbs)” (1984:266) that
are familiar to them in order to understand the global meaning
carried by the input. Context (linguistic and nonlinguistic) serves to
clarify the meanings of unfamiliar words which can subsequently
become part of the student’s familiar vocabulary. According to this
explanation, comprehensible input is defined in terms of content
word vocabulary; the contribution that knowledge of syntax can
make to the process of understanding language is not taken into
account.

The results of the study reported here suggest that memory for
syntactically arranged words is an important component of proficiency
in listening comprehension; thus, it can be inferred that syntax also
plays an important role in rendering input comprehensible. Trying to
understand target language input when syntactic structures are
unfamiliar might be compared to trying to recall target language
content words arranged in random order. The participants in this
study could recall fewer randomly arranged words than words
arranged into sentences, and this component of short-term memory
contributed only marginally to listening proficiency.

Taken together, these findings suggest that students benefit from a
knowledge of syntax, which enables them to group words into syntactic
units. Several questions remain, however: Is this knowledge implicit
or explicit? How do students learn/acquire this knowledge? It is
possible that students would benefit from a formal introduction to the
syntactic structures of the target language, taught at first for recogni-
tion, so that they could use this knowledge to process input more
efficiently and to acquire language more quickly.

Similar recommendations for including the formal study of grammar
in the early stages of the foreign language curriculum come from
recent research by Higgs and Clifford (1982). They investigated the
educational histories of language learners who were unable to progress
beyond the 2/2+ level on the Foreign Service Institute’s oral profi-
ciciency scale and found that most of these individuals had learned the
target language in unstructured situations in which communication
was valued over accuracy of form. By contrast, learners at the 2/2+
level who were able to progress to higher levels of proficiency had
formally studied the structures of the language from their first expo-
sure. Despite the fact that their findings were limited by the nature of
the study, which used self-report data based on recall of early foreign
language experiences, Higgs and Clifford recommend that the
teaching of grammar skills be included in the foreign language curriculum from the beginning levels on.

Teaching syntactic structures for auditory recognition is not a new idea. Nida (1952/1953) recommended teaching students to listen for specific aspects of the linguistic structure of the target language in order to hone overall receptive skills. In addition, texts based on the audiolingual method, such as Unsere Freunde (Center for Curriculum Development 1978), provide listening exercises to help students familiarize themselves with target structures. Morley (1976) and Godfrey (1977) have underscored the need to develop structural awareness by teaching students to attend to grammatical relationships in spoken language. Similarly, Taylor (1981) and Wipf (1984) have noted the importance of recognizing grammatical signals in the skillful processing of spoken language. Yet, despite this consensus that knowledge of structure is an important component of listening proficiency, most published materials emphasize listening for the meaning of the passage rather than listening for the structure that gives shape to the meaning.

A listening curriculum that includes aspects of both formal learning and informal acquisition needs to be developed. Activities that formally introduce new vocabulary and, for more advanced learners, word-study exercises like those found in Barnard’s (1972) workbook will contribute a great deal to students’ repertoires of familiar words. However, knowledge of vocabulary is not enough to make students good listeners; they must also be able to use syntax to help them recognize the relationships among the words they have heard and to retain utterances in memory long enough to understand them. Formal exercises focusing on the recognition of syntactic structures are essential to the development of this skill.

Once students have become familiar with the vocabulary and structure that are the immediate targets of instruction, they are ready to begin acquisition activities by listening to input at the i + 1 level for global meaning. Focusing on listening for the formal properties of the target language before they are asked to listen for meaning will provide students with the tools they need to process comprehensible input more efficiently and to acquire the target language more quickly.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
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THE AUTHOR
Mary Call holds a joint appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Instructional Studies (School of Education) and the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) at the University of Pittsburgh.

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Edited by VIVIAN ZAMEL
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**Classroom Second Language Development**

This book is the first major British contribution to the debate surrounding the acquisition process in second and foreign language classrooms. It is of obvious interest to psycholinguists, but the methodological implications make the book important for anyone with an interest in materials or syllabus design or in teacher training. Ellis’s full use of preview and review in all chapters—indeed, the first chapter previews the whole book—makes the book eminently readable. The full index ensures that it can be easily used as a reference manual.

Chapter 2 looks at the development of grammatical competence. Ellis provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the language acquisition device and discusses the merits of the two models which have most influenced current thinking on second language development (SLD):

1. SLD occurs in a *fixed* order, regardless of input or the mother tongue of the acquirer (Dulay and Burt 1977), and
2. SLD is affected by the nature and frequency of occurrence of specific input (linguistic structures) to which the acquirer or learner (Ellis refuses a distinction between these terms in the context of his own research) is exposed (Hatch 1978).

What is surprising is the very small amount of research which has been conducted on classroom language acquisition and the difficulty of interpreting the findings conclusively. Ellis does not come down firmly in favor of either of the proposed models. In essence, he feels that naturalistic SLD and classroom SLD probably follow a very similar process. He believes, though, that “modelled data” (overt
teaching of structure) may influence the rate of development by sensitizing the learner/acquirer to forms which will be developed (used spontaneously) later.

Chapter 3 looks at semantic development in the classroom. Ellis begins with an examination of semantic development in first language development (FLD) and goes on to review the small amount of research (Hernández-Chávez 1977, Pienemann 1980) on this aspect of naturalistic SLD. For classroom SLD, he examines his own data (Ellis 1982) and argues that in creative (unplanned) speech, L2 learners will produce speech that is semantically simplified and that this process of semantic simplification may aid acquisition by enabling the learner to edit input of speech.

Chapter 4 looks at formulaic speech, prefabricated routines of whole or partial utterances. Again, Ellis reviews the literature and offers further insight from his own research. He finds evidence that some formulas are learned because of the specific language functions they perform. Formulas are useful because, once learned, they allow the learner to interact, unlike grammar learning, which does not facilitate early interaction. Ease of teaching, together with immediate usefulness in establishing a climate for further acquisition, are sufficient justification for teaching formulas.

Chapter 5 examines the types of interaction which occur in a second language classroom and their role in assisting language development. The main concern is teacher talk, the input provided by the teacher. Most teachers modify, reduce, repeat, and in other ways simplify their language when talking to learners. The same thing happens in FLD when adults talk to children (motherese or caretaker talk) and in naturalistic SLD when native speakers adjust their speech for foreigners (foreigner talk). Ellis reviews the literature on these issues. Krashen’s (1982) hypothesis that “rough tuned” input is the main facilitator of SLD is questioned; Ellis feels that the weight of evidence is toward interaction, in which the native speaker, provided with feedback from the learner’s speech, produces speech that serves as input to the learner’s own processing mechanism. This is an important point for teachers, since the pedagogical implications of Krashen’s and Ellis’s hypotheses are almost totally opposed.

In looking at the goals of classroom discourse, Ellis adopts the three-way analysis proposed by Butzkamm and Dodson (1980), which distinguishes between medium-oriented teaching (i.e., teaching a second or foreign language), message-oriented teaching (i.e., teaching about something else in the target language), and activity-oriented teaching (resulting in some nonverbal product). Each of these pedagogical goals is examined separately in light of SLD facilitation. Ellis
comes down in favor of message-oriented teaching. He feels that if we acknowledge a need to foster communicative speech, we must establish communicative needs in a here-and-now setting. The pupil must be an initiator as well as a responder, and the teacher’s role must be to expand and ensure a language-rich environment.

Ellis offers an analysis of the facilitative characteristics of different types of classroom interaction (131). Were Krashen to offer a table of the same kind, the values that he would ascribe to the different types of interaction would be quite different. We see clearly that Ellis emphasizes output on the part of the learner. What is clear is that the traditional teacher-pupil, question-answer routine does not facilitate SLD. The use of the second language at all times is crucial; all meaning is negotiated in and through the language. This is inevitable in most Western second language classes, where few of the participants share a common mother tongue. However, in most language teaching settings, the classes are monolingual. The majority of these classes are taught by teachers who are not native speakers. Will Ellis be able to persuade foreign language teachers to exclude the mother tongue?

Chapter 6 focuses on the teaching of grammar. Can syntax be taught? Ellis begins by reminding us that “the teacher dominated interaction that results from medium-centred goals may restrict some learners’ ability to construct and amend hypotheses about the L2” (135). Research into young learners’ developmental language suggests that the order of acquisition of syntactic features is not substantially influenced by formal instruction. Ellis tends to join Krashen in seeing the major value of “teaching about language” as being the language interplay that results from that instruction as it provides a source for incidental exposure and acquisition. We are shown research evidence that “rules can be picked up in the classroom as in any other setting” (139).

In essence, grammar teaching does not facilitate communicative speech. Teachers should teach only what is easily learnable and has high frequency value. Beginners may find explicit teaching more useful than intermediate or advanced pupils; later development can occur through communicative interaction. There appears to be no firm evidence for treating adults differently from children in this respect. When formal instruction does affect the order of acquisition of syntactic features, the effects are short-lived, as the natural order re-asserts itself within a few weeks. Again, however, the reader is surprised by the paucity of research from which tentative conclusions are being drawn, and we are again faced with disagreement about how findings should be interpreted.

is absolutely no transfer from learned knowledge to acquired knowledge; learned knowledge is useful only to monitor what has been said or written or, in some cases, to prepare an utterance. True communicative competence springs from the acquired store of knowledge. The interface model (Stevick 1980, Sharwood Smith 1981) assumes the possibility of transfer from learned to acquired knowledge. The two opposing models agree only that there is a dual competence. Ellis is critical of both models and puts forward a third model, which he calls the Variable Competence Model of SLD. He sees dual models as simplistic and argues instead for a single, variable competence. At times, speech is processed automatically (no monitor); in some situations, controlled processing, involving some monitoring, takes place; and in other situations, everything will be monitored. Ellis suggests that L2 knowledge exists in a continuum from totally explicit to totally implicit, with use and usage responsible for shifts along the continuum.

In Chapter 8, which looks at classroom applications, Ellis admits that these must be somewhat speculative, given the scanty research evidence; he asserts, however, that “it is not reasonable to argue for delay when the knowledge that SLD research is capable of providing, incomplete as it is, is knowledge that teachers do not have” (189). Ellis adopts the view that pedagogy must reflect the aims of teaching. If the aim is to develop fluency in unplanned conversations, we must provide a naturalistic classroom climate. If we wish to prepare learners for planned discourse, teaching must make greater use of monitoring possibilities, such as formulaic speech and simple, usable rule giving.

The last ten years have seen a preoccupation with syllabus design. Whatever the content or the approach, a syllabus assumes a systematic exposure to the language. In this respect, every syllabus is formal. Ellis argues that we can also have an informal syllabus, which is more a list of activities and resource materials than a selection of linguistic items. Ellis’s classroom would look quite different from a classroom modeled on the Natural Approach (Krashen and Terrell 1983), since Ellis bases the whole of his activity syllabus on interaction between students. In this respect, he supports recent developments in communicative EFL methodology. For pedagogy, the message is clear: We need less instruction in correct forms with a course book and more use of resource materials which promote communication. To conclude with Ellis’s own words, “A competency for participating in informal interaction is more likely to develop from exposure than from instruction” (211).
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The Cognitive Reading Strategies of ESL Students

STEPHANIE L. KNIGHT
University of Houston-University Park

YOLANDA N. PADRON
University of Houston-Clear Lake

HERSHOLT C. WAXMAN
University of Houston-University Park

In recent years, researchers have investigated the importance of the cognitive strategies students use while reading (Weaver 1979, Hansen 1980, Wilkinson 1980, Linden and Wittrock, 1981, Cohen 1983). The use of these strategies has been found to be effective in improving students’ reading comprehension (Brown 1981, Baker and Brown 1984, Palinscar and Brown 1984, 1985). However, as Padron (1985a) has noted, most of these studies have been conducted with English monolingual, and few have examined the reading strategies of ESL students (Padron 1984, 1985b). Since reading and language are closely linked (Carroll 1977), the difficulties bilingual encounter in reading texts in their second language may differ from those experienced by monolingual. Connor (1984), for example, found that there were differences in the way students process material written in the second language.

The study reported here was conducted to determine whether there are differences in either the type or frequency of cognitive reading strategies reported by ESL and monolingual students. Individual interviews, which were audiotape for analysis, were conducted with 23 Spanish-speaking ESL students and 15 English monolingual students from the third and fifth grade classes of an inner-city public school in a major Southwestern metropolis. Subjects were first administered the San Diego Quick Assessment (see Ekwall 1979), a graded word list to determine their independent reading levels. Students then read an appropriately matched passage from the Ekwall Reading Inventory Manual (Ekwall 1979), stopping at pre-marked intervals to explain the reading comprehension strategies they were using. Spanish-speaking students were allowed to respond in their native language so that...
speaking ability would not interfere with their ability to explain the strategies. Using a structured interview form adapted from Chou Hare and Smith (1982), the strategies reported were categorized by type and tallied for frequency of occurrence. Interceder agreement on the analysis of the transcribed interviews was .99, as measured by Cohen’s kappa.

Strategies, as defined in this study, include processes for enhancing reading comprehension and overcoming comprehension failures. The processes mentioned by subjects during the interviews were placed in the following categories, adapted from Chou Hare and Smith (1982):

1. Rereading
2. Selectively reading (remembering the main words or interesting parts and skipping others)
3. Imaging (having a picture of the story or events in the story in mind)
4. Changing speed (reading the story more slowly and carefully)
5. Assimilating with personal experiences (tying the passage to something in one’s life or someone else’s life)
6. Concentrating
7. Assimilating with passage events (thinking about some event that happened earlier in the story)
8. Noting/searching for salient details
9. Summarizing
10. Predicting outcomes
11. Self-generated questions (questioning comments about the story [see Alvermann 1984])
12. Student’s perceptions of teacher’s expectations (attempting to determine what the teacher wants to know)
13. Rehearsal

The strategy cited most often by English monolingual was Concentrating, while the least cited strategy was Student’s Perceptions of Teacher’s Expectations, which no student mentioned. ESL students, on the other hand, mentioned Student’s Perceptions of Teacher’s Expectations most frequently. The categories of Imaging, Noting Details, and Predicting Outcomes were not cited by any bilingual students during the interviews. The use of three strategies—Concentrating, Noting Details, and Self-Generated Questions—was reported significantly more often (p < .05) by monolingual than by ESL students. Overall, native English-speaking subjects used significantly (\( t = 3.32; p < .01 \)) more strategies (\( X = 4.93; \) S. D. =3.20) than did ESL students (\( X = 2.43; \) S.D. = 1.38).

The results indicate that monolingual English students were using about twice as many strategies as Spanish-speaking ESL students. This may be one reason why bilinguals’ reading achievement on measures like the Texas Assessment of Basic Skill is not as high as that of monolingual (see Robledo and Cortez 1983). One possible explanation of both the difference in the number of strategies mentioned by the two groups and of the lower achievement of Spanish-speaking ESL students is that ESL students may have been transferred too quickly to English reading and consequently did not have the opportunity to develop these strategies first, while reading texts
in Spanish. Typically, the primary concern of second language students is
the development of decoding skills, and not those cognitive strategies which
enhance reading comprehension. Further research needs to be conducted to
determine if instruction in reading comprehension strategies will result in
increased achievement by ESL students.

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BRIEF REPORTS AND SUMMARIES 791
The Effect of Research Design on Free Written Recall as a Measure of Reading Comprehension in a Second Language

JAMES F. LEE
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

An investigation was conducted of the effect of research design in studies using a free written recall task to measure second language (L2) reading comprehension. Although studies (Carrell 1982, 1984a, 1984b, Bernhardt 1983, Connor 1984, Lee and Ballman 1985) using a free recall task differ in many ways, variables selected for examination were 1) the language (native versus target) in which recalls are written, 2) the use of prereading instructions orienting subjects to the recall task, and 3) the level of L2 proficiency of subjects.

The 320 subjects participating in the study were volunteers enrolled in four different levels of Spanish classes at Michigan State University and the University of Michigan. Each of the 80 subjects at each level received a packet containing an agreement form, a reading passage (with or without instructions), and a third page on which they were directed to write their recalls either in English (native language) or Spanish (target language).

The results of a three-factor ANOVA revealed significant main effects for level and language of recall, as well as a significant interaction between orienting instructions and level. No significant main effect was found for orienting instructions, and none of the other interactions (Orienting Instructions x Language, Language x Level, Orienting Instruction x Language x Level) was significant.

In view of the significant interaction of Orienting Instructions x Level, the significant main effect found for level must be cautiously interpreted. However, while a number of studies of L2 reading ability (Bernhardt 1983, Carrell 1984a, Connor 1984) have used subjects at only one level of proficiency, the results of this study suggest that findings cannot be generalized to learners at other levels of proficiency.

The significant main effect found for language of recall has definite research implications, however. The main effect found for language of recall (with learners recalling more when writing in their native language than in the target language) suggests that research on L2 reading comprehension...
should try to allow learners to use their native language. This may be more feasible for research on second/foreign language learning by students with the same native language (e.g., the learning of a foreign language by native speakers of American English or the learning of English as a second language by speakers of the same native language) than for research on ESL reading comprehension of students from a variety of language backgrounds. Clearly, however, studies using target language recalls may elicit artificially low performance as a result of subjects’ limited production abilities.

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Author’s Address: Department of Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL 61801

A Pop Song Register: The Motherese of Adolescents as Affective Foreigner Talk

TIM MURPHEY and JEAN LUC ALBER
University de Neuchâtel

Recent research in first and second language acquisition has indicated that the adult native speaker’s adjustment of register when speaking to a learner plays a significant role in promoting second language acquisition. Brown (1977) characterizes motherese, or baby talk (BT), as the simple code spoken to infants. This code is heavily charged with affective meaning, its principal goal is communication, not language teaching. For second language acquisition, Krashen (1981) emphasizes the need for comprehensible input at the appropriate interlanguage level.

In light of these considerations, the study reported here is being conducted to find the similarities and differences between a pop song register (PS) and simple and simplified codes. Brown (personal communication) has suggested that there may actually be several registers involved in PS which correspond to different musical styles (country, punk, heavy metal, and so on), styles which address different needs in different audiences. For the purposes of
this report, PS refers to the song that is analyzed and any songs similar enough to produce the same results. Our working hypothesis is that PS might be considered the “motherese of adolescence” and could provide valuable input to the second language learner.

Stevie Wonder’s pop song, “I Just Called to Say I Love You” (1984), which was number one on the hit charts in the Swiss-German area of Switzerland and number five in the French-speaking area on November 4, 1984, was analyzed following Brown (1977). He finds it useful to represent the human infant as + inspiring affection, + tenderness, + intimacy, and – verbal production, – verbal comprehension, and – cognitive competence. By changing the negative values to positive ones, the adult lover can be represented. Wonder’s song is also + inspiring affection, + tenderness, and + intimacy (not toward itself, but toward others, by a process of identification discussed below). Although PS does contain verbal production, it is in a frozen form which allows for no spontaneous adjustment or creativity. The song itself clearly has no capacity for comprehension—except insofar as the writer intuitively comprehended the need for affective communication on the part of his listeners when he created and “froze” the message—and no cognition of its own. In effect, PS can be conceived as a receiver-controlled communication, in that the listener in most instances chooses whether or not to receive the message and can, without fear of reproach, be attentive or not or even turn the message off. PS, then, is essentially a nonthreatening, nondemanding, affective, communicative “teddy bear-in-the-ear.” In this kind of receptive language contact, recommended by such methodologies as Suggestopedia, TPR, and the Natural Approach, the L2 learner need produce nothing.

“I Just Called to Say I Love You” is structurally a simple code. The average phrase length is 7.02 words, or 8.28 syllables, with 83 percent of the 246 words monosyllabic and 57 percent of the text based on 18 different words. By one rough measure of phrase and word length (Gunning 1962), it is equal to the reading level of a child after four years of school. (More precise measures of auditory comprehension difficulty are being sought.) The pauses after phrases are either half (17 percent), three quarters (20 percent), or wholly (63 percent) as long as the utterances that precede them; pauses of the latter kind may allow echoic memory to process and shadow effectively in real time (see Stevick 1976).

In their typology of texts, Bain, Bronchart, and Schneuwly (1985) distinguish among discours en situation, discourse théoriques, and narrations. Wonder’s song is by definition a narration, a text made for the enjoyment of a sociocultural group which did not participate in the production of the text. However, when analyzed more closely, it has many of the features of situational discourse (defined as a text coproduced by the participants, who are also the target audience, interacting with each other, as in a conversation): use of first and second person pronouns, present and past tense verbs, and an elevated density of verbs (20 for every 100 words). Thus, the song creates a situation rather than telling a story and involves the listener in a type of pseudo-dialogue or conversation.
The use of pronouns (24 occurrences of I, 8 of you) and nonspecific topics (the weather, standard celebrations, and so on) permits this listener identification, or je d’enonciation (Benveniste 1972, Rattunde 1974). In BT, the first and second persons singular are generally avoided in favor of nouns and first person plural (Baby tired? We no-no.). In PS, it may be significant that I and you predominate at a time in life when the child’s egocentricity is threatened by adolescent world-awareness and adult stress. But what is most important in PS is that the I in the song becomes I the listener by identification; precise referents are rare, so that everyone can maintain the illusion that the singer’s words are his or her own. Certain features of BT, including nursery pitch (the higher fundamental frequency used to address infants) and avoidance of semantically empty forms, facilitate the child’s identification; perhaps on a different level, adolescents react similarly to PS.

The preliminary stages of this research raise several interesting questions. Are the linguistic features of PS described above widespread or possibly even universal, crossing the boundaries of different musical styles? What role does the music play in the register? Does it facilitate, complicate, or render unimportant the degree of linguistic comprehension? To what degree can we actually consider PS as affective foreigner talk, involving L2 students in affectively charged communicative situations? How and to what degree can PS be exploited in an L2 classroom? What effect does passive contact with PS, estimated at over eight hours a week for Swiss youths (Murphey 1984), have on L2 acquisition?

The authors are currently comparing hit songs from different genres, languages, and time periods to “I Just Called to Say I Love You.”

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Authors’ Address: Centre de linguistique appliquée, Université de Neuchâtel, 2000 Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Recent psycholinguistic research has stressed the benefits learners can draw from conversing with one another in the language classroom (Long 1983, Porter 1983, Varonis and Gass 1983, Doughty and Pica 1984, Long and Porter 1985). However, the social reality of the classroom can make pair and small-group work difficult; the potential benefits of such activities are often mitigated by the perceptions, experiences, and expectations of the participants. Learners in peer conversations may feel at the mercy of other, more proficient participants. Less skillful learners may feel unable to control and manage the topic of the conversation; however, they may perceive their major source of trouble to be a linguistic deficiency and may not be aware of their problems with the interactive structure of the discourse (Kramsch 1981). In ESL classes, cultural differences in discourse management can lead to tensions and misunderstandings that reinforce cultural stereotypes and impede communication (Tannen 1979, Gumperz 1982). Finally, learners’ expectations of their roles and tasks in classrooms can also counteract the potential benefits of group work.

From a social-theoretical viewpoint, language learning in peer groups can be considered as the construction of a social reality in which discourse roles and tasks are not fixed in advance, but have to be determined by the participants. For example, group work requires students to fulfill group-task functions and group-maintenance functions that are traditionally the responsibility of the teacher in frontally taught classes (Schein 1969). If many of the difficulties encountered by learners are interfactional in nature, explicit attention to interaction processes should be the first step in learning to construct discourse.

The pilot study described in this report was conducted to test the feasibility of metacommunicative learning in the classroom, using an empirical, interpretive approach (Bales 1950, Soeffner 1979). Three issues were addressed: 1) the extent to which learners are capable of evaluating their own and others’ patterns of participation in group interaction, 2) their ability to discuss these in the target language, and 3) the possible benefits of metacommunicative evaluations.

THE STUDY

Twenty-one American undergraduates from a fourth-semester German class selected themselves to be participants or observers in a 15-minute, task-oriented discussion, which was conducted, without the teacher being
present, on the second day of a new term. The subjects, who were assigned
to three groups, did not know each other and had varying degrees of
proficiency in German, as is often the case in fourth-semester, college-level
foreign language classes.

In doing a similar exercise in English on the previous day, participants
and observers had been sensitized to three main aspects of discourse:

1. Turn-taking procedures—e.g., frequency of turns, choice of addressee,
sequence of interlocutors, number of interruptions

2. Management of topic, including both strategies for fulfilling group-task
functions—e.g., suggesting ideas, thinking out loud, making countsug-
gestions, commenting, summarizing, organizing, and making procedural
remarks—and strategies for group-maintenance functions—e.g., elabo-
rating the ideas of others, giving feedback, checking understanding, helping
others to clarify, encouraging others to contribute, eavesdropping, trying
unsuccessfully to take a turn, indicating lack of interest in the activity (For
this aspect, the observer had to write down, for a given participant, both
what the participant actually said and what strategy the observer felt had
been used).

3. Repairs, including linguistic errors—type of error, selection of repair
procedure—and misunderstandings—decision to repair or not, choice of
procedure

The assigned topic in German was the distribution of the national budget
in a fictitious developing country (Rooks 1981). Group members had to
negotiate to reach a decision as to how the country was to spend its money.
There were four participants and three observers per group. During the
discussion, Observer 1 noted turn-taking mechanisms, Observer 2 the
management of the topic, and Observer 3 the repair of errors and break-
downs in communication. Following the discussion, participants were
asked to assess their participation and that of the other members of the
group in terms of the group-task functions and group-maintenance func-
tions, which were the focus of Observer 2.

The observers’ codings and the participants’ evaluations were then
compared and discussed in a debriefing session. The target language was
used for both the observation sheets and the ensuing debriefing session.
Since the observers were naive—that is, they were not highly trained or
experienced in classroom observation—their role was not to offer a more
reliable source of information than the retrospective accounts of the par-
ticipants, but rather to provide an outsider’s perspective on the interaction.

FINDINGS: AN EXAMPLE

The following is a report on one of the groups, which consisted of
Eugen, Phil, Sue, Tom, and three observers.
Turn-Taking

Observer 1 assessed the whole 15-minute discussion as an interfactional triangle between Eugen, Phil, and Sue, which Tom interrupted from time to time. The observer noted that Eugen had taken 38 turns in all, Phil 36, Sue 38, and Tom 14. He added that “there were often dialogues between Eugen and Phil and between Eugen and Sue.”

Self- and other-evaluations by the participants after the discussion indicated that the perceived availability of turns depended in part on the participants’ judgment of their own abilities and goals. For example, Tom noted, “In the beginning, I didn’t say much, but later I spoke more. I lacked vocabulary. If I wanted to say something, I always had to interrupt. The others monopolized the discussion.” A transcription of the discussion shows, however, that Tom did not in fact have to interrupt to take a turn; for example, long pauses at the end of the other speakers’ turns offered him natural entry points. However, he perceived that he had to interrupt, since he was concentrating on his lexical problems and thus was not alert to these entry points. Similarly, Eugen’s avowed goal of “wanting to bring about results” was reflected in the number of turns he made available for himself. Phil’s observed tendency to “enter into dialogues” with other members of the group was consistent with his goal of “wanting to be a moderator.”

The availability of turns also appeared to depend on the behavior of others. Sue’s responsible behavior to others encouraged the formation of dialogues with Eugen. Phil’s way of “showing the other side of ideas” and Sue’s comments made Eugen feel he was “provoked” into taking an active part in the discussion.

Topic Management

Frequent discrepancies between the observers’ codings and the participants’ retrospective evaluations illustrate the complexity of interpreting discourse phenomena. The reality portrayed by coding individual utterances in the course of the conversation was not quite the same as the global perception which participants had after the event. Therefore, what was of interest for the learners was not to search for a “true” account of what happened, but to negotiate an understanding of the various perspectives.

It appeared that the participants’ evaluations of others were in part determined by their self-perception. While Tom’s claim that Phil and Sue “talked a lot,” in contrast to his “talking little,” was consistent with the observers’ codings, Eugen gave Tom the very same evaluation he gave himself, despite the marked contrast seen by the observer between the two. Moreover, the ability to differentiate among various functions and to reflect on the processes of the interaction seemed to be related to the amount of control learners had over their own and others’ role in the discourse. Tom, who felt he had the least control over the interaction, was also the least capable of metacommunicative differentiation. His assessment was restricted to quantitative judgments such as “talking a lot” versus “talking little.”
Repairs

Whereas Eugen, Phil, and Sue either explicitly requested help or used face-saving strategies that were perceived as appeals for assistance or self-repair, Tom was never observed requesting help explicitly. When he did receive unsolicited suggestions, he neither acknowledged them nor used them. He was busy retrieving words from his mother-tongue stock and drew little help from the communicative context—for example, by using words or structures already used by others.

Only lexical difficulties were detected by Observer 3. Problems of pronunciation were never picked up, and grammatical errors were rarely noted. It seemed that the observer could not pay attention to errors in form (low-inference events) and higher-level breakdowns in communication (high-inference events) simultaneously. For example, topic misunderstandings due to lack of vocabulary were coded simply as “lack of vocabulary.” In addition, toward the end of the conversation, when Eugen wanted to use the arts for what he called “propaganda,” that is, to educate the people about democracy, he was misunderstood by the others as advocating communist totalitarianism. There were no observers’ notes on this portion of the exchange.

CONCLUSIONS

The adult learners in this pilot study were able to observe and evaluate low-inference events in their interaction with one another. These events they perceived to be mostly lexical in nature. Most of the time, they were able to focus on interaction processes and discuss these in the foreign language, since the terminology was concrete enough and the students had been exposed to it first in their native language. Multiple perspectives on the same events made the students aware of the relative value of their assessments and set the tone for a nonjudgmental evaluation of the activity. It also sensitized some of the participants to the different roles available in group work (see Schein 1969).

The ability of the learners to focus on discourse processes was affected, however, by the amount of control they perceived themselves as having over the interaction. If one of the key elements in the control of discourse is mastery of its interfactional features, this preliminary study suggests that explicit attention to these features could yield important benefits, particularly in the following areas:

1. It could help learners view their performance in light of the short-term and long-term, implicit and explicit goals they have set for themselves. A more diversified description of learners’ performance might help learners refine and diversify their own perception of their goals.
2. Observing the variety of discourse behaviors adopted by their peers can broaden learners’ options in group work. For example, learners can assess and compare the conversational mileage obtained by taking short, frequent turns versus long, infrequent ones; fulfilling group-maintenance versus individual- or group-task functions; and explicitly requesting help versus...
meeting needs on one’s own. Explicit discussion of interaction processes can help learners deal with one of the most difficult challenges of learning a language in a classroom setting. The delicate balance each learner must strike between furthering the content of one’s own learning and maintaining the group interaction, without which this learning cannot take place.

The study reported here is being followed up by a contrastive study of learners’ interfactional behavior in their mother tongue and in the target language and by a study of the effect over time of an explicitly process-oriented syllabus on the development of interfactional competence in the classroom. It is hoped that the latter will shed light on the relationship between interfactional competence and the acquisition of target language forms.

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*Author’s Address: Foreign Languages and Literature, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA 02139*
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 Kyle Perkins and Barbara Jones’s “Measuring Passage Contribution in ESL Reading Comprehension”

A Reader Reacts . . .

BRENT BRIDGEMAN
Educational Testing Service

The recent article by Kyle Perkins and Barbara Jones in the TESOL Quarterly (Vol. 19, No. 1, March 1985) focuses needed attention on the problem of “reading comprehension” test items that can be answered correctly without reading the associated passage. Unfortunately, the two tests selected to demonstrate this potential problem were clearly inappropriate for the sample tested. The authors’ assumption that university entrance requirements ensure that “foreign students admitted to full-time study as undergraduates can read and write the English language on a par with native speakers” (140) is simply incorrect. Scores of native speakers on the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL, for example, are substantially above those of typical foreign undergraduates (Clark 1977). Just as the TOEFL is too easy to yield meaningful data for native speakers, the tests used by Perkins and Jones—the Davis Reading Test (DRT) and the Cooperative English Tests—Reading Comprehension (CET-RC), which were intended for native speakers—are far too difficult to produce meaningful scores for foreign students.

Table 2 in the article (142) indicates that the mean scores on both tests were only a few items above chance levels, even when the passage was available. A student who knew the answer to only 4 of the easier items on the CET-RC and responded randomly on the remaining 56 items would receive a score almost as high as the mean score reported (the chance level is 15, and the mean score was 19.23).
The authors concede that “many, if not most, of the scores were clustered near the zero point of the scoring continuum” (147). However, they do not clearly warn the reader of the disastrous consequence of this difficulty level on the computation of the passage dependency index (PDI), which depends on a comparison of the proportion of correct answers with the passage present and the proportion of correct answers without the passage.

Suppose a group of high school seniors in the United States had taken a reading test written in Chinese. They would receive the same chance-level score whether the passages were given to them or not, and the mean PDI would be around zero. The same test administered in China might yield a very high PDI; students who had read the passages might do much better than students who were not given the passages. Thus, the PDI is not an invariant property of a test, but is rather an indication of how the test functions for a particular population. This property makes the authors’ contrast of the DRT and CET-RC with the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) essentially meaningless; if the MTELP were administered to a sample in which even students who had read the passage could not select the correct answer, then it, too, would have a PDI approaching zero. Similarly, the PDI for the DRT and the CET-RC might be very high for the population of college students who are native speakers of English. The PDI has no clear meaning for items that reflect primarily chance responding even when the passage has been read.

Perkins and Jones provide a valuable service in reminding teachers to be aware of the possible lack of passage dependency of reading comprehension items. However, before teachers start computing a PDI, they must make certain that the test they are using is at an appropriate difficulty level for their students.

REFERENCE

Brent Bridgeman has made two criticisms of our study: 1) invalid application of test instruments and, as a result, 2) invalid computation of passage dependency indexes for items which proved extremely difficult for the testing sample.

Our premise in conducting this research was that we were measuring the functional reading comprehension ability of foreign students admitted to full-time study as undergraduates and the passage contribution of test instruments in the reading comprehension process. For our study, we chose a test for native-speaking high school and college students (the DRT) and a test for native-speaking college freshmen and sophomores (the CET-RC). The results indicated that these tests were too difficult for our subject pool and that the passages contributed little information. The conclusion was that our subjects exhibited little functional proficiency in reading comprehension, as measured by instruments suitable for native-speaking freshmen and sophomores.

The implication of Bridgeman’s comments is that foreign students admitted as full-time undergraduate students cannot be expected to read and write on a par with native speakers. If this is the case, instructors in undergraduate content courses presumably should have two sets of reading and writing standards for their classes: one for native speakers and one for foreign students. Carried to the extreme, it could be argued that lower-division textbooks should be edited and revised to a much lower readability level. In addition, using Bridge- man’s line of reasoning, it could be argued that the Graduate Record Examination is an inappropriate instrument for foreign students.

Bridgeman’s second criticism deals with the effect of high difficulty items in the passage-out and passage-in conditions on the computation of the PDIs. Rasch item-difficulty indexes, corrected for the sample spread expansion factor to eliminate boundary effects and skewing, were estimated for all items under both conditions. Statistical tests indicated no significant differences between the two conditions. While Bridgeman’s comment about a contrast of the proportion of items answered correctly with the passage present and the proportion of items answered correctly without the passage is germane, our use of the Rasch logits of difficulty obviates any criticism based on the observed difficulty of the items for the subjects in our study.
We concede that had we used ESL reading tests, the results may have been different; in other words, the ESL passages might have made a significantly greater contribution. However, we must point out that instructors of lower-division undergraduate courses do not use ESL-level texts, nor do they give ESL-level tests.

The results of our study, along with Bridgeman’s comments, indicate that foreign students exhibit lower functional reading proficiency with L1 reading materials than we would like. Perhaps future research can isolate specific causes for this lack of functional reading ability; to that end, we suggest that a number of problems—including lack of automaticity in word identification, rigidity in perception and conceptualization, lack of variable depth processing, lack of interaction between textual and structural knowledge and general knowledge of the world, and inability to apply relevant strategies to the reading process—might all be fruitfully explored to explain the phenomenon treated in our paper and in Bridgeman’s comments.

Comments on Thomas W. Adams’s Review of Methods of Teaching English (G. V. Rogova)

A Reader Reacts . . .

BERNARD CHOSEED
Georgetown University

In writing his review of Methods of Teaching English in the TESOL Quarterly (Vol. 19, No. 1, March 1985), Thomas W. Adams’s desire for “a close and critical look at comparative foreign language education” (164) is commendable, but by considering this book to be a model textbook for TEFL in the Soviet Union, he is elevating it far above its actual qualifications.

One might begin by pointing out that the book is ordinary-level Soviet hardcover quality and sells for all of 75 kopecks. More important, Rogova prepared the book not at Moscow State University, but at the Moscow State Lenin Pedagogical Institute, which has no connection with either the University or even with the totally separate, albeit prestigious, Thorez Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages. The publisher is not the Ministry of Education, but rather the publishing house Prosveshchenie (which means education), and the book
merely carries the imprimatur “approved by the USSR Ministry of Education as a textbook aid for students at pedagogical institutes.” There is no implication that this is the textbook for all future teachers. (Moreover, this is but a revised and amplified second edition of what first appeared in 1975.)

Adams correctly notes “lapses” in the author’s English. Actually, the very title in English, *Methods...*, inaccurately conveys the sense of the Russian title which appears on the inside cover: *Metodika...* Russian has *metod(y)*, equivalent to “method(s),” and *metodika*, which means “methodology.” Thus, *Methodology of Teaching English* would be a title more in line with the aims and contents of the book.

The book itself is a fairly typical stage-by-stage practical manual for teacher trainees preparing to teach at the elementary and middle school levels—in other words, for trainees other than those enrolled in foreign language institutes. Its rather eclectic bibliography, which somehow even includes Stevick’s *Memory, Meaning, and Method*, will at the very least broaden readers’ horizons.
ERRATA

The TESOL Quarterly wishes to bring to its readers’ attention the following printer’s errors in the September 1965 issue (Volume 19, Number 3):

A line was omitted from Linda Seright’s article, “Age and Aural Comprehension Achievement in Francophone Adults Learning English.” The paragraph which begins on page 465 should read as follows:

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 = .01) of post-test (achievement) score. No significant effects 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.

In “A Semantic Field Approach to Passive Vocabulary Acquisition for Reading Comprehension,” by John T. Crow and June R. Quigley, the overview of the experimental design of the study, which is presented on page 501, should be as follows:

Group 1: Pre 1 x Post 1 x Post 2 x Foll 1
Group 2: Pre 1 x Post 1 x Post 2 Foll 1 Foll 2,
where Pre = Pretest, Post = Post-test, X = Experimental treatment, and Foll = Follow-up.

In addition, the sentence which begins nine lines from the bottom of page 509 should read:

Indeed, even though the differences were not statistically significant, performances for both groups were slightly superior on the experimental portion of the test.
INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

EDITORIAL POLICY
The TESOL Quarterly, a professional, refereed journal, encourages submission of previously unpublished articles on topics of significance to individuals concerned with the teaching of English as a second or foreign language and of standard English as a second dialect. As a publication which represents a variety of cross-disciplinary interests, both theoretical and practical, the Quarterly invites manuscripts on a wide range of topics, especially in the following areas:

1. psychology and sociology of language learning and teaching; issues in research and research methodology
2. curriculum design and development; instructional methods, materials, and techniques
3. testing and evaluation
4. professional preparation
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Because the Quarterly is committed to publishing manuscripts which contribute to bridging theory and practice in our profession, it particularly welcomes submissions which draw on relevant research in such areas as anthropology, applied and theoretical linguistics, communication, education, English education (including reading and writing theory), psycholinguistics, psychology, first and second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and sociology and which then address implications and applications of that research to issues in our profession. The Quarterly prefers that all submissions be written so that their content is accessible to a broad readership, including those individuals who may not have familiarity with the subject matter addressed.

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     Stephen J. Gaies
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     University of Northern Iowa
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   Reviews. The TESOL Quarterly invites reviews of textbooks, scholarly works related to the profession, tests, other instructional materials (such as computer software, videotaped materials, and other non-print materials), and other journals concerned with issues relevant to our profession. Comparative reviews, which include a discussion of more than one publication,
and review articles, which discuss materials in greater depth than in a
typical review, are particularly welcome. Reviews should generally be no
longer than 5 double-spaced pages, although comparative reviews or
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Brief Reports and Summaries. The TESOL Quarterly also invites short
descriptions of completed work or work in progress on any aspect of
theory and practice in our profession. Reports of work in the areas of
curriculum and materials development, methodology, teaching, testing,
teacher preparation, and administration are encouraged, as are reports of
research projects of a pilot nature or which focus on topics of specialized
interest. In all cases, the discussion of issues should be supported by
empirical evidence, collected through either formal or informal investiga-
tion. Although all reports and summaries submitted to this section will be
considered, preference will be given to manuscripts of 5 double-spaced
pages or fewer (including references and notes). Longer articles do not
appear in this section and should be submitted to the Editor of the TESOL
Quarterly for review. Send two copies of reports and summaries to the
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Ann Fathman
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The Forum. The TESOL Quarterly welcomes comments and reactions
from readers regarding specific aspects or practices of our profession.
Responses to published articles and reviews are also welcome. Contribu-
tions to The Forum should generally be no longer than 5 double-spaced
pages. Submit two copies to the Editor of the TESOL Quarterly at the
above address.

2. All submissions to the Quarterly should conform to the requirements of
the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (Third
Edition), which can be obtained from the Order Department, American
Psychological Association, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington,
D.C. 20036. The Publication Manual is also available in many libraries and
bookstores.

3. All submissions to the TESOL Quarterly should be accompanied by a
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