

# TESOL QUARTERLY

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## *Table of Contents*

To print, select PDF page nos. in parentheses

English as a Second Language in Adult Basic Education Programs . . . . . <i>Dennis R. Preston</i>	181	(4-19)
The Sequencing of Structural Pattern Drills . <i>Christina Bratt Paulston</i>	197	(20-31)
A Theoretical Contribution to ESL Diagnostic Test Construction . . . . . <i>Charles H. Blatchford</i>	209	(32-38)
The Relation of Study About Language to Language Performance: With Special Reference to Nominalization . . . <i>Ruth Crymes</i>	217	(39-52)
Activating Advanced ESL Students: A Problem and a Solution . . . . . <i>Ronald V. White</i>	231	(53-60)
Controlled Writing Vs. Free Composition . . . . <i>Maryruth Bracy</i>	239	(61-68)
Ann and Abby: The Agony Column on the Air . . <i>Richard W. Hall</i>	247	(69-71)
English for Foreign Students Goes Out on the Streets . . . . . <i>Ruth M. Blackburn</i>	251	(72-77)
<i>Reviews</i>		
Cotto, Hull, and Pono: American English Series: English as a Second Language (Mohr) . . . . .	257	
Saville and Troike: A Handbook of Bilingual Education (Tucker) . . . . .	259	
Announcement . . . . .	262	

# TESOL QUARTERLY

A Journal for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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## ***English as a Second Language in Adult Basic Education Programs***

Dennis R. Preston

ESL instruction in adult basic education (ABE) programs is receiving increasing attention, but there continues to be a reluctance on the part of ABE professionals to adopt modern foreign language-teaching methods. Many see a conflict between the strict methods of the audio-lingual approach and the psychology of the learner being served by ABE centers. TESOL specialists must make sure that they understand the purposes of ABE and that ABE teachers understand the depth and variety of ESL methodology. This paper suggests several specific organizational and methodological solutions to problems posed by ESL-ABE classes: It is recommended that ESL-ABE classes be geared to time-learned (student attendance) rather than time-taught (teacher attendance) figures and that polystructural, small-unit sequences be cycled to allow for both open enrollment and irregular attendance. The inclusion of the content material of ABE in the ESL segment of the program is especially recommended as a practical corollary to the immediacy of ABE students' needs for survival information.

Much of the heritage of ESL in the United States is bound closely to the teaching of English to adults. Long before the public schools introduced ESL into their curricula, before foreign students made ESL a necessary part of the university curriculum, and certainly before American English was respectable enough for export, adults representing hundreds of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds were learning American English. Although ESL may have experienced a healthy re-birth after the Second World War, following the development of more productive methods in foreign language teaching as a result of the war experience and the influence of structural linguistics, probably the most ancient history of ESL in the United States is of the H\*Y\*M\*A\*N K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N, prescriptivist, grammar-translation variety. It is true, of course, that much of this instruction was very poor, and most of it was carried out by people who were not professional language teachers. Out of that experience, however, and out of others concerned with the instruction of adults who were unable to function at a self-satisfying level in American society grew the field of adult basic education (ABE), an area which continues to address its skills and understandings to millions of Americans who are not functioning members of society; a goodly portion of those millions still requires ESL.

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Fortunately, the national TESOL organization and the United States Office of Education have begun to pay some respect to this old friend—ESL-ABE. At its national conventions, in its publications, and through the interest of its officers and membership, TESOL has shown an ever-increasing awareness of the ESL needs of ABE students. From the first TESOL Conference in Tucson, where a paper on the use of a visual grammar in teaching adults was the sole presentation in this area, to the New Orleans Convention of 1971, where separate sections on ESL for the Non-Academic Adult were set aside in the Pre-Convention Workshops and where regular sections were devoted to the same area, TESOL has proved that the organization's concern for this branch of the ESL family is on the move. During the summers of 1969 and 1970 the U.S.O.E. has sponsored national teacher-training institutes and workshops in ESL-ABE at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and these programs have helped bring together professionals from both ESL and ABE.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, professionals in the field of ABE, though many are concerned with the difficulties and responsibilities of ESL in their area, have not been able to mount a similar program through their largest national organization, NAPCAE (National Association of Public Continuing and Adult Educators).<sup>2</sup> The 1970 Atlanta conference of the organization did not feature one session or speaker devoted to the area of ESL.

It is not fair, however, to condemn ABE professionals without seeking some explanation of their failure to emphasize modern techniques in ESL. First, they have very rightly concerned themselves with basic survival tactics for undereducated adults. Continuing social injustice in urban areas, the influx of rural residents into urban environments, and the continued impoverished conditions of such rural inhabitants as Blacks in the south, Appalachians, Mexican-Americans, Indians, and others have forced the ABE educator to believe that the survival strategies of pre-vocational and basic vocational training, consumer education, and environmental survival techniques constitute the hard core of his job. Although many realize that even these basic skills cannot be provided to those whose native language background will not permit elementary instruction, the impetus of

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<sup>1</sup> Reports of these two summer training programs are available: Robert F. Roeming and Dennis R. Preston, *Final Report: Institutes in Adult Basic Education (A TESOL Project)*, Project Number: 950109, Contract Number: OEC-0-9-591109-4237 (323), University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1969; and Diana E. Bartley and Dennis R. Preston, *Final Report: Institutes in Adult Basic Education (A TESOL Project)*, Project Number: 144-B131, Contract Number: OEG-0-70-4614, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is in order to explain to TESOL readers who may find this organization's name unnecessarily lengthy that the distinction between *adult* education and *continuing* education is the same as the distinction used in this paper between adult basic education and adult education. The former label, in each case, indicates that kind of training provided for the segment of the population which, due to environmental or experiential shortcomings, is incapable of achieving a self-satisfying position in society; the latter term, in each case, indicates that variety of education offered to adults for fun, *Series in Adult Basic Education for Spanish-Speaking Agricultural Workers: Book One—Language and Literacy* (University of Wisconsin, 1967).

ABE planning and training has, nevertheless, moved the field into the development of strategies, materials, and techniques which implement instruction in the categories listed above. Second, since considerable national attention has been given the problem of illiteracy, ABE professionals have understood the inability to read to be the ultimate linguistic barrier for all ABE students, including speakers of other languages. This inclination has directed ESL-ABE teachers towards reading, translation, and writing and away from oral work. Finally, some of the blame for the lack of attention given ESL by ABE teachers and administrators must be borne by TESOL experts themselves. The TESOL community, in general, has been much too dogmatic in its insistence on the audio-lingual methodology, and though those close to the field know that this dogmatism is now fading and that modern foreign language-teaching techniques as they have been understood for the last twenty years are being seriously re-evaluated, particularly in the area of psychological assumptions, those who look to TESOL for support see, all too often, the hard line of the 50's and early 60's. It is only natural that those who have spent considerable effort trying to understand the psychology of the adult learner would reject the strict audio-lingual approach.<sup>3</sup> It is especially unfortunate, however, for ABE that the TESOL community creates an information gap between its most recent cerebrations, experiments, and tentative conclusions and the hard line it most often imposes on those seeking enlightenment. Experienced ABE professionals *know* that audio-lingualism, in its more simplistic forms, will not work in the ABE situation. Many feel, however, that some application of the techniques proposed would be beneficial, but they are unable to produce a happy combination of their knowledge of the ABE learner and ESL methodology. The usual result of this impasse is either an unwillingness on the part of ABE teachers and administrators to have anything at all to do with modern foreign language-teaching techniques or an unfortunate dependence on the authority of the audio-lingual school. The first choice does nothing to improve the teaching of ESL, and the second, after it drives students from the classroom and fails to produce the advertised results, is often dropped after a short and unhappy trial.

This picture is, of course, much too bleak; a number of ESL-ABE centers are alive and doing well. I fear, however, that many of those successful operations are ones which utilize persons with ABE rather than ESL experience. The most successful are those which have found a supervisor, head teacher, or curriculum specialist defiant enough to learn something about ESL methods and then twist them to fit his knowledge of the ABE student. This chance, however, is much too risky for the entire field of ABE. TESOL must begin to tell ABE specialists a number of truths so that not only a few strong-willed persons will derive benefits from ESL

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<sup>3</sup> I am particularly concerned with those attempts to carry TESOL information to ABE specialist which give this limited picture of TESOL expertise. In many cases the TESOL authority has been considerable, but the author's or speaker's information about ABE programs, students, and teachers has been limited.

methods and techniques. First, it should be made clear that recent research in both language learning and linguistics does not justify thorough acceptance of many of the tenets of the audio-lingual theory. Second, it should be emphasized that perhaps the central issue in the current debate is the controversy between the habit-formationists (those who hold to the strict audio-lingual approach with its emphasis on repetition, memorization, and pattern practices) and the cognitive-codists (those who suggest that audio-lingual drills should be accompanied with explanations of structure and various less tightly controlled language experience situations). Third, TESOL should proclaim, even more strongly, that it recognizes the diverse purposes involved in the learning of a second language, as strongly, perhaps, as it has recognized the different purposes involved in the learning of a second as opposed to the learning of a foreign language. Fourth, TESOL should re-emphasize for other areas those sections of the 1970 and revised 1971 Minorities Reports which call attention to the responsibility on the part of the educator to pay attention to his community.<sup>4</sup> Finally, perhaps as a corollary to the fourth exhortation, TESOL experts must make it part of their professional responsibility to know about the students, teachers, and purposes of programs they aspire to advise. This is not only advice rooted in educational practicality but also a suggestion which calls to mind the relativistic, anthropological heritage of American structural linguistics, in some ways a more enviable heritage than the dogmatic principles of language instruction which were codified under the same banner, though, it must be admitted, the earliest formulators of the audio-lingual methodology did not intend the inflexible stand their disciples took. Further and more specific suggestions might be offered, but the purposes of this paper may be better served by turning to some particular conclusions about the organization and teaching of ESL in ABE programs.

Although the social and economic urgency of ABE has already been stressed, it is impossible to discuss arrangement or content of an ESL-ABE program until some further specifications of the ABE learner's goals, strengths, fears, weaknesses, and inclinations are given. Experienced ABE teachers are pretty much agreed that, putting aside particular concerns which may be very important in a certain area or with a certain group, ABE students are afraid of the traditional educational setting yet expect to find it when they come back to school. They are embarrassed by their inability to speak English and more embarrassed by illiteracy, particularly if they are illiterate in their native language. In their expectation of failure, they demand immediate and rapid progress, and they demand a practical justification for those things they are asked to learn. Finally, though not of least importance, adults demand respect for their age and experi-

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<sup>4</sup> It is significant, and heartening, that the word *aspires* occurs throughout that report, not in the context "aspires to learn" but in the significantly challenging context "aspires to teach." I would contend that those who aspire to teach ESL-ABE are challenged with, perhaps, the most difficult aspiration in our field.

ence, and are pleased by respect for their culture and heritage.<sup>5</sup>

A particular problem at many ABE centers is the matter of attendance. Even highly motivated students, satisfied with their courses of instruction, may not be able to attend as regularly as they would like. In some ways this is at the root of many of the problems of ESL-ABE. The teacher is at a loss to decide on the balance between review and the introduction of new material. As soon as the students' abilities seem to be brought to a certain level, an old student returns after two nights' or even two weeks' absence. The administrator is at a loss to decide how to schedule his classes and how to facilitate promotion from one class to another. Though the answer to these problems is in part administrative, I believe a complete answer involves both methodological and administrative concerns.

First, the total timing of a program or course should be geared to the actual attendance norm of students in a given area rather than to the hours of instruction offered. For example, an administrator who plans a six-week course with five meetings per week appears to be planning thirty hours of instruction. In fact, attendance patterns in the community may reveal that such a course will provide each student with an average of twenty to twenty-five hours of instruction. It will probably also be the case that any reduction of number of meetings per week will not economize but simply decrease the number of hours of instruction received by each participant. If such attendance patterns are discovered, it is only realistic to suggest that either a six-week course will, in fact, provide twenty total hours of instruction per student or, if thirty hours represents some particular content goal, a seven- to eight-week course is in order. Though this seems to be a fairly straightforward approach to calculating time, many administrators still tend to equate hours of instruction received with hours of instruction given. Second, teachers will be quick to realize that this handy administrative solution to the time-taught versus time-learned problem will cause difficulties in presentation. This is especially true in programs which stress sequencing, particularly monostructural sequencing, in which mastery over one item is sought before the next is presented. The major difficulty here causes the teacher to question his ability to sequence material, provide continuity throughout the course, and promote students to a higher level. It is obviously important that material be sequenced, though the necessity for sequencing rests more with the teacher and the program than with the student.<sup>6</sup> On

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<sup>5</sup> I am particularly indebted to the members of Workshop II of the 1970 TESOL-ABE Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for their insights into the psychology of the ABE learner. A further list of characteristic and a more complete rationale for many of the conclusions drawn in this paper may be found in Bartley and Preston, pp. 29-44.

<sup>6</sup> For support of the contention that sequencing is not of particular importance to the learner of a second language see John A. Upshur, "Four Experiment on the Relation Between Foreign Language Teaching and Learning," *Language Learning*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1 & 2 (1968), pp. 111-124.

the other hand there are psychological benefits for a student in a sequenced program even if there are no explicit linguistic gains. We shall see an illustration of such effect in the polystructural program discussed below. First, however, the monostructural program, which gives rise to the problems discussed above, is represented in Figure 1:

Week 1		Week 2		Week 3
Presentation and practice— objective # 1	Review	Review of week 1	Presentation and practice— objective # 3	Review  etc. . .
	Presentation and practice— objective # 2	Review		
Review	Presentation and practice— objective # 4			

FIGURE 1

Such a program as this may be appropriate to captive audiences or to students with long-range goals, but it does not allow for a healthy attitude towards realistic attendance patterns and creates considerable confusion about progress, particularly if progress is determined by promotion or retention at the end of a specified period of time. It is possible, however, to hold on to the sequencing of material, at least throughout a program, and to implement the administrative plan noted above to deal with irregular attendance. In such a revised program, the teachers must, however, reconsider the order in which material is presented. Consider, for example, the order illustrated in Figure 2:

Beginner I		Beginner II		etc. . .
Weeks 1-2	Weeks 3-5	Weeks 1-2	Weeks 3-5	
Presentation and limited practice of all objectives	Practice of all objectives in each week	Presentation and limited practice of all objectives	Practice of all objectives in each week	
		Review of Beginner I	Review	

FIGURE 2

Such a presentation allows a student to miss several nights in the first two weeks of a session but still hear an explanation of all the grammatical objectives for the five-week course. If each of the remaining three weeks is devoted to a practice of all the objectives, a student may miss even more sessions and still practice each objective at least twice. It is interesting to note that the notion of microwaving, which at first seems par-

titularly inappropriate to this structure, is not completely lost if the teacher can complete a full cycle in one class session.<sup>7</sup>

Other benefits accrue from adopting such a plan, both to students and teachers. Of particular importance to adult learners is the feeling of having completed something at the end of each lesson. If the teachers learn to budget their time carefully, they will avoid the tag which is so disconcerting to the person who knows he may not be able to attend for the next few nights: "Well, I guess we're out of time now, but we'll work on this tomorrow night until everybody gets it." In a program which follows the outline of Figure 2, both students and teachers know that material missed will come up again in a program which cycles rather than completes topics. Furthermore, this plan does not demand intensive oral responses from the students at the very beginning, a particularly sensitive area with students who, for any reason, may lack self-confidence.

More important than these psychological benefits, helpful as they may be, is the possibility of completely open enrollment and unscheduled promotion, both important factors in a program addressed to a population which is unable to keep a regular schedule. Assume that the following structural guide is used by the teacher of a six-week beginners' course:

- 1) N be N: John's a carpenter, etc. . . .
  - a. N = Pronoun: I, you, he, she, it, we, they.
  - b. N = Article+ N: the room, a room, an eraser, etc . . .
  - c. N = Demonstrative+ N: this room, that room, these rooms, those rooms, etc . . .
  - d. N = Demonstrative: this is, these are, etc . . .
  - e. be = am, is, are.
- 2) N be A: John's unhappy, She's pretty, etc . . . .
- 3) N be Av: I'm at home, She's in the park, etc . . .
- 4) QM be N, A, Av: Who's unhappy?, Where is Julio?, etc . . . .  
QM = who, what, where.
- 5) Modes:
  - a. Contraction: I'm, you're, he's, where's, etc . . .
  - b. Negation: I'm not, you aren't, you're not, who isn't, etc . . .
  - c. Interrogatives: Is he here?, Isn't he sad?, etc . . .
  - d. Short answers: Yes, I am, No, they aren't, In the park, John, etc . . .

A course designed along the lines of Figure 1 above would present these structures in order, though, of course, review of previously introduced structures would be included at later stages, and a final week might be devoted to a review of all topics, especially those which caused the great-

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<sup>7</sup> Only a strong sense of propriety prevents me from calling such a technique "micro-miniwaving."

est difficulty. A course designed along the lines of Figure 2 above, however, would present all the structures as quickly as possible, devoting most of the first two weeks to explanation and minimal practice of every structure. The final four weeks would be given to extensive practice of all structures, including a brief re-explanation each time a different structure was introduced for practice.<sup>8</sup> After the six weeks are completed, the course begins again, regardless of the number of new students or the number of students retained.

In an effort to further the students' understanding of the scope of the program, the teacher might provide each student with a list which illustrates in considerable detail the structures to be covered during a certain time period. Such a list for the structural notes given above might take the following form:<sup>9</sup>

	Class	Outside
1) John's a carpenter.	_____	_____
2) Mary's a seamstress.	_____	_____
3) I'm a teacher.	_____	_____
4) He's a plumber.	_____	_____
5) She's a nurse.	_____	_____
6) We're students.	_____	_____
etc. . . . .		

The list would continue, of course, until sample sentences of each type suggested by the teacher's notes (given above) had been provided. The first check (Class) is made when the teacher and the students agree that the structure has been mastered in class. The second check (Outside) is made at the student's discretion after he feels he has used the construction successfully in a language situation outside the classroom.

Such a list as this, though quite long, provides illustrations of exactly what the student is to learn and lets him know in some detail what the content of his course is to be. It allows for immediate success since the earliest listed items are extremely basic and are bound to be understood if not mastered after a few classes. By watching the progress of the double check system on each student's sheet, the teacher may devote very little time to formal testing and yet be rather sure the student is ready for advancement. Though the teacher may have to exert some influence on fast-checkers and slow-checkers, the benefit of such a system for adults is obvious. First, it allows the individual to see (and to evaluate) what he is to be taught and what he is expected to learn. Second, there is little

<sup>8</sup> Teachers should learn, too, to scramble the order of presentation of structural items in different weeks; if, say, item four is always done on Thursdays, the student who misses every Thursday will always miss item four.

<sup>9</sup> This is by no means meant to be a definitive list of constructions or lexical items for a beginning ESL-ABE class. It is given here only for the purpose of illustration.

question about his progress. When he has checked every item in both columns, he is ready for the next course. Most important, the next course is ready for him, since, if all sections follow the procedure outlined in Figure 2, the material will be introduced and practiced in its entirety regardless of his entrance date. Such a system, then, is not only helpful in solving late enrollment problems, but is also a device which allows students to move on at their individual rates without disrupting classroom presentations. Finally, the system allows for a formal introduction of the student's own judgment of his progress, an especially important allowance for adult students.

It is important to stress that such a plan is useful not only in beginning classes but throughout a program. In fact, the visual progress such a chart indicates may be even more important to intermediate or advanced students. Depending on the variation in local terminology, it is often the case that an ESL-ABE course is made up of a six- to eight-week beginning course, an eight- to twelve-week intermediate course, and an endless advanced course. This is, unfortunately, a natural division which matches the plateau theory of language learning represented in Figure 3:

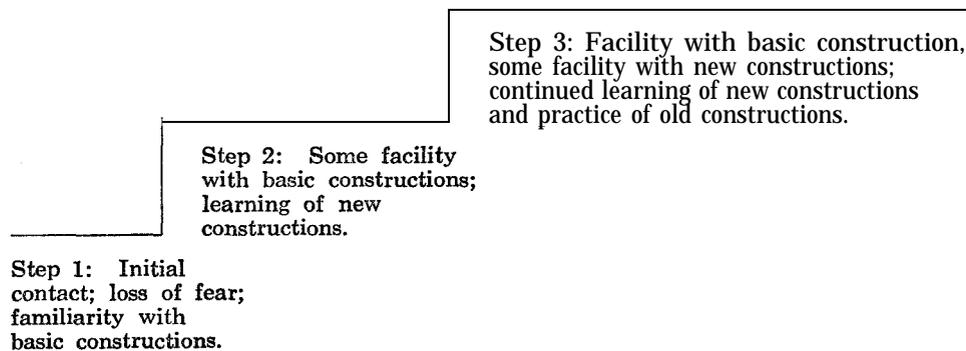


FIGURE 3

Since these are natural language learning steps, students who fit such descriptions are often put into three sections which seem to correspond to their needs. Unfortunately, their linguistic needs, though they may be met quite competently in such a program, are not the same as their psychological needs, especially the psychological needs of adult students. Subdivision of steps two and three into shorter units which have as their goals the learning of a finite list of structures similar to that provided above for a typical beginning class is the best way to prevent intermediate and advanced dropout due to an imagined lack of success. The student has no evidence available which would suggest that the intermediate or advanced level should take twice or three times as long to complete as the beginning. Though many experienced teachers will rec-

ognize that intermediate and advanced students do not seem to build up knowledge of more complex material in exactly the same way that new structures are learned and utilized by beginners, there still seems to be no justification for treating advanced work as an open-ended, hopeless and endless chore. All the benefits—psychological, organizational, instructional—listed above for beginning classes can apply throughout a program.

Such a plan allows, too, for an eclectic (hopefully appropriate) solution to the cognitive-code versus habit-formation argument, at least until more conclusive evidence in favor of one approach or the other is brought forth. Explanation, subsequent re-explanation, and student participation in evaluation are all techniques which will satisfy those who hold to the cognitive-code theory of language instruction. Such approaches should satisfy as well those experienced ABE teachers who have heretofore believed that modern foreign language teaching techniques (i.e., audio-lingual techniques) are insulting to adults. On the other hand, such a program allows for constant oral and written practice of sets of sequenced constructions, and there is nothing in the sequencing of elements or suggestions for implementation which contradicts the use of a wide range of audio-lingual drills.

One obvious objection to the proposed format will come from experienced teachers who may feel that such lists are so highly structured that their professional liberty is at stake. Surely the opposite is the case. While it is true that a teacher is asked to cover in a certain order a closed list of constructions, nothing is said about the implementation of the actual teaching job. First, under such a plan, teachers would be free to use their favorite texts, though they might have to perform minor surgery on the ordering of elements. Second, teachers would obviously be free to use any and all of their favorite teaching aids and/or activities. Finally, and perhaps most important, the list given should be understood as a minimum, a set of constructions which a teacher of a more advanced class can depend on. As long as that list is covered, there is no proclamation against the introduction of topical material which may be of particular interest or importance.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the availability of a carefully programmed list is of obvious benefit to inexperienced teachers or teachers new to the program.

Discussion of pronunciation work has been omitted from this description despite its obvious importance. Though it is not yet completely established, it seems that the development of good phonological habits (if they are habits! ) may best be fostered by those varieties of foreign language teaching drills which have caused the most objections from experienced ABE teachers. Extremely accurate pronunciation is for adults a long range goal, and, perhaps, it is appropriate to adult education but

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<sup>10</sup> In fact the inclusion of such material should be encouraged. More is said below about the compatibility of ABE content material and ESL classes.

not to ABE. Intelligibility is the only really clear goal we can propose for pronunciation work in ESL-ABE, though it may be possible to focus more carefully on a few sounds as they are introduced in a grapheme-phoneme correspondence literacy program. Whatever the attitude adopted here, there is now no reason to exclude pronunciation and literacy from the ESL course, for the relationship between phonology and spelling has been made considerably clearer in recent years.<sup>11</sup>

While English literacy should clearly be made a part of the ESL program, there may be the opportunity in some programs for native language literacy training before English literacy is started. In fact, the availability of such a program would do away with the awkward combination in beginning classes of those who are illiterate in both their native language and English but rather skilled in spoken English with those who have no control of spoken English at all. Figure 4 indicates how an ESL-ABE program might resolve this difficulty:

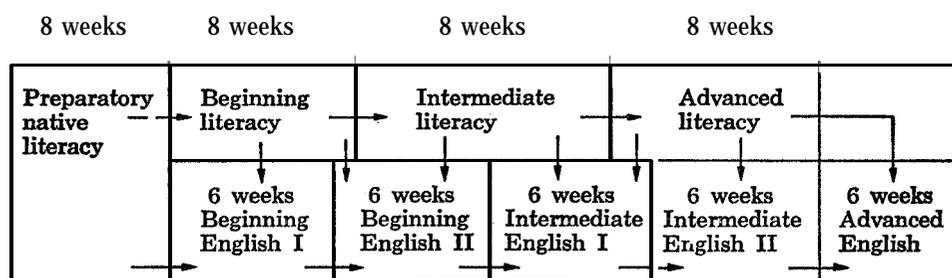


FIGURE 4

In such a program a person illiterate in his native language who had no proficiency in English would move from eight weeks of native literacy instruction into the English program. On the other hand, a student with some fluency in English but no literacy skills could continue in a combined English-native language literacy program until he reached that point at which his knowledge of English no longer allowed him to keep up with the increasing English content of the literacy track.<sup>12</sup> Since students may join the ESL classes at any time, there is no reason to hold back or promote too quickly those who have begun their studies in the literacy program. Finally, some recent research indicates that there is sufficient transition from native literacy to second language literacy to justify the inclusion of such work on practical, linguistic grounds.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The fullest treatment of this relationship may be found in Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle, *The Sound Pattern of English* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968),

<sup>12</sup> See Bartley and Preston, p. 37, for further justification of providing native literacy training beyond the preparatory level.

<sup>13</sup> The strongest proof of this contention, though admittedly, not for adults, may be found in Nancy Modiano, "National or Mother Language in Beginning Reading: A Comparative Study," *Research in the Teaching of Reading*, I (1968), 32-43.

Many teachers and administrators may find little to argue with in the total plan presented here, but they will recognize that it is best suited to a fairly extensive operation. For some classes the difficulty of presenting material to people at significantly different levels of ability in English is a real one. Failure to solve this problem no doubt accounts for considerable dropout by advanced or beginning students, depending on which level the teacher decides to address himself to. The best answer to this question is, of course, one which suggests that the problem ought to be avoided rather than worked around. In most urban areas program cooperation is often the best answer. For example, a number of small programs might not be able to offer the range and variety of language instruction suggested here, but the same programs might offer the entire range in cooperation. One center might take responsibility for all literacy training; still others might have no ESL facilities at all but devote all their time to other aspects of the ABE curriculum. This is, obviously, the best long-range solution, and it is not unlike a solution proposed for ESL training of college students on a regional basis.

Meanwhile, teachers in ESL-ABE classes are faced with students whose abilities in English cover a wide range. There are, perhaps, personal or practical reasons why centers may not divide up areas of instruction. If no organizational rearrangements are possible, a center might, first of all, consider limiting its offerings in advanced English in particular. In a large number of centers students are being served whose economic backgrounds and occupational goals do not really qualify them as ABE students. Such students, often ones seeking college entrance, may make up one-half or more of the population of advanced classes or all classes in ESL. Persons whose background is in ESL rather than ABE are especially likely to admit and serve these students and consider their instruction in English an integral part of a center's responsibility. These students, however, are most often persons who already know how to take advantage of various opportunities in the system; they require no training in community survival strategies. ABE students are harder to reach, and a program director who is satisfied with numbers in attendance will often find that his classes are filled with those who need the program least but are first to avail themselves of its opportunities. Universities and colleges, private facilities, vocational schools, continuing education outlets of all sorts must be made responsible for the ESL training of persons who do not qualify as ABE students. Their presence in an ABE program is a sure indication that the population the program was designed to serve is not being reached.

If inter-agency programs are investigated and if teachers are satisfied that the student population requires ABE as well as ESL work, how, then, may teachers deal with classes still made up of students representing a wide variety of skills in English? There is no need to repeat here many of the excellent suggestions, especially of the past few years, for

dealing with such mixed groups. It is important to note, however, that nearly all these suggestions rely on different presentations by the teacher.<sup>14</sup> Some, of course, indicate ways in which the various skills of the students may be used in the classroom. Literate students may be helpful in work with illiterates; those who speak English fairly well may aid the teacher in providing conversational models. The most common suggestion involves the assigning of different tasks to smaller groups of students. In all of these situations, however, the teacher's attention is directed to one group at a time. This direction to several groups and inability to offer one presentation suitable for all students is a particular handicap in an ABE situation where the student is much more likely to assume that his time is being wasted. He is likely, too, to reject help from classmates, at least until some time has gone by.

It is possible, however, for the teacher to make one presentation which is appropriate to several different levels if he keeps carefully in mind that all students need not respond in the same way. In short, the teacher may work with larger grammatical units than those usually treated in one lesson, and, if the more complex units are compatible with the more basic units, a unified presentation is possible. For example, the string *the man who worked at the tannery was from Puerto Rico* may constitute an example sentence provided for different purposes for different students. One group (A) might be working on adverbial following *be*; a second (B) might focus its attention on adverbial following intransitive verbs; a third (C) might be considering relative clauses. These three distinct groups could participate in a unified practice of the following form:

Cue	Response
The man was from Puerto Rico. Worked at the tannery.	(A) The man was from Puerto Rico. (B) The man worked at the tannery. (C) The man who worked at the tannery was from Puerto Rico.
From Mexico. Mill.	(A) The man was from Mexico. (B) The man worked at the mill. (C) The man who worked at the mill was from Mexico.
Venezuela. etc . . .	(A) etc . . .

Although the teacher will have to provide three different grammatical explanations, all of them can be attended to by all students, and there is certainly no harm in showing students at a lower level how the sen-

<sup>14</sup> Unless, of course, a classroom aide is available. Although the use of paraprofessionals has been shown to be quite effective, let us assume, for the purposes of this discussion, that the teacher has only himself to rely on.

tences and grammatical units they are working on participate in the creation of larger structures. To extend this notion just a little further, it is easy to see how another group, responding with (A) and (B), might have had their attention drawn to another matter—the position (and presence) of the definite article. In this case it is possible for students who give the same response to focus on different matters, even though the “noise” of the drill is the same. It is, in fact, easy to find textbook examples of pattern practices which lend themselves to modification of this sort. Consider the following drill on tense:<sup>15</sup>

Cue	Response
I eat breakfast.	(A) I ate breakfast. (B) I have eaten breakfast. (C) Have you eaten breakfast? (A and B) Yes, we have.
I read a book.	(A) I read a book. (B) I have read a book. (C) Have you read a book?
etc . . .	etc . . .

These suggestions concerning the construction and implementation “of pattern practices for mixed classes are even more easily applied to dialogue work. The lines of a dialogue may be written so that they, too, focus on the grammatical objectives of different groups in the class. For example, a six-line dialogue could be written with the objectives of groups (A), (B), and (C) above in mind.<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted that the above suggestions are not meant to replace the many techniques already available for dealing with classes of mixed abilities in English. In ABE, and perhaps in other areas, such drills offer the opportunity of directing instructional attention to everyone, and that attention is often a necessary psychological ploy in certain classes. The ABE student who feels that the majority of the teacher’s

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<sup>15</sup> Some teachers complain that these drills are unmanageable, but I have been using them in ABE and college ESL classes for some time and have observed them being used by both professional and paraprofessional teachers. Note that this second drill example is perhaps superior to the first since the statement, question, and response are semantically consistent. That is, each unit of the drill bears some resemblance to a conversation. Such drills, even though obviously contrived, are to be preferred.

<sup>16</sup> Again, specific suggestion concerning pronunciation have been left out, and the justification is similar. First, the objects in ABE classes do not admit careful work in pronunciation; second, phonological difficulties in language learning are more homogeneous among students, who may represent different general abilities in a language, than other areas of their language abilities, provided, of course, that they are speakers of the same native language.

time is given to others, either above or below him, is likely to assume that his time is being wasted.<sup>17</sup>

Although this paper has tried to call attention to general problems associated with the teaching of English as a second language in ABE programs and to emphasize the need for organizational cooperation and education in that area, it is hoped that the suggestions concerning program and course construction and the techniques suggested for dealing with mixed classes have touched on two specific, common problems in ESL-ABE. A final difficulty worth mentioning, however, has to do with the actual content of such courses. If ABE courses deal, for the most part, with survival techniques which are of immediate importance to the students' well-being, there is no particular reason why those concerns cannot be made a part of the ESL class. Too often ESL training is taken to be an ancillary concern, particularly in programs which do not boast a large number of trained ESL teachers. In many of these cases a number of language-training specialists are hired to prepare the students for other instruction. What is strange about this is that the subsequent instruction takes place in a language situation, but the language in language instruction is thought to be vacuous. It would seem that the most efficient means (that is, the quickest) of imparting necessary information to students would involve integration of the ESL classes into the content areas of the ABE curriculum. There are no particular reasons to assume that ESL teachers and textbook writers have any special skills in identifying the social and economic needs of ABE students. They can be made aware of these needs, however, if the entire curriculum is shared among all the instructors. If the ABE specialists have determined necessary information, there is no good reason why that information cannot be used in pattern practices, dialogues, conversations, and reading exercises. In fact, the isolation of that content material from the ESL program is simply a waste of time, and time is what ABE students have little of. Although it may be the case that students at the beginning level can be treated with basic vocabulary and patterns, students beyond that level might as well be given material which is appropriate to the ultimate purpose of their training. Those of us who are used to working with foreign students in colleges and universities recognize that the different educational objectives of our students prevent us from offering content-oriented language instruction, though we dream of such situations as English 010-A, open only to Hungarian graduate students in Electrical Engineering. Though such an ideal case is not quite true of ABE, it is a fact that ABE students, for the most part, have similar educational objectives. That homogeneity of educational purposes, accompanied often by a cultural and linguistic homogeneity, suggests, at least, that ABE content should be a regular part of ESL training in ABE centers.

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<sup>17</sup>It is perhaps worth mentioning that such a presentation also offers particularly apt students the possibility of learning much more rapidly than would be the case in a paced, mono-level class.

ESL-ABE will continue to draw attention from members of both professional communities. Those of us who claim TESOL backgrounds may do much to facilitate appropriate and effective instruction and organization in ESL-ABE classes if we share with our colleagues in ABE the varieties of our thoughts and experiences. If we share with them only a simplistic, domatic view of language instruction and if we refuse to recognize the differences among groups seeking English instruction, we will not be an effective voice in an area of continuing importance.

## ***The Sequencing of Structural Pattern Drills\****

Christina Bratt Paulston

This article is an attempt to re-examine the role and function of structural pattern drills in language learning. The first part of the paper seeks to examine the relevant literature pertaining to drills in order to (1) bring together some of the major references for examining areas of concord and disagreement and (2) to consider the implications for language teaching. The second part of the paper proposes a theoretical classification of structural pattern drills, incorporating the implications found relevant, in order to allow a sequencing of drills which will provide a more efficient working model for the classroom.

There is at present in the field of language learning and teaching a re-examination of many of its basic tenets and assumptions. This paper is an attempt to re-examine the role and function of structural pattern drills in language learning. The first part of the paper seeks to examine the relevant literature pertaining to drills in order to (1) bring together some of the major references for comparison of agreements and disagreements and (2) to consider the implications for language teaching. The second part of the paper proposes a theoretical classification of structural pattern drills, incorporating the implications found relevant, in order to provide a systematic and more efficient working model for the classroom.

A cursory glance at the literature during the last two decades reveals a consistent concern about drills, their function, construction, and role in language teaching. This concern naturally reflects the assumptions about language learning held by the advocates of the present major approach to teaching foreign languages, the audio-lingual method. Language learning is seen as basically a mechanical system of habit formation, strengthened by reinforcement of the correct response: language is verbal, primarily oral, behavior and as such learned only by inducing the students to "behave."<sup>1</sup> It is not by accident that most of the proponents of this method are, or were trained by, descriptive structural linguists, since, as Croft points out, pattern practice and substitution drills—the very backbone of the original Fries oral method—developed from techniques of linguistic field methods? It is interesting to speculate that part of the theoretical foundations of the audio-lingual method was based on a fortuitous, albeit very felicitous, fit between the then major linguistic method of analysis and psychological learning theory.

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Mrs. Paulston, Assistant Professor of Linguistics and Director of the English Language Institute, University of Pittsburgh, has published in *English Language Teaching, Foreign Language Teacher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964, pp. vii-viii, which examines the major assumptions of the audio-lingual method.

<sup>1</sup> A summary of Wilga Rivers's "Table of Contents" in *The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. vii-viii, which examines the main assumptions of the audio-lingual method.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Croft, "TESOL Materials Development," *NAFSA Studies and Papers, English Language Series, No. 11*, ed. K. Croft, p. 45.

Scientists tend, as Kaplan has pointed out, to research what they have the instruments with which to investigate, and linguists are no exception. Surely there is a relationship between kinds of linguistic analyses and kinds of drills, in that drills attempt to teach what linguistic analysis reveals of language structure; and typically, different linguistic analyses explore different characteristics of language structure. Moulton as early as 1963 pointed out the relationship between tagmemics and substitution drills, between immediate constituent grammar and expansion drills, and between transformation-generative theory and transformation drills.<sup>3</sup> I think this is important to consider in light of the present challenge of the basic tenets of the audio-lingual method "Linguists have had their share in perpetuating the myth that linguistic behavior is 'habitual' and that a fixed stock of 'patterns' is acquired through practice and used as the basis for analogy. These views could be maintained only as long as grammatical description was sufficiently vague and imprecise."<sup>4</sup>

Chomsky's admonition that "it is the language teacher himself who must validate and refute any specific proposal"<sup>5</sup> would lead, of course, to an empirical rather than a theoretical approach and would open a Pandora's box of problems. It is entirely true that language teaching as a field shows a dearth of controlled experimentation, and as Eugène Brière has pointed out, the primary value of *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach*<sup>6</sup> lies in specifying all the assumptions in the field that need verification. However, the predictive power of theory would be lost if the language teacher has to validate every new proposal, and the result would be an endless ad hoc list of techniques. What the linguist and the language teacher jointly need to do is re-examine the theory of language learning and to make changes in the theory according to new data.

There has been relatively little disagreement on the purpose of structural pattern drills when one looks at the literature of the past twenty years. Drills "are undertaken solely for the sake of practice, in order that performance may become habitual and automatic," and "make no pretense of being communication."<sup>7</sup> "The function of drill is to provide sufficient repe-

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<sup>3</sup> William Moulton, "What is Structural Drill?" *Structural Drill and the Language Laboratory*, ed. F. W. Gravit and A. Valdman (The Hague: Mouton, 1963), pp. 11-15.

<sup>4</sup> Noam Chomsky, "Linguistic Theory," *North East Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*, ed. Robert G. Mead. Reports of the Working Committees, 1966, p. 44. See also Chomsky's review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior in Language*, 35, (1959), 26-58; Eric Lenneberg, "The Capacity for Language Acquisition" *The Structure of Language*, ed. J. Fodor and J. Katz (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964); and Leon A. Jacobovits "Implications of Recent Psycholinguistic Developments for the Teaching of a second Language," *Language Learning*, XVIII: 1 and 2 (June, 1968) 89-109.

<sup>5</sup> Chomsky, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> Eugène Brière, Review of *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach*, by Robert Lad o, *IJAL*, 31 (1965), 170-178.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson Brooks *Language and Language Learning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), p. 146.

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tion in meaningful context to establish correct habitual responses.”<sup>8</sup> “The fact that language operates largely on the basis of habit should be obvious to everyone. What is needed is practice that will gradually force the students’ attention away from the linguistic problem while forcing them to use language examples that contain the problem. This will engage the habit mechanism and more quickly establish the new habits.”<sup>9</sup> Linguists from Fries<sup>10</sup> to Haugen<sup>11</sup> to Moulton<sup>12</sup> have echoed the belief that language learning is habit formation. Obviously we need now to look very closely at how this is reflected in structural pattern drills.

There seems to be disagreement on the degree of meaning necessary in drills and I shall return to this question. There is also disagreement as to the focus of the drill. Lado maintains the view that the student’s attention should be forced away from the teaching point and defines pattern practice as “rapid oral drill on problem patterns with attention on something other than the problem itself.”<sup>13</sup> Rivers on the basis of a good deal of psychological research<sup>14</sup> states, “If the drill is to be effective, the student must be aware of the crucial element in the operations he is performing.”<sup>15</sup> This is certainly an area that needs systematic study with experimental verification of the above assumptions.

There is a great deal of varying practice, if not disagreement, in terminology. Most attempts at classification of drills are purely descriptive (Brooks,<sup>16</sup> Dacanay,<sup>17</sup> Finocchiaro,<sup>18</sup> Hok<sup>19</sup>). An exception is Stanislaw P. Kaczmarek’s “Language Drills and Exercises: A Tentative Classification,”

<sup>8</sup> J. Donald Bowen, “Appendix: Pedagogy: in R. P. Stockwell, J. D. Bowen, and J. W. Martin, *The Grammatical Structures of English and Spanish* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 295.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Lado, *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 105.

<sup>10</sup> Charles C. Fries, *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1945), pp. 8-9.

<sup>11</sup> Einar Haugen, “New Paths in American Language Teaching,” *ELEC Publications*, III (March, 1959), 23.

<sup>12</sup> Moulton, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Lado, 105. See also, Jeris E. Strain, “Drilling and Methodology,” *Language Learning*, XVIII: 3 and 4 (December, 1968) 177-182.

<sup>14</sup> Rivers, Chapter XI.

<sup>15</sup> Wilga M. Rivers, *Teaching Foreign Language Skills* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> Brooks, p. 156.

<sup>17</sup> Fe R. Dacanay, *Techniques and Procedures in Second Language Teaching* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1963), pp. 107-151.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Finocchiaro, *English as a Second Language: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Regents, 1964), pp. 60-65.

<sup>19</sup> Ruth Hok, “Oral Exercises: Their Type and Form,” *Modern Language Journal*, 48:4 (1964), 222-226. See also, T. Grant Brown, “In Defense of Pattern Practice,” *Language Learning*, XIX: 3 and 4 (December, 1969) 191-203; James W. Ney, “Oral Drills—Methodology,” *NAFSA Studies and Papers, English Language Series*, ed. David Wigglesworth, 1967, pp. 57-63; Herschel J. Frey, “Audio-lingual Teaching and the Pattern Drill,” *English Teaching Forum*, IX:4 (July-August, 1971), 11-14, 26; Adrian Palmer, “Communication Practice vs. Pattern Practice,” *English Teaching Forum*, IX:4 (July-August, 1971), 15-19, 30.

which classifies drills according to various types of stimulus-response sequences in terms of spoken, written, and non-linguistic media.<sup>20</sup> Drills thus are exclusively classified according to the medium of the communicative activity with no attention to learning process or degree of information (although he says "one of the principal tasks of the methodics of language teaching is to work out the most efficient . . . process of habit and skill formation in the learners."<sup>21</sup> V. J. Cook, in an article called "Some Types of Oral Structure Drills," attempts to define structure drills in terms of the number of operations the learner has to perform in a drill.<sup>22</sup> "This approach treats the output as a master sentence into which successive items are inserted according to information selected from the input, rather than as a process of changing the whole input into an output."<sup>23</sup> She concludes that "one point which does emerge from this framework is the extremely limited number of operations that the learner has to perform in a structure drill . . . It does appear that what is happening in a drill is much more limited than had been previously thought."<sup>24</sup> This conclusion is not really astounding because, for unstated reasons, Cook defines a structure drill as a mechanical drill only (see later discussion) and her discussion therefore only deals with mechanical drills.

There is within the last five or six years a definite increase in the demand for some form of meaning and communication in the drills. Wilga Rivers throughout her *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*<sup>25</sup> emphasizes the need for meaningful learning and communicative classroom activities. Clifford Prator<sup>26</sup> has a very useful paper where he outlines Bowen's,<sup>27</sup> Stevick's<sup>28</sup> and his own viewpoints on this and their variances; but basically they all agree that there are two poles in language learning, i.e., from manipulation to communication, and that in efficient language teaching there needs to be some form of communication built into the drills. For once, there is experimental evidence to support this assumption. Oller and Obrecht report on an experiment carried out in a Rochester, New York, high school with the conclusion that "the effectiveness of a given pattern is significantly increased by relating the language of that drill to communicative activity in the teaching/learning process." They conclude that from the very first stages

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<sup>20</sup> Stanislaw P. Kaczmariski, "Language Drills and Exercises: A Tentative Classification," *IRAL*, III: 3 (August, 1965), 195-204.

<sup>21</sup> Kaczmariski, p. 195.

<sup>22</sup> V. J. Cook, "Some Types of Oral Structure Drills," *Language Learning*, XVIII: 3 and 4 (December, 1968), 155-164.

<sup>23</sup> Cook, p. 157.

<sup>24</sup> Cook, p. 164.

<sup>25</sup> Rivers, *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*. (University of Chicago Press, 1966).

<sup>26</sup> Clifford Prator, "Guidelines for Planning Classes and Teaching Materials," *Workpapers in English as a Second Language: Matter, Methods, Materials*, Department of English, University of California, Los Angeles, April, 1967.

<sup>27</sup> Bowen, pp. 292-309.

<sup>28</sup> Earl W. Stevick, "UHF and Microwaves in Transmitting Language Skills," *Language Learning: The Individual and the Process*, ed. E. W. Najam, *IJAL*, 32:1 (January, 1966), 84-94.

of a foreign language study meaningful communicative activity should be, a, if not the, central point of pattern drills.<sup>29</sup>

To sum up, there are fairly adequate procedural descriptions of types of drills available although we need to consider the implications of recent linguistic theory on new types of drills (not within the scope of this paper.)<sup>30</sup> There is growing concern with the necessity to teach not only parroting of the teacher but also some form of communication within the classroom. We do not have as yet a generally accepted theoretical framework for classifying structural pattern drills which deals with these problems.

I have recently attempted, in an article called "Structural Pattern Drills: A Classification,"<sup>31</sup> to suggest such a conceptual framework; that is, a classification, which recognizes that language learning is partly but not only habit formation, which proposes to put meaning and communication into classroom activities, and to do so in a consistent and orderly procedure. This present paper is an attempt to further expand and clarify this proposition for classifying drills. We need such a classification for grading and sequencing drills in order to obtain a systematic and more efficient progression in the classroom from mechanical learning to the internalizing of competence. I believe with John Carroll, Wilga Rivers, and others in our field that "there is no reason to believe that the two positions (language teaching as formation of language habits versus the establishment of rule-governed behavior) are mutually exclusive."<sup>32</sup> Rivers points out in a fascinating footnote that many of the language features which are most efficiently taught by drills (person and number inflections, gender agreements, formal features of tense, etc.) "are excluded by Chomsky from his system of rewrite rules and are included in the lexicon as parts of complex symbols."<sup>33</sup>

If, as the evidence seems to suggest, language involves more than one

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<sup>29</sup> John W. Oller and Dean H. Obrecht, "Pattern Drill and Communicate Activity: A Psycholinguistic Experiment," *IRAL*, VI: 2 (May, 1966) 165-174.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g., Mark Lester, ed. *Readings in Applied Transformational Grammar* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970); Robin Lakoff, "Transformational Grammar and Language Teaching: *Language Learning*, XIX: 1 and 2 (June, 1969) 117-140; William E. Rutherford, "From Linguistics to Pedagogy: Some Tentative Applications: *Preparing the EFL Teacher: A Projection for the '70s*, ed. R. C. Lugton (Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, Inc., 1970), 29-44; Sol Saporta, "Applied Linguistics and Generative Grammar," *Trends in Language Teaching*, ed. Albert Valdman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966). This language teacher would like to express her validation of most TG proposals for classroom teaching as quite impractical. Hauptman is quite right when he says, "We must be aware of the fact that in many areas, transformational grammar is not ready to be applied except in the most cursory way. We can look to it for insights, but it is a mistake to expect firm answers." (289) Philip C. Hauptman, Review of *Readings in Applied Transformational Grammar*, ed. Mark Lester, *Language Learning*, XX: 2 (December, 1970), 284-289.

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

<sup>32</sup> Rivers, *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*, 78. See also John B. Carroll "Current Issues in Psycholinguistics and Second Language Teaching," *TESOL Quarterly*, V: 2 (June, 1971), 101-114.

<sup>33</sup> Rivers, *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*, p. 79.

level and there are at least two types of learning,<sup>34</sup> then this should be reflected in the nature and types of drills. Both Stevick<sup>35</sup> and Titone<sup>36</sup> conceive of language learning as a three-stage process, but as Prator<sup>37</sup> points out, there is no way of accurately assigning a drill to a specific stage. My contention is that there are three classes of drills: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative and that we may distinguish these three classes from each other if we analyze the drills in terms of (1) expected terminal behavior (2) degree of response control, (3) the type of, learning process involved, and (4) criteria for selection of utterance response.

But before I proceed to a discussion of the criteria for classifying drills, we need to consider an important aspect of drills, which cuts across this classification. Many have recognized a basic division in kinds of drills. Etmekjian<sup>38</sup> refers to them as teaching drills and testing drills, Rivers as the teaching phase and the testing phase, and Fries spoke of patterns produced "on the level of conscious choice."<sup>39</sup> What is involved is the difference between drills that serve primarily to help the student memorize a pattern with virtually no possibility for mistake and the drills which test or reinforce the learning of that pattern. (For a detailed discussion of reducing a grammatical pattern to "minimal items" see Gunter's "Proportional Drill as a Technique for Teaching Grammar.")<sup>40</sup> The concord of person and verb in the Romance languages serves as a good example for a teaching drill:

Model: andar (tu)	R: andas
cantar (tu)	cantas

Continue the drill:

Cue: trabajar (tu)	R:
pasar (tu)	
hablar (tu)	

This is a memorizing drill, where even the reader who does not know (or understand ) Spanish can complete the drill correctly. But as soon as we change the cues to include all persons, that is, to change the cues so as to

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<sup>34</sup> Rivers, *The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher*, pp. 47, 50.

<sup>35</sup> Stevick, p. 85. Stevick actually talks of a two-phase cycle from the M-phase of mimicry, manipulation and meaning to the C-phase of communication. This process is analyzable along the three dimensions of "habituation," "vividness," and "responsibility."

<sup>36</sup> Renzo Titone, "A Psycholinguistic Model of Grammar Learning and Foreign Language Teaching," *English as a Second Language: Current Issues*, ed. R. Lugton (Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, 1970), pp. 41-62, and especially 58-59. He refers to grammar learning as a three-stage process: (1) Association of elementary linguistic units, (2) Induction and integration, and (3) Deduction.

<sup>37</sup> Prator, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> James Etmekjian, *Pattern Drills in Language Teaching* (New York: New York University Press, 1966). pp.33-36.

<sup>39</sup> Fries, p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Gunter, "Proportional Drill as a Technique for Teaching Grammar," *Language Learning*, X:3 and 4 (1960), 123-134. See also Andrew Macleish, "Composing Pattern Practice Drills," *On Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, ed. B. W. Robinett, Series III, 1966, 141-148, and "Questions and Directed Discourse," *TESOL Quarterly*, 2:4 (December, 1968) 262-267.

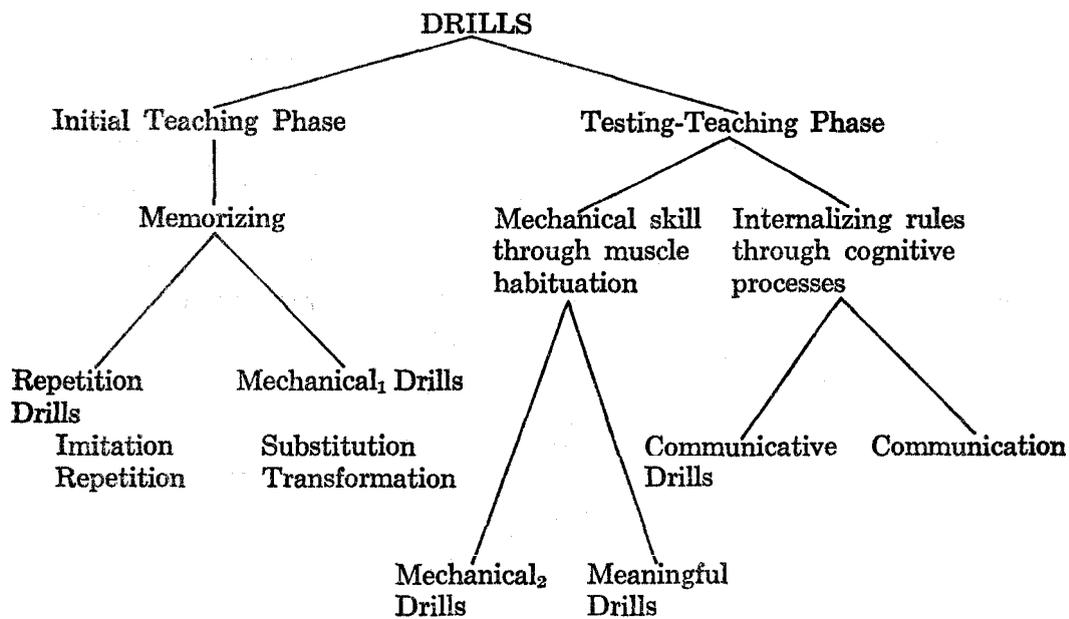
require an answer of more than minimal items, we require that the student know all the verb endings for the *ar-* verbs, present tense, and by his response we know whether he does or not. The response depends on the conscious choice of the student:

Model: andar (tu)            R: andas  
           cantar (Vd. )        R: canta

Continue the drill:  
 Cue: trabajar (cl) R:

Only the student who has previously memorized these patterns can complete the drill successfully.

I have constructed a tentative design to clarify the overall division of drills.



Drills are basically divided into teaching (memorizing, habituation) drills and testing (feed back, quizzing) drills.<sup>41</sup> There are two types of drills to help the student memorize: Repetition drills and Mechanical drills which basically tend to be substitution drills, but transformation drills are also possible. The testing drills in turn can be divided according to purpose: acquiring mechanical skill through muscle habituation on the one hand and, on the other, internalizing of roles through cognitive processes. The me-

<sup>41</sup> I find the terminology of teaching and testing drills infelicitous, in that the testing drills are also designed to teach language and "testing" easily becomes confused with the technical sense of that word. I am at a loss though to find a more apt terminology.

chanical skill drills subdivide into mechanical and meaningful drills, while the internalizing of competence drills subdivide into communicative drills and actual communication. It can thus be seen that it is possible for mechanical drills to be either testing or teaching drills, depending on their breakdown into minimal items. I mention this before discussion of the three classes—mechanical, meaningful, and communicative—of drills because this duality of mechanical drills troubled me for a long time and contributed to some confusion in my previous article.

This chart may make the following discussion somewhat clearer.

	<i>Mechanical Drills</i>	<i>Meaningful Drills</i>	<i>Communicative Drills</i>
Expected terminal behavior	Automatic use of manipulative patterns—formation of habits	Automatic use of manipulative patterns—formation of habits still working on habit formation	Normal speech for communication—free transfer of patterns to appropriate situations
Degree of Control	Complete	Less control but there is a “right answer” expected	No control of lexical items—some control of patterns. Answer cannot be anticipated
Learning process involved	Learning through instrumental conditioning by immediate reinforcement of correct response ANALOGY	Learning through instrumental conditioning by immediate reinforcement of correct response ANALOGY trial-and-error ANALYSIS	Problem solving ANALYSIS
Criteria for selecting response	Teacher	Teacher, situation, readings (knowledge common to the class)	Student himself (new information about real world)

A mechanical drill is defined as a drill in which there is complete control of the response and only one correct way of responding. Because of the *complete* control, the student need not even understand the drill, although he responds correctly, as in the first Spanish drill. One might possibly consider repetition drills as the most extreme example of this class of drill, but substitution drills are the most typical of this class. The difference between a mechanical memorizing drill and a mechanical testing drill lies in the ability of the student to respond, again depending on how well he has memorized certain patterns; but understanding what he is saying is not a necessary requisite. It is perfectly possible to supply a verb with a correct ending, e.g., in Spanish, without necessarily knowing what the verb means:

given the cue: *\*gratar (nosotros)*, any docile student will respond with *\*gratamos*; and he, no more than I, will know the meaning of that nonsense word. The ability to practice mechanical drills without necessarily understanding them is an important criterion in distinguishing them from meaningful drills.

Transformation drills may be mechanical:

John kicked the door.

The door was kicked by John.

All the student need memorize is the structural change, and he can complete such a drill without understanding exactly what he is saying. Response drills, which so frequently are being masqueraded as communication, can be some of the easiest mechanical drills for the student:

Which would you prefer, tea or coffee?  
 wine or beer?  
 nectar or ambrosia?

I know very well that the student is going to answer *ambrosia* without the foggiest notion of what it is.

The expected terminal behavior of such drills is the automatic use of manipulative patterns and is commensurate with the assumption that language learning is habit formation. It involves the classical Skinnerian method of learning through instrumental conditioning by immediate reinforcement of the right response. Learning takes place through analogy and allows transfer of identical patterns. This is clearly the mechanical level of learning, and this class of drills provides practice in mechanical associations such as adjective-noun agreement, verb-endings, question-forms, and the like. This is a very necessary step in language learning; and as long as the student is learning, he won't mind the mechanical nature of the drill. The teacher needs to remember that the student can drill without understanding and to make sure that in fact he does understand. Because of the response control, it is eminently suited for choral drills.

The student knows how to select his utterance response on the basis of the teacher's cue, be it oral or pictorial; but the teacher is the sole criterion for supplying the correct response. This becomes an important distinction between meaningful and communicative drills.

Much of the criticism of the audio-lingual method is based on the mechanical drill or rather the over-use to which it has been put. There are a number of psychological studies which demonstrate that there is a limit to the efficiency of mechanical drills in language learning.<sup>42</sup> While not denying the need for mechanical drills, we may note that on the mechanical level alone the student certainly cannot yet express his own ideas fluently. He next needs to work through a set of meaningful drills:<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Rivers, *The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher*, p. 61-79.

<sup>43</sup> William E. Rutherford, *Modern English: A Textbook for Foreign Students* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 11.

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Teacher: He's outside. | 2. Teacher: He's eating.    |
| Student 1: Where is he?   | Student 1: What's he doing? |
| Student 2: He's outside.  | Student 2: He's eating.     |
| 3. He's at home.          | 4. He's going home.         |

(Note that Student 2's response is not meaningful; it is repetition.)

In a meaningful drill there is still control of the response although it may be correctly expressed in more than one way and as such less suitable for choral drilling. There is a right answer and the student is supplied with the information necessary for responding, either by the teacher, the classroom situation, or the assigned reading; but in all cases the teacher always knows what the student ought to answer. Everyone is always aware that these drills are only language exercises and that any answer will do as well as another as long as it is grammatically correct and conforms to the information supplied. The student cannot complete these drills without fully understanding structurally and semantically what he is saying. I have attempted very hard to exclude lexical meaning from structural in the definition of meaningful drills, but I doubt that it is either possible or desirable. With the new license for mentalism I shall include both. The result is that some pattern drills come very close to being vocabulary drills. Compare the above "Which would you rather have, tea or coffee?" with "Which would you rather be, rich and healthy or sick and poor?" In other words, some meaningful drills may have the check for feedback which shows that the student really understands the pattern built into the lexical components.

Comprehension type question and answers based on assigned readings fall in this class of drills:

Teacher: What color is Little Red Ridinghood's hood?  
 Student: Little Red Ridinghood's hood is red.

as well as much "situational" teaching as in this drill on post-nominal modification using prepositional phrases, where the students were instructed to describe each other:

Teacher: Which boy is in your class?  
 Student: The thin boy with long sideburns.  
           The handsome boy with black hair,

It will be noticed that in the question-answer drill above, the long answers were given. The expected terminal behavior is the same as for mechanical drills. We still want an automatic use of language manipulation; we are still working on habit formation. But the method is different. Mechanical drills by their nature can be drilled without grammatical analysis with the students left to "analogize" the pattern on their own. This is not possible with meaningful drills. Unless the student understands what he is doing, i.e., recognizes the characteristic features involved in the language manipu-

lation, he cannot complete the drill. Politzer reports of an interesting experiment in "The Role and Place of the Explanation in the Pattern Drill" and points out that an early introduction of the explanation seems to be a more effective treatment than its postponement or omission and that it is preferable to show the application and relevance of the new material in some sort of context before explaining it.<sup>44</sup> The place for the explanation then is following the mechanical drills; those students who grasped the analogy will be rewarded with positive reinforcement and those who did not will be helped to understand the specific characteristics of that language structure.<sup>45</sup> The learning process varies depending on the structural pattern drilled, and while there may still be instrumental conditioning involved, there is very often a trial-and-error process involved in finding the correct response.

At this point, however, there is still no real communication taking place. Students have a tendency to learn what they are taught rather than what we think we are teaching. If we want fluency in expressing their own opinions, then we have to teach that. The expected terminal behavior in communicative drills is normal speech for communication or, if one prefers, the free transfer of learned language patterns to appropriate situations.

The degree of control in a communicative drill is a moot point. I originally stated that there is no control of the response, that the student has free choice to say whatever he wants. However, this turns out not to be true. All classroom teachers, using this system of sequencing drills, have reported that there is indeed control, not of lexical items as we had at first thought but of structural patterns. The difficulty lies in retaining this control so that the students indeed practice what they have learned; they themselves lose track of the fact that they are drilling and become engrossed in exchanging information. But it is a drill rather than free communication because we are still within the realm of the cue-response pattern.

To recapitulate, the differences between a meaningful drill and a communicative drill lie in the expected terminal behavior (automatic use of language manipulation versus free transfer of learned language patterns to appropriate situations) and in response control. But the main difference between a meaningful drill and a communicative drill is that in the latter the speaker adds *new* information about the real world. In mechanical and meaningful drills the teacher and the class always know what answer to expect; although the grammatical patterns used to encode the information may vary, the content is already known and there is a right or wrong answer. No one ever forgets that these drills are only language exercises; in the real world it would seem foolish to ask questions the answer to which you already know. The answer to "What color is your shirt?" is merely meaningful; the situation supplies that information, and the teacher knows the

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<sup>44</sup> Robert L. Politzer, "The Role and Place of the Explanation in the Pattern Drill," *IRAL*, VI:4 (November, 1968): 315-331.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Barrutia, "Some Pedagogical Dangers in Recent Linguistic Trends," *IRAL*, IV: 3 (1966), 157-164.

answer as well as the student. But the answer to “Do you have a date for Saturday night?” is communicative; here the class gets a piece of information it did not have before.

Communicative drills are the most time consuming and the most difficult to arrange, but if we want fluency in expressing personal opinions, we must teach that. Role playing within a set situation—ordering a meal, carrying on a telephone conversation, buying groceries—is one way of working with communicative drills. Soliciting opinions rather than factual answers from reading passages is another. The simplest way of working with communicative drills is just to instruct students to answer truthfully.

GUIDED REPLY <sup>46</sup>

1. Do you read the *Daily News* editorials  
     No.    **The *Times* is the paper whose editorials I read.**  
           { **The paper whose editorials I read is the *Times*.**
2. Are you familiar with Burma's problems?  
     No.    { **Thailand is the country whose problems I am familiar with.**  
           { **The country whose problems I am familiar with is Thailand.**
3. Did you fly over here on a United Airlines plane?
4. Are you taking Professor Wiley's course?

Communicative drills provide John Carroll's “ ‘problem-solving’ situation in which the student must find . . . appropriate verbal responses for solving the problem, ‘learning’ by a trial-and-error process, to communicate rather than merely to utter the speech patterns in the lesson.”<sup>47</sup> We are clearly working within a level of language that involves thought and opinion and teaching it in a way which necessitates an understanding of the essential elements of what is being learned. It is a very different experience from mechanical drilling. It is practice in performance by practice in generating new utterances in order to internalize the rules of the grammar.

To summarize, in teaching languages we need to take each pattern systematically through a sequence of mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills, not leaving out any one step. Mechanical drills are especially necessary in beginning courses and in learning languages markedly different from the native tongue. But I doubt that any amount of mechanical drills will lead to competence in a language, i.e., fluency to express one's own opinions in appropriate situations; and if that is our objective, then we must also employ meaningful and communicative drills in our teaching.

<sup>46</sup> Rutherford, p. 219.

<sup>47</sup> John 13. Carroll, *The Study of Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1953), p. 188.

## ***A Theoretical Contribution to ESL Diagnostic Test Construction \****

Charles H. Blatchford

This paper considers the results of an experimental 40-item diagnostic test dealing with 10 grammatical mistakes typically made by Chinese students; the analysis focuses on the scores of these 10 mini-tests. The purpose of the experiment was to calculate the reliability of the mini-tests and then to determine how many items are needed to establish 'good' reliability. Two forms (A & B) were administered a week apart to 298 ESL students. Validity of the mini-tests was checked by constructing a composition with the same grammatical mistakes and asking the students to identify them. Reliability coefficients (K-R #20) ranged from .67 to .91. The data were then analyzed as if each mini-test in Form A had only 3 items, and then only 2 items;  $r$  ranged from .61 to .87, and from .28 to .82 respectively. From a different point of view, the optimum number of items may be suggested by asking how much useful information is lost if a decision is made on the basis of 2 items rather than 4. If the criterion is the student's consistently good, or poor, performance from A to B, the degree of such consistent performance is very stable whether based on 4, 3, or 2 items per subtest.

This paper is addressed to some problems in diagnostic testing, and I should probably start out by defining just what a diagnostic test is. In TESL we usually think of A.L. Davis' "Diagnostic Test for Students of English as a Second Language"<sup>1</sup> as a prime example of a test in this category. The difficulty is that when the test is given, it most likely loses its diagnostic character, because its score is reported as a single number.

First, then, my definition of a diagnostic test is functional, and depends on the way scores are reported: whenever several part scores are reported for a test, something more than that global concept of 'English' is being tested, and certain aspects are therefore diagnosed, no matter whether the test is billed as an achievement test, a proficiency test, or whatever. In other words, the degree to which a test is diagnostic depends not so much on the purpose of the test, but on the way in which scores are analyzed. Let us consider TOEFL for a moment: TOEFL is usually considered to be a proficiency test, and when its total score is considered by an admissions officer, it can quite rightly be so classified. However, if one looks at the five part-scores for reading comprehension,

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\* Much of the content of this paper, which was presented at the TESOL Convention, New Orleans, March 7, 1971, is derived from my Columbia University dissertation, "Experimental Steps to Ascertain Reliability of Diagnostic Tests in English as a Second Language" (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970, Order #70-18,785).

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<sup>1</sup> A. L. Davis, "Diagnostic Test for Students of English as a Second Language" (Washington: Educational Services, 1953, now distributed by McGraw-Hill).

vocabulary, and so on, the test is serving a diagnostic purpose, in that information about an individual's particular strengths and/or weaknesses is obtained. That is, we have specific information not on 'English', but on certain abilities or skills.

Second, my definition of the ideal diagnostic test is that it be criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced. That is to say, one should look at whether mastery of the content has taken place—comparison with a criterion—rather than at how a student fares in relation to others—comparison with a norm. Although I just cited TOEFL as one example of gross diagnosis, it is a norm-referenced test, and the scores will not help inform the classroom teacher about specific weaknesses. The Davis test, on the other hand, is a criterion-referenced test. But *unless* the answer sheet is very carefully studied, the test with its one score will not give the teacher much information on strength or weakness. Usually, it is used as a placement test since its score is translated into specifications of how much more English a student should study. To summarize, first, a diagnostic test should have subscores and second, it should not even have a total score, so that the temptation to make norms will be avoided.

In essence, a diagnostic test should be considered as a series of miniature tests on specific problems. But as soon as one considers short tests, there is the difficulty of statistical reliability—that index of how stable an individual's performance is from one form of a test to another. Reliability is felt to be dependent on test length: the longer the test, the more reliable. But, with many tests, we cannot afford great length. As Thorndike and Hagen put it, "Diagnostic testing faces a very troublesome dilemma. How is the test to provide sufficient diagnostic detail, and yet appraise each separate ability with sufficient reliability?"<sup>2</sup>

To attack this problem of the reliability of miniature tests, an experimental, untimed, 40-item instrument was constructed to test ten grammatical problems, not general abilities. Examples of such problems are the use of *wish* and the patterns its use requires; *if* and 'contrary-to fact' conditions; the use of *because* and *therefore* as connective; the use of *since*, *for*, and *ago*; and so on. Each of these ten grammatical problems was tested by four multiple-choice items and the options were based upon Chinese students' mistakes. For example, two of the four items testing *wish* were as follows:

I can never finish my work.

I wish I (1) have more time.

(2) to have more time.

(3) could have more time.

(4) have had more time.

(9) I don't know the answer.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert L. Thorndike and Elizabeth Hagen, *Measurement and Evaluation in Psychology and Education* (New York: Wylie, 1961), p. 297.

It takes an hour to get to school.

I wish I (1) could live nearer.

(2) have lived nearer.

(3) to live nearer.

(4) live nearer.

(9) I don't know the answer.

Two of those testing *for*, *since*, and *ago* were as follows:

I have been watching TV (1) for an hour.

(2) since an hour.

(3) an hour ago.

(4) from an hour.

(9) I don't know the answer.

I have been living at 350 Main Street (1) two years ago.

(2) from two years.

(3) for two years.

(4) since two years.

(9) I don't know the answer.

It can be seen that the items are structurally similar, although the options are given in different (randomized) order.

To 298 secondary and college foreign students, two forms of the test were administered a week apart, so that a Pearson product-moment reliability measure could be made. For each of the ten grammatical prob-

TABLE 1  
Product-Moment Reliability Coefficients When  
Forms A and B have  $n$  Items in Each Miniature Test  
( $N = 298$ )

Mini- test	$r$ A'B'	$r$ A <sup>2</sup> B'	$r$ A <sup>3</sup> B'	$r$ A <sup>4</sup> B'	$r$ A <sup>5</sup> B'	$r$ A <sup>6</sup> B'	$r$ A <sup>7</sup> B'	$r$ A <sup>8</sup> B'
1	.437	.420	.411	.361	.418	.401	.398	
2	.374	.369	.363	.264	.383	.371	.292	
3	.445	.435	.406	.329	.423	.381	.315	
4	.601	.576	.512	.358	.595	.581	.438	
5	.620	.595	.586	.503	.627	.627	.579	
6	.785	.759	.761	.666	.764	.744	.680	
7	.462	.470	.458	.373	.455	.323	.173	
8	.616	.586	.548	.525	.556	.635	.642	
9	.671	.602	.531	.587	.660	.613	.408	
10	.618	.582	.596	.466	.601	.572	.523	

lems, there was then a reliability coefficient. Such product-moment reliability ranged from .37 (#2) to .79 (#6) as seen in Table 1. By Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 for internal consistency, the ten coefficients ranged from .67 (#9) to .91 (#6). 'Good' reliability is considered in

TABLE 2  
Kuder-Richardson Formula #20 Internal Consistency Reliability  
When Forms A and B Have <sup>n</sup> Items in Each Miniature Test  
(N= 298)

Mini-test	A <sup>4</sup>	A <sup>3</sup>	A <sup>2</sup>	B <sup>4</sup>	B <sup>3</sup>	B <sup>2</sup>
1	.873	.835	.780	.875	.832	.776
2	.854	.798	.642	.726	.720	.628
3	.786	.769	.654	.778	.732	.662
4	.829	.750	.620	.797	.723	.574
5	.862	.802	.754	.689	.696	.740
6	.906	.870	.818	.909	.876	.774
7	.794	.721	.590	.615	.534	.290
8	.840	.777	.686	.685	.580	.680
9	.670	.609	.276	.704	.683	.222
10	.781	.705	.744	.848	.841	.774

the .90's or high .80's.<sup>3</sup> The reliability figures were then recalculated on the miniature tests by dropping one of the four items and thus considering each mini-test as having only three items. Each reliability figure drops. Similarly, when each mini-test was considered to have only two items, the coefficients dropped yet again. The range of these coefficients was from .28 (#9) to .82 (#6). Still, in many of these mini-tests, there is good internal consistency reliability, or at least it can be considered to be good, when there are, after all, only two items making up each test!

It may now be asked what these data say regarding the optimal number of items per mini-test. It seems that for most purposes, where one is interested in descriptions of, rather than decisions about, individuals, a test of two items per problem tested may be sufficient.

From another point of view, the question of reliability can be considered not in terms of either internal consistency or product-moment coefficients. The question of how long the test should be may be rephrased to ask how much useful information is lost if a diagnosis of a student's English is based on a mini-test of two items rather than four. To attack this problem, let's look at a hypothetical situation. Four correct responses out of four will be classified as [+] and 3, 2, 1, or 0 right as [-]. For example, if on Form A a student gets two items out of four right, the student will be classified as [-] by this criterion. Should the teacher decide to teach him another lesson on the given problem? Let's say a decision to teach is made. If on Form B (given a week later but with no intervening instruction) the student scores two out of four again (classified as [-]), the correct decision was made. His performance was consistent in a negative way [-,-]. Conversely, if a student got a score of four on Form A (classified as [+1]), and a four on Form B [+], and if the decision not to teach more had been made, the consistency of his

<sup>3</sup> David P. Harris, *Testing English as a Second Language* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), pp. 16-17.

performance [+,+], also corroborates the decision as being right, this time in a positive way. Thus, similarity of performance, [+,+], or [-,-] is the basis for determining whether the correct decision has been made.

Let us look at some of the data in this light. The first line in Table 3 can be read as follows: 66 students who got four right on Form A got four right on Form B; 127 who got less than four right on Form A got less than four right on Form B. The students classified in these two cells, [+,+], and [-,-] performed consistently from one testing to the next, and for them a correct decision was made, that is, the [+,+], cell members needed no further instruction, and the [-,-] cell members did. Correct decisions were made for 193 cases, which are .647 of the total

TABLE 3  
Consistency of Performance from Form A to Form B as Measured by  
Numbers and Percents of Examinees Getting Specified Scores  
(N = 298)

Mini-test	Form B Score	Number of Items in Form A Sets											
		4			3			2			1		
		# Right		% <sup>a</sup>	# Right		%	# Right		%	# Right		%
0-3	4		0-2	3		0-1	2		0	1			
-	+		-	+		-	+		-	+			
1	4 +	13 66	.65	12 67	.64	11 68	.63	7 72	.58				
	0-3 -	127 92		123 96		119 100		101 118					
2	4 +	82 76	.62	79 79	.63	77 81	.62	63 95	.60				
	0-3 +	110 30		110 30		104 36		83 57					
3	4 +	43 127	.69	33 137	.69	29 141	.68	21 149	.65				
	0-3 -	77 51		67 61		61 67		46 82					
4	4 +	26 84	.74	24 86	.74	20 90	.71	7 103	.56				
	0-3 -	137 51		134 54		122 66		64 124					
5	4 +	19 57	.78	18 58	.77	15 61	.75	13 63	.71				
	0-3 -	176 46		171 51		163 59		147 75					
6	4 +	32 109	.79	31 110	.78	19 122	.80	14 127	.77				
	0-3 -	127 30		122 35		115 42		101 56					
7	4 +	24 72	.69	21 75	.69	16 80	.64	4 92	.51				
	0-3 -	134 68		129 73		112 90		61 141					
8	4 +	18 153	.64	14 157	.64	11 160	.64	6 165	.63				
	0-3 -	41 86		35 92		30 97		23 104					
9	4 +	75 172	.71	72 175	.73	66 181	.73	5 242	.86				
	0-3 -	41 10		41 10		37 14		15 36					
10	4 +	63 52	.70	61 54	.69	29 86	.71	24 91	.64				
	0-3 -	157 26		151 32		126 57		100 83					

<sup>a</sup>% is the sum of the [-,-] and [+,:] cells divided by N.

of 298. Thus, if one had based his decisions just on Form A performance, his decision would have been corroborated in 65% of the cases. Or, put another way, assessments of a student's knowledge based on Form A performance seem to be borne out against the criterion of Form B per-

formance in 65 out of 100 cases. The numbers in the other two cells indicate erroneous assessment. Thirteen students who got less than four right [—] on Form A performed perfectly on Form B, and 92 who performed perfectly [+] on Form A got less than four right [—] on Form B. Their inconsistent performance would have led to mistaken assessment and placement. In mini-tests one through ten, the percentages of correct assessment range from 62% (#2) to 79% (#6). If one decided from chance alone, or if one had no prior knowledge of the examinees, one would expect to be right 50% of the time. The percentages just given thus improve decision making. If one decided only on the basis of Form A, 53% (158 out of 298); if on the basis of Form B only, 27% (79 out of 298).

The figures and percentages just discussed are those for Form A when four items constitute each mini-test. When the number on Form A is reduced from four to three (as shown in the next column of Table 3), the percentage of examinees performing consistently declines, but only very slightly. When the number of items is further reduced to two, the percentage decreases a maximum of five percentage points from what it was when the mini-test comprised four items. And in set six, which generally appears to have the best Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 reliability, there is even a tiny gain! To summarize, when it comes to the percent of correct decisions, the shorter mini-tests seem to give as much information as the full four items. The median percent of correct decisions when the test is four items long is .69, and when it is two items long, is also .69. It appears that the additional two items do not provide much, if any, more information.

So much for the theoretical side. What about the practical? I assume that since there are not many diagnostic tests, most are made by the teacher. What does the information above mean for the teacher when he is constructing a test?

1. I believe it means that with confidence he can use only two items per problem and be fairly sure of his diagnosis.
2. I believe it means that he should look at each item for each student—not using total scores. This procedure will obviously require much more time, but unless it is followed, the time spent in testing is not really worthwhile.
3. I believe it means that he can individualize instruction to a greater extent *if* he is willing to spend more time in studying the analysis of each student's test. Such individualization will require an abandonment of set ways. It will mean that he not give his pat diagnostic test at the beginning of the term, generalize about total scores, and then proceed blithely with the set syllabus. If that procedure is followed, both criteria for a diagnostic test with which this paper was introduced are being discarded.

In conclusion, provided that test-makers follow the usual canons of

carefully constructing and pre-testing items, I believe the teacher can trust the diagnostic nature of his results even if the mini-tests on each grammatical problem contain only two items—or even only one, and if sufficient time is spent looking at the test papers, *not* the score. Using the criterion of the percent of correct decisions made is perhaps a more meaningful measure than ascertaining traditional coefficients of reliability.

***The Relation of Study About Language to Language  
Performance: With Special Reference  
to Nominalization \****

Ruth Crymes

In order to test the hypothesis that a learner's construction of a theory of a second language can be facilitated by study about language in the form of sentence-combining exercises which focus the learner's attention on pre-selected language data, some experimental materials were prepared, and the language performance of students who studied from these materials was compared with the language performance of students who had not studied from them, on the assumption that if facilitation had occurred, it could be inferred from language performance. The particular area of competence "that the experimental materials aimed to facilitate was English nominalization. Changes in the pre- and post-language performance of the experimental group showed a pattern of development in the direction of native speaker performance. The changes in the pre- and post-language performance of the control group, where they occurred, showed no consistent pattern. (Native speaker performance was characterized in two ways—by drawing on Hunt's findings (1965 and 1970) and by collecting samples of language performance from native speakers comparable to the ones collected from the non-native speakers who were the subjects in this study and analyzing them in the same way that the samples from the non-native speakers were analyzed.) The number of subjects in this study was small—10 control and 10 experimental—and so the findings can be said only to be suggestive.

**Introduction**

Recent work in language and language learning within the transformational-generative framework has called our attention to the ability that a child brings to the task of learning his first language, an ability to construct a theory of language. But not much is known about how this ability may work in learning a second language nor how the hypotheses-making abilities of adults differ from such abilities in children. However, people do in fact learn second languages without benefit of formal instruction—and sometimes even despite formal instruction. A person can somehow—and more or less unconsciously, depending on his linguistic sophistication—construct a theory of a second language, given a rich enough language environment and the motivation to learn

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In order to construct a theory of a second language it must be the case that the learner responds selectively to the language that he is exposed to—as is the case in first language learning. There just would not be time enough to attend to everything. So, in a very real sense, there may be no such thing as exposure to random language data in second language learning, just as there is not, given the transformational-generative view of language, in first language learning.

Taking this view of language, the research reported here is based on the assumptions first, that given exposure to enough language data, adults have the ability to construct a theory of a second language, exercising selectivity in what they attend to in the data in ways yet unknown; and second, that the construction of this theory can be promoted in the classroom by providing a rich language environment, rich both in the amount and variety of meaningful language the learner is exposed to and in the opportunities provided him for using the second language as a vehicle for expressing his thoughts and ideas.

A third assumption, and this is the assumption which the present research tries to test, is that the learner's theory-construction can be facilitated by supplementing such language experience as that just alluded to with preselected language data packaged in the form of manipulative exercises which offer the learner direction in what he can profitably attend to and through which he can instruct himself, again in ways unknown, in how the second language works.

If a learner's study about how the second language works, through such manipulative exercises, does indeed facilitate his construction of a theory about the second language, such facilitation can only be inferred from a change in his language performance, a change which might be attributable to such study. Any such facilitation which is inferred from language performance could be taken as evidence that study *about* language, in the manipulative, pre-packaged mode described here, helps the student indirectly to increase his mastery of his second language. This emphasis on the indirection of such influence of study about language on language performance follows Mellon (1968).

The research reported here is a mini-project involving a very small number of subjects. It tried to find out if a learner's study of certain nominalizing processes in English, in the form of sentence-combining exercises, facilitates the development of his competence in English nominalization, such competence to be inferred from his language performance.

#### **Description of the experimental materials**

Experimental materials were prepared for the experimental subjects. The materials were in two parts, classwork and homework. For classwork, ten texts were provided on various subjects, such as folk medicine, the nature of intelligence, and proverbs. Oral, edited renditions of these texts and also unedited—in fact, unrehearsed—native speaker discussions on topics related to the texts were taped. Suggestions for speaking activities

related to the topic of each text were provided. Class time was spent listening to the tapes and talking about topics related to the texts. Apart from the fact that topics to talk about were suggested; the class discussions were student-centered, and the teacher was a resource person who coordinated reports, debates, dramas, small group discussions, etc., and who occasionally put words in a student's mouth when it seemed appropriate to do so.

For homework, vocabulary exercises and sentence-combining exercises were provided. The sentence-combining exercises introduced eleven types of nominals, as described by Vendler (1968), and also incorporated some of the notions about factive and non-factive nominals presented by the Kiparskys (1970). The only connection between the sentence-combining exercises and the classwork was that the subject matter of the sentences in the exercises was the same as the subject matter of the text in each lesson, and where the sentences had truth value, the truth value derived from what the texts said.

The lessons were not ordered. There were two experimental classes, and each took up the lessons in different order, according to their interest in the topics. At the end of each lesson, the students took a quiz covering points practiced in the sentence-combining exercises in that lesson. The quizzes consisted of taking dictation of sentences, recognizing paraphrases, and recognizing 'wrong' sentences.

Vendler's description of nominals was selected, despite many problems in the analysis—any analysis of nominals presents many problems—because he includes in his description the paraphrase possibilities of each nominal type, and this provided a useful guide for preparing the sentence-combining exercises. Further, he organizes his analysis of nominal types in terms of the degree to which their deep structure is obscured in their surface structure, and this provided a dimension worth examining.

He establishes three degrees of obscurity. His types A, B, and C are clauses, and reflect the smallest degree of obscurity. His types D and E are gerunds and nouns derived from underlying verbs, the subjects of which may optionally appear in the surface even in cases where they fulfill the requirements for deletion (*his asking the question in He told me about (his) asking the question*). These types reflect a middle degree of obscurity. His types Ca, F, G, H, I, J, and K are infinitives and gerunds derived from underlying verbs whose subjects must undergo identical noun phrase deletion where it is applicable. These types reflect the greatest degree of obscurity. See the Appendix for a description of these nominal types.

### **Design of the experiment**

In the fall of 1969, at the University of Hawaii English Language Institute, four classes—two intermediate and two high intermediate oral English classes—were selected, on the basis of instructor volunteers, to be two experimental and two control classes. The students were hetero-

geneous in language background. The basic text in one of the control classes was Jason Alter, *Utterance-Response Dialogues*, and in the other, Leonard Newmark *et al*, *Using American English*. However, the intent was to compare the experimental treatment with lack of that treatment, not to compare two treatments. The experimental classes received instruction from the experimental materials referred to above, but neither class covered the lessons dealing with nominal types C, Ca, F, G, and K.

Both control and experimental subjects spent the same amount of time in class each week, and the classwork for both consisted of oral activities. In addition to classwork, the control subjects spent two or three hours a week in the language lab, three if they were intermediate, two if they were high intermediate. The experimental students had homework assignments, in lieu of attending the language lab, which took them varying amounts of time, averaging 1½ hours a week at the beginning of the semester and tapering off to an average of ½ hour a week toward the end of the semester. The semester was 15 weeks long.

Though the goal in all the classes was to help the students improve their oral English, the testing for this experiment was in the written mode, on the assumption that oral performance and written performance are equally valid manifestations of underlying competence. The writing assignments were the same at both pre- and post-test times. Hunt (1965 and 1970) has observed that of the three kinds of subordinate clauses (adjective, adverbial, and noun) the noun clauses seem to be least dependent on maturity and most dependent on subject matter. Hence the effort to keep the subject matter constant.

A maximum of 30 minutes was allowed for each writing assignment and students were requested to write with attention to what they were saying and not to worry about making errors. They were told that the purpose of the testing was to help the English Language Institute identify the most persistent problems of non-native speakers of English, so that this information could be used in the preparation of materials. They were requested not to worry about overall organization.

The writing assignments were:

1. A response to a film without words (*The Hunter and the Forest*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 8 mins.). Students, after viewing the film twice in succession, were asked to summarize, criticize, evaluate, or comment on the film in any way that they chose.
2. A description and discussion of the kind of education a child in the student's country receives before he begins the first year of elementary school. Before writing this, students were given a passage from John Holt's *Why Children Fail* to read at home, and they had a chance to discuss this passage in class.
3. A rewriting of two paragraphs composed of short, simple sentences in order to make them 'sound better'. These paragraphs were themselves rewrites of two paragraphs taken from a report of man's exploration of the moon in *Time* (July 18, 1969), selected because they contained several nominalizations.

From these writing assignments, 30 T-units were collected from each

student at both pre- and post-test times: the first 12 from the response to the film, the first 12 from the composition on pre-school education, and the first 6 from the rewritten paragraphs. The T-unit is, of course, the measure established by Hunt (1965), the length of which is an indicator of maturity. The present study followed Mellon (1968) in counting condition, concessive, reason, and purpose clauses as separate T-units, rather than as parts of T-units. The T-units were then analyzed for word-length and for the number, types, and functions of nominals appearing in them.

Ten control subjects and eleven experimental subjects each completed three pre- and three post-compositions containing the required number of T-units. Ten of the eleven experimental subjects were selected by matching as closely as possible the total number of nominals produced by the ten control subjects with the total number produced by ten of the experimented subjects at pre-test time. The ten control subjects produced 101; the ten experimental subjects, selected from the eleven, produced 103. In each group of ten subjects, four were intermediate level and six were high intermediate.

In order to have a baseline against which to measure the performance of both control and experimental subjects, the same three writing assignments were given to ten volunteer native speakers, a mix of undergraduates and graduates, just as the non-native speakers were, who, as future English teachers, were enrolled in a course in Modern English Grammar. The same number of T-units was taken from the writings of these native speakers in the same way as from the writings of the non-native speakers, and were analyzed in the same way. In the summary of findings below, the performance of the native speakers is taken to be 100%, and the performance of the non-native speaker control and experimental subjects is measured against that percentage. The calculations for significance in Tables 1 and 2 are based on the percentages.

One type of nominal, Vendler's K, did not occur at all in any of the T-units collected, and so no further notice is taken of it here.

A word should be said about the identification of T-units and nominals in the writing of the control and experimental subjects. It was evident very early that it would be impossible to count sentences, since the punctuation was so erratic. It did, however, turn out to be easy to mark off the the T-units. Only in two or three instances was it necessary to delete a few words as garbles. In essentially all the writing it was clear what the student was saying and what the T-units were, even though his English was sometimes a bit deviant. On the data sheets for all the subjects is recorded whether a nominal is syntactically deviant and whether the matrix in which a nominal is embedded is syntactically deviant, but these deviances have been ignored in the findings reported here, since it was in all cases possible to identify the type of nominal the student was aiming for and its function, and to understand what it was that he was communicating.

The measures taken in the 300 T-units collected from the control and experimental groups at both pre- and post-test times and from the 300 T-units collected from the native speakers were as follows:

1. T-unit length (Table 1)
2. Number of nominals produced (Table 2)
3. Ratio of nominal types (A-J) to total number of nominals in the 300 T-units from each group of subjects at each test time (Table 3)
4. Ratio of nominal types (degree of obscurity) to total number of nominals in the 300 T-units from each group of subjects at each test time (Table 4)
5. Ratio of nominal types (degree of obscurity) in the various functions to total number of nominals of each type (Table 5)
6. Ratio of nominal functions to total number of nominals in the 300 T-units from each group of subjects at each test time (Table 6)

### **Results and discussion**

In the analysis of the data the first step was to examine T-unit length and the number of nominals produced for evidence of quantitative change; the second, to examine the nominals for direction of change.

Measurement of the pre-post growth in T-unit length and in number of nominals produced for each group showed that, for the experimental group, growth both in T-unit length and in number of nominals produced was significant at the .05 level. The control group showed no significant growth in either (see Tables 1 and 2).

At pre-test time, the control and experimental groups showed no significant differences in T-unit length or in number of nominals produced in 300 T-units. This was taken as evidence that the two groups were evenly matched for the purpose of this study. Neither were the differences between the two groups in these two measures significant at post-test time, though the difference in number of nominals produced approached significance.

An examination of the actual number of nominals produced by each subject (see Table 2) shows that among the experimental subjects none showed a decrease, whereas among the control subjects six of the ten showed a decrease. Why these six should have decreased their use of nominals is not clear. It may be that it simply indicates random performance, a possibility that the other results seem to point toward also.

The nominals were then examined for direction of change, specifically for direction of change in the types of nominals used and in the functions in which they were used, in order to see whether there was any growth in either group in the direction of maturity, as defined by Hunt (1965) as "the observed characteristics of writers in an older grade."

Hunt (1965) concluded that one mark of maturity is the use of "near-clause" nominals. And along the same line, O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris (1967) pointed out that in the language of the children that they studied, from K through 7, constructions resulting from deletion transformations increased, frequently significantly, from grade level to grade level. Hunt's research also showed that, although noun clauses increase significantly

TABLE 1  
T-Unit Length  
(in 30 T-unit sample from each subject using native speaker group  
mean of 15.3 words per T-unit as 100%)

Subject	Control				Experimental			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	Words	%	Words	%	Words	%	Words	%
1	7.9	52	8.5	55	10.5	69	12.8	84
2	9.4	61	9.7	63	10.8	71	11.6	76
3	9.4	61	7.1	46	9.3	61	11.8	77
4	12.0	78	10.1	66	13.0	85	12.1	79
5	9.3	61	11.2	73	9.9	65	11.3	74
6	10.8	71	10.4	68	9.0	59	17.3	113
7	10.6	69	9.7	63	12.4	81	11.3	74
8	11.5	75	16.4	107	10.7	70	13.8	90
9	16.1	105	13.8	90	12.0	78	16.7	109
10	13.2	86	13.7	90	7.3	48	8.7	57
Group Mean	11.0	72	11.0	72	10.5	69	12.7	83

Difference between the groups

DF: 18

t-ratio required at .05: 2.10

t-ratio required at .01: 2.88

Difference, Control Pre/Exper Pre: non-sig ( $t = .5033$ )

Difference, Control Post/Exper Post: non-sig ( $t = 1.41$ )

Growth in each group

t-ratio required at .05: 2.26

t-ratio required at .01: 3.25

Growth, Control Pre/Post: non-sig ( $t = .19$ )

Growth, Exper Pre/Post: sig at .05 ( $t = 2.5$ )

from fourth to eighth to twelfth grades, his "superior adults" used fewer noun clauses per T-unit than twelfth graders (though more than fourth graders). Another mark of maturity according to Hunt (1965) seems to be the ability to use noun clauses in functions other than object of verb. Further, his research showed that none of his fourth graders used gerunds as subjects, whereas two of eighteen eighth graders and six of eighteen twelfth graders did.

In the present study the experimental group showed a pattern of change in the direction of the first mark maturity—increase in "near-nominals." They also showed a decrease in noun clauses. The control group showed no consistent pattern of change.

Tables 3 and 4 show the ratios of nominal types to total number of nominals produced by each group at each test time. Table 3 shows the ratio of each nominal type (A through J) separately; Table 4 shows the ratio of these same types grouped in three classes according to degree of obscurity. The two tables contain the same information, but the direction of change can be seen more clearly in Table 4.

TABLE 2  
 Number of Nominals Produced  
 (in 30 T-unit sample from each subject using native  
 speaker group mean of 11.9 as 100% )

Subject	Control				Experimental			
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post	
	No. of nom.	%						
1	5	42	2	17	13	109	14	118
2	6	50	7	59	11	92	18	151
3	5	42	4	34	7	59	7	59
4	17	143	14	118	8	67	11	92
5	11	92	9	76	13	109	13	109
6	5	42	9	76	11	92	19	159
7	17	143	12	101	11	92	14	118
8	3	25	18	151	4	34	16	134
9	20	168	15	126	15	126	23	193
10	12	101	13	109	10	83	11	92
<b>Group Mean</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>123</b>

Difference between the groups

DF: 18

t-ratio required at .05: 2.10

t-ratio required at .01: 2.88

Difference, Control Pre/Exper Pre: non-sig (t= .054)

Difference, Control Post/Exper Post: non-sig (t= 2.06)

Growth in each group

DF: 9

t-ratio required at .05: 2.26

t-ratio required at .01: 3.25

Growth, Control Pre/Post: non-sig (t= .3)

Growth, Exper Pre/Post: sig  $p < .05 > .01$  (t= 3.19)

For ease of reference, the three classes of "degree of obscurity" will be referred to as Type I (ABC), Type H (DE), and Type III (Ca, F-J), Type I showing the smallest degree of obscurity, Type II representing an intermediate degree, and Type III the greatest degree.

The control group increased in use of Type I. The experimental group decreased in use of this type, using, at post-test time, even a smaller proportion than the native speakers used.

The control group showed no change in use of Type II. The experimental group increased in use of this type, and approached closer than the control group to native speaker performance, though it did not match it.

The control group decreased in use of Type III. The experimental group showed no change. The control group matched native speaker performance more closely than the experimental group did, though the experimental group surpassed native speaker performance at both pre- and post-test times.

Thus, as far as Type III is concerned, the experimental group did

TABLE 3  
Ratio of Nominal Types (A-J) to Total Number of Nominals

Nom. Type	Control				Experimental				Native Speaker	
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		No. of Nom.	Ratio %
	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %		
All Types	101		103		103		146		119	
A	27	.27 150	26	.25 133	30	.29 161	25	.17 94	22	.18 100
B	0		2	.02 67	1	.01 33	1	.007 23	3	.03 100
C	6	.06 120	18	.17 340	7	.07 140	7	.05 100	6	.05 100
C <sub>a</sub>	6	.06 120	1	.01 33	13	.13 433	19	.13 433	3	.03 100
D	12	.12 50	16	.16 67	14	.14 58	32	.22 92	29	.24 100
E <sub>non der</sub>	4	.04 133	0		4	.04 133	6	.04 133	3	.03 100
E <sub>der</sub>	7	.07 50	8	.08 57	4	.04 29	9	.06 43	16	.14 100
F	5	.05 56	4	.04 44	6	.06 56	11	.08 89	11	.09 100
G	3	.03 100	2	.02 67	1	.01 33	1	.007 23	4	.03 100
H	18	.18 450	10	.10 250	7	.07 175	8	.05 126	5	.04 100
I	11	.11 79	14	.14 100	14	.14 100	24	.16 113	17	.14 100
J	2	.02	2	.02	2	.02	2	.02	0	

TABLE 4  
Ratio of Nominal Types (Degree of Obscurity) to Total Number of Nominals

Nom. Type	Control				Experimental				Native Speaker	
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		No. of Nom.	Ratio %
	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %		
All types	101		103		103		146		119	
I ABC	33	.33 127	46	.45 173	38	.37 142	33	.23 88	31	.26 100
II DE	23	.23 58	24	.23 58	22	.21 53	47	.32 80	48	.40 100
III C,FGHIJ	45	.45 132	33	.32 91	43	.42 124	66	.43 126	40	.34 100

not show any pattern of change as it did in Types I and II. Two observations seem relevant. In the first place, the experimental subjects did not cover the lessons in the experimental materials which dealt with Ca, F, and G—three of the six Type III nominals. In the second place, nominals of Type III are much more restricted in function than are those of Types I and II. Table 5 shows that the function of Type III is almost exclusively object of verb (meaning either object or complement, in traditional terminology). Further, in this function its occurrence is governed by the verbs that are used. Such constraints may work against an 'increase in use of this type of nominal in such a situation as the present one, where the study by the students was directed toward syntactic manipulations, not toward the lexicon.

The experimental group also showed a pattern of change in the direction of the second mark of maturity—the use of more clauses and gerunds as subjects. The control group did not. See Table 5, which shows the direction of change in functions according to nominal type. The experimental group increased in their use of Type I (clauses) and Type II (which includes gerunds) as subjects. The control group decreased in the former and increased in the latter. In the functions performed by Types I, and II the experimental group came closer to native speaker performance in 7 of the 10 categories listed in Table 5; the control group came closer in the other 3.

Table 6 shows the ratio of nominal function to total number of nominals, disregarding nominal types. It shows that at post-test time, in the first four functions listed (subject, complement of *be*, object of verb, and object of preposition in adverbial prepositional phrases) the experimental group approached native speaker performance more closely than the control group did, whereas in the last functions (objects of prepositions in adjective prepositional phrases and appositive) the control group approached more closely.

Table 6 also shows that both groups decreased in the proportion of nominals used as complements of *be*. But in the other functions, except the appositive, the direction of change for the two groups was exactly the opposite—where one increased, the other decreased. In the case of the appositive, the control group showed no change and the experimental group increased, using at post-test time a greater proportion of nominals as appositive than the native speakers did, though the control group approached native speaker performance more closely than the experimental group did.

### **Summary and conclusions**

The experiment reported here attempted to ascertain whether or not study of English nominalizing processes through sentence-combining exercises facilitates a second language learner's competence in English nominalization as reflected in his English language performance. The performance of the experimental group, which pursued such study, was

TABLE 5  
Ratio of Nominal Types (Degree of Obscuration) in Various Functions  
To Total Number of Nominals of Each Type

Type and Function	Control				Experimental				Native Speaker	
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		No. of Nom.	Ratio %
I(ABC) Total	33		46		38		33		31	
I Subject	4	.12 63	1	.02 11	5	.13 68	5	.15 79	6	.19 100
I Comp. of <i>be</i>	8	.24 343	7	.15 214	4	.11 157	1	.03 43	2	.07 100
I Obj. of verb	21	.64 98	35	.76 117	29	.76 117	21	.64 98	20	.65 100
I Obj. of prep.	0		1	.02 29	0		1	.03 43	2	.07 100
I Appos.	0		2	.04 130	0		5	.15 500	1	.03 100
II(DE) Total	23		24		22		47		48	
II Subject	3	.13 76	5	.21 123	1	.04 23	5	.11 65	8	.17 100
II Comp. of <i>be</i>	6	.26 352	3	.12 150	2	.09 112	5	.11 137	4	.08 100
II Obj. of verb	6	.26 200	4	.17 131	4	.18 138	5	.11 85	6	.13
II Obj. of prep.	8	.35 56	10	.42 68	14	.64 103	27	.57 92	30	.62 100
II Appos.	0		2	.08	1	.05	5	.11	0	
III(C <sub>s</sub> ,F-J) Total	45		33		43		66		40	
III Subject	2(J)	.04	2(J)	.06	2(J)	.05	2(J)	.03	0	
III Comp. of <i>be</i>	0		0		0		0		0	
III Obj. of verb	39	.87 92	30	.91 96	41	.95 100	59	.89 94	38	.95 100
III Obj. of prep.	0		1(C <sub>s</sub> )	.03	0		1(J)	.02	0	
III Appos.	4(C <sub>s</sub> )	.09 180	0		0		4(C <sub>s</sub> )	.06 120	2(C <sub>s</sub> )	.05 100

TABLE 6  
Ratio of Nominal Functions to Total Number of Nominals

Function	Control				Experimental				Native Speaker	
	Pre		Post		Pre		Post		No. of Nom.	Ratio %
	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %	No. of Nom.	Ratio %		
All Functions	101		103		103		146		119	
Subject	9	.09 75	8	.08 67	8	.08 67	13	.09 75	14	.12 100
Comp. of <i>be</i>	14	.14 280	10	.10 200	6	.06 120	6	.05 80	6	.05 100
Object of verb	66	.65 120	69	.67 124	74	.72 133	84	.58 107	64	.54 100
Obj. of prep. (adv)	8	.08 38	6	.06 29	10	.10 49	22	.15 71	25	.21 100
Obj. of prep. (adj)	8	.08 133	6	.06 100	4	.04 67	7	.05 83	7	.06 100
Appositive	4	.04 133	4	.04 133	1	.01 33	14	.10 333	3	.03 100

compared with the performance of a control group which did not pursue such study. The comparison was of a treatment versus lack of that treatment.

The findings suggest that it may be the case that, with the experimental subjects, the study of nominalization in the manner described did indeed facilitate the development of language competence in that area. The changes in the experimental group reflect a pattern of development that moves in the direction of native speaker performance, whereas the changes in the control group, where they occurred, reflect no pattern. The number of subjects and the number of T-units was small, so the following results can be interpreted only as evidence that the experimental treatment might have facilitated the learners' theory-construction in the area of nominalization.

1. Pre-post growth in number of nominals produced in 300 T-units was significant at the .05 level for the experimental group. The control group showed no significant increase.
2. Pre-post growth in T-unit length was significant at the .05 level for the experimental group. The control group showed no increase.
3. The direction of change in terms of the proportionate use of the various nominal types moved in the direction of native speaker performance for the experimental group. That is, the experimental group decreased in their proportionate use of Type I (ABC) and increased in their use of Type II (DE). The direction of change in the control group showed no pattern.
4. Also, for the experimental group, the direction of change in terms of the proportionate use of certain types of nominals in certain functions moved

in the direction of native speaker performance, with an increase in Types I and II as subject and a decrease in Type I as object. Again, the direction of change for the control group showed no pattern.

#### APPENDIX

The 30 T-units collected from each subject at each test time were checked for the occurrence of the following types of nominals, following Vendler (1968). Types C and E have sub-types.

- A** THAT clauses
- B** WHETHER OR NOT clauses
- C** WH-clauses
- C<sub>a</sub>** Reduced WH-clauses (*what to do, how to go*)
- D** Gerundive nominals \* (*his killing bird*)
- E<sub>non-der</sub>** Action nominals \* (non-derived) with *ing* suffix (*his killing of the bird*)
- E<sub>der</sub>** Action nominals (derived) with derivational suffix (*his destruction of the whale*)
- F** ING-forms after verbs in which the underlying subject is the same as the surface subject of the matrix sentence and which do not allow occurrence of the underlying subject in the surface (*shooting the deer* in *He resisted shooting the deer*). Also included were TO-forms which could be paraphrased by these ING-forms. TO-forms were in fact more common. The verbs underlying these forms are indicative.
- G** ING-forms after verbs in which the underlying subject is the same as the object of the matrix sentence and which do not allow occurrence of the underlying subject in the surface (*the deer eating* in *He watched the deer eating*). These ING-forms can be paraphrased by a plain form (*He watched the deer eat*). The verbs underlying these forms are indicative.
- H** TO-forms after verbs in which the non-surface-occurring underlying subject is the same as the surface subject of the container sentence (*to explore the moon's surface* in *They went to explore the moon's surface*). In some cases, the underlying subject of the TO-form is the same as the object, rather than the subject, of the matrix sentence (*him to explore the moon's surface* in *They wanted him to explore the moon's surface*), but verbs occurring in such sentences have the potential of being followed by the TO-form alone. The verbs underlying these forms are subjunctive.

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\*These labels are from Robert B. Lees in *The Grammar of English Nominalizations* (Publication Twelve of the Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, Volume 26, Number 3, July 1960, reissued January 1963).

- I TO-forms whose non-surface-occurring underlying subjects are always the same as the object of the matrix sentence. This is a difficult category to recognize" and some items that were accepted may not in fact be nominals. So the category here will be defined in terms of the verbs accepted as matrix verbs: *teach, drive, permit, make, compel, let, encourage, cause, allow, force, help, tempt, urge, have, ask, and convince (They encouraged him to go)*. The verbs underlying these forms are subjunctive.
- J TO-forms occurring after *for, in* matrix sentences with certain adjectives like *good, easy (It was easy for him to do that)* or with certain nouns like *burden (It was a difficult burden for him to bear)*.
- K TO-forms which come after *of* in matrix sentences with certain adjectives like *nice, smart (It was nice of him to come)*. No nominals of this type occurred in the T-units collected.

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## ***Activating Advanced ESL Students***

### ***A Problem and a Solution***

Ronald V. White

This paper concerns itself with problems in teaching advanced ESL students. The first of these is contextualization, the problem of making the connection between the linguistic features of an utterance and the non-linguistic features of the situation operating when the utterance is made. The second is the difficulty of the learner in identifying himself with the language he is being required to learn. The author describes a simulation study-role playing project carried on with advanced students which resulted in an enlivened English program.

#### **Introduction**

A problem frequently faced by ESL teachers is not what to do with beginning students or even with those who have been learning English for some time, but what to do with students who have been learning the language for a number of years and who have indeed received the greater part of their education in English. In the classroom and in the careers for which they are being educated, such students will usually employ English most of the time. They are bi- or tri-lingual, commonly speaking other languages outside the school and work situation. Although their English may be deficient in a number of respects, they do not as a rule regard themselves as being in need of 'remedial' work, and language exercises of the audiolingual type are usually regarded with antipathy if not downright hostility. Students such as these represent a peculiar, though by no means unusual, problem for the ESL teacher; but the devising of suitable lesson material for such students appears to have received scant attention.

What I propose to outline in this paper is one method of teaching that can be included in the advanced ESL program. It is not suggested that this particular method is in any sense a final solution to the difficulties of teaching advanced ESL students; nevertheless, it faces up to two major problems that have been gaining more and more attention in the literature.

The first of these is the problem of contextualization.<sup>1</sup>The function

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<sup>1</sup>By *contextualization* is meant the connection between the linguistic features of an utterance and the non-linguistic features of the situation operating at the time the utterance is made. *Context* and *meaning* are often employed synonymously; but in the present paper *context* is extended to embrace such features of the situation as field of discourse, relationship between participants, and degree of formality.

of language in establishing and maintaining social relations has always been an important part of the Firthian tradition, and Halliday (1970) points out that one of the three functions of language is "the expression of social roles, which include the communication roles created by language itself—for example, the roles of questioner or respondent. . . ." Campbell and Wales (1970) follow a similar theme when they suggest that one of the limitations of the Chomskyan view of language is that it does not allow for the most important linguistic ability—"the ability to produce or understand utterances which are not so much *grammatical*, but more important, *appropriate to the context in which they are made*."

The second problem, which really grows out of the first, is the difficulty of having the learner identify with the language that he is being required to learn. Rivers (1969) notes that the "essential ingredient of role-identification" is missing from the dialogue learning that is a common ESL classroom activity. She suggests—though with younger pupils than are concerned with in the present study—that children will learn to communicate and not merely to repeat if they are given the opportunity of acting out the roles associated with the dialogues which they are having to practice. Dialogues and pattern drills should become a form of communication related to real situations.

These considerations suggest that the advanced ESL learner needs to be given the opportunity of:

- 1) extending his use of English to real-life situations;
- 2) adapting his language to variations in formality, role-relationships and province of discourse;
- 3) practicing the use of such sympathetic circularity features as intonation, pause fillers, facial expression and gesture in maintaining continuous verbal interaction;
- 4) acquiring in context new linguistic items—both lexical and syntactical—by being exposed to situations beyond those normally encountered in the classroom;
- 5) transferring their L1 intuitions about language use to the appropriate use of English in varied communication settings;
- 6) utilizing the linguistic intuitions that they have built up in the process of acquiring and using English.

In this way the advanced ESL student will be using English for actual communication. He will become the initiator as well as the respondent in a series of encounters which are simulations of real life. Indeed, an important component in such work should be the use of English in actual real-life situations in which the student is no longer simulating but is putting his English to use in the kinds of social roles which he will ultimately assume in his career. In short, we are concerned with the development and practice of what Hymes (1962) has called communicative competence.

A further important factor is that at this level of ESL acquisition,

the *subject* (rather than the language) of English may be a major vehicle for new ideas and educational experiences. For advanced ESL students, English is the message as well as the medium. It is a significant means of personal enrichment; through English such students may be encouraged to achieve that degree of enlightenment and self-awareness which is inherent in a liberal education. Thus, the teacher of advanced ESL students may have to concentrate not only on increasing his students' language skills; he may also have to devise a program of work which has important cognitive and affective components, and whose objectives are therefore more broadly 'educational' than is usual in an ESL program primarily directed towards the teaching of language skills.

### **The 'Problem' Students**

For advanced ESL students, therefore, 'English' has a double meaning, and for the group of students who were the subject of this trial—all young men and women in their second year of teacher training for a Diploma in Education—English had come to mean something else as well. It was a bore. For all but two, English was a second language; most had been learning it since the age of six; and during the previous ten years English had been the medium of instruction for all their subjects except for vernacular language study. Ethnically they were very diverse: there were at least six different L1's represented among the group. In addition to this ethnic and linguistic diversity, the students were grouped into Arts, Science, and Technical majors and less than half of them would actually be teaching ESL when they graduated. All, however, would be teaching *in* English at junior high school level, and English would be the language of school administration, business, and government.

### **The 'Problem' Course**

At the beginning of the experimental project, class morale was low. The students had become bored with the more traditional diet of English that they were receiving: some language, some literature, and one hour a week in the language laboratory. A colleague and I taught them literature and language respectively, and we had become as depressed as the students about their English course. We decided to combine forces in an attempt to overcome the antipathy towards English which the class exhibited.

Our problem was to provide an English program which would meet the following criteria:

- 1) The language work should be directed, without being too controlled. Rigid drilling was definitely out, but complete freedom was undesirable. We had, therefore, to choose a path between the two.
  - 2) Work in English was regarded as contributing an important part of the students' personal education. Consequently, the English program should allow for a liberal or general studies component.
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- 3) The English program should constitute an integrated course, with each component complementing the others. A rigid division into language, literature, essay writing, etc., should be avoided.
- 4) The combined language-liberal studies English course should appeal to the students as being closely related to their future needs as teachers, regardless of their particular subject specialities.

### **The Solution**

No easy solution was forthcoming. However, experiments with role playing had been tried out with students in other courses, and had been found successful.<sup>2</sup> The effectiveness of role playing as a means of bringing about attitude change has been demonstrated in the field of industrial psychology (Newcomb, Turner, and Converse, 1965), and has been widely applied in industrial contexts. More recently the practice of role playing has been incorporated in teacher-training programs. Some educationists also consider role playing to be of particular value in establishing cooperation with others and in exchanging viewpoints, both activities being important steps towards the making of assumptions and the formulation of hypotheses. Indeed, Piaget believes that the development of formal operations would not occur without such cooperation and discussion. (See Beard 1969, 97f.)

Another technique also used in teacher training is that of the simulation study, in which students are given problems to work on. The problems are usually related to those which arise in classroom and school; they do not generally have one 'right' answer, and the students have the task of applying their knowledge and training to provide a suitable solution. We decided to combine role playing and simulation study by devising a series of problems related to the school and the community. Students would then have to research a problem, devise an appropriate solution, and present both the problem and the solution in dramatic form by acting out the roles of the participants. Some language laboratory dialogues on topics similar to those we set provided a controlled lead-in to the type of language needed.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Objectives**

Before introducing the project to the class, we worked out exactly what our objectives were to be in terms of student behavior, and distributed these. They were stated as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> My colleague, Mrs. Meg Smith, originally experimented with role playing in her literature classes. It was her initial suggestion which inspired the development of the simulation study-role playing project on which we collaborated.

<sup>3</sup> See Abbs, Cook, and Underwood (1970), *Realistic English*. Mr. Abbs was present during the project, and made a number of useful suggestions. From start to finish, including the language laboratory work, the project occupied four English classes per week for five weeks.

- (a) Applying to uncontrolled situations language items learned in language laboratory dialogue drills;
- (b) Acquiring a practical knowledge of committee procedure;
- (c) Discovering the appropriate course of action to be followed when dealing with problems involving the school and the community;
- (d) Appreciating varying viewpoints and gaining an insight into different motives for behavior by means of role playing;
- (e) Producing a report giving an account of activities portrayed in each situation and of their own individual experiences in playing particular roles.

### **Preparation**

The class was divided into groups of 5 or 6 members, with students of known leadership potential and of poor motivation being equitably distributed among them. Each group was given a different situation, together with the instruction that roles and tasks should be allocated among the group members. Group leaders were given sources for the information they would require in dealing with their problems. They were also instructed to make reports on the progress of their group's work, and to seek advice and assistance as needed. Group discussions were to be conducted along committee lines and an account of committee procedure formed part of the introductory work.

When the information had been collected, roles allocated, and the format of presentation worked out, each group was to give a dramatized version of their project for the rest of the class. The dialogue was to be as spontaneous as possible, arising from the situation itself. This would be facilitated by the familiarity of the participants with the situation and the characters. Typical of the problems which the groups had to deal with is the following:

#### *The School and the Probation Service*

A boy at school is arrested for stealing. The distraught mother comes to see the boy's teacher and headmaster who then approach the police to find out what the charge is. They are doubtful of the boy's guilt in view of his very good school record. Police and juvenile court procedure form the central focus.

- How is such a person represented in the juvenile court?
- What can be done to help him?
- Does counsel have to be employed?
- If so, who pays?
- What happens if the case is taken to a higher court?
- What happens if the defendant is put on probation?
- How can the school cooperate with the probation service?

Once we had introduced the project to the class, discussed the objectives and procedure, and organized the groups, the students themselves set to work with alacrity. Animated discussions—in English—were conducted as problems were considered, work outlined, and tasks allocated. Meanwhile, arrangements had been made for the students to interview relevant personnel in various outside agencies such as the probation service, the

school for crippled children, and the department of education. The interest generated by some of the problems was great enough for many students to spend a considerable amount of their own time on this section of the project. When they had obtained the information they needed, the groups then began organizing the material into a form appropriate for dramatic presentation.

Each group produced a script, and this was the occasion for much profitable cooperative effort in devising language appropriate to the situations and characters they were portraying. The scripts were not, however, to be learned word-for-word or to be used during the actual presentation. They were treated by the students as guides to what they would actually say when they presented their short plays; and during the course of devising the scripts, they had to formulate with some precision details of plot, character, action and interaction. Thus, the dialogue which was finally presented comprised a mixture of improvisation and memory.

### **The Presentation**

It was fortunate that the first group to present their study established a very high standard indeed, a standard which the following groups were constrained to match and—in some cases—to exceed. The problem, that of the school and the probation service outlined above, was presented in three short scenes. The first scene showed the mother and her son at the police station where the son was charged to appear before the juvenile court. The second scene involved an interview between the probation officer and the boy's mother, during which the probation officer endeavored to discover any influences in the boy's family background which might have affected his behavior. The third and final scene took place in the juvenile court where the boy was placed on probation by the judge who delivered a splendid homily on the possible effects the boy's action might have on his future career. The mother was also warned of the legal obligations incurred by parents when their child is placed on probation. The play ended with a short explanation by the probation officer of the kinds of follow-up which her department endeavored to maintain in such cases.

When the presentation had concluded, the rest of the class questioned the group on their treatment of the problem. The group leader directed each question to the student who had acted the role to which the question related, so that the student tended to answer the inquiry from the viewpoint of his assumed *persona*. Some of the questions were searching and demanded from the students concerned a good grasp of their material. For instance, the 'judge' was asked why it was he told the mother that she would be held legally responsible if the boy broke parole. The 'judge' then had to use his knowledge of the legal issues involved in providing an informed answer to this query.

The final stage came when each individual student had to write up a report on the group activity as well as his own part in the project. In the report the student was required to make an evaluation of the project,

stating in what ways he had benefited from participation in the simulation study and what information he had derived from the problems that had been dealt with.

### **Evaluation**

There was no doubt, either in our own minds or in those of the majority of the students, that the combined simulation study-role playing project had been a great success. In particular, two major aims were achieved. Firstly, the students had been able to use their English in realistic situations. Items which had been acquired in the language laboratory and the English classroom were transferred to real-life settings, and almost to a man the students had manipulated the language in such a way that the manner as well as the content was appropriate to the field, character, and social relationships among the participants. Some groups exhibited considerable sophistication in switching language codes in order to suggest particular facets of character and event. It was clear that the simulation study-role playing provided them with an opportunity to utilize the intuitive grasp of language which they possessed as a result of their experience both with their L1 and with English in the multilingual environment in which they live.

Secondly, the role playing, by forcing the students into novel situations, extended their language repertoire in new ways. They had to draw on their existing repertoire in face-to-face encounters with people and situations beyond the normal range of their classroom experience. Furthermore, the social roles and the language which the students had to use were associated with the kind of situations which they might eventually meet as members of the teaching profession. The project, therefore, benefited the development of the students' communicative competence while at the same time it enabled them to share other people's points of view.

A third payoff not originally envisaged in the objectives was the imaginative and vivid presentation of information that the students managed to contrive. One group dealing with a problem related to the school and health managed to put over a great deal of important and accurate information on the way in which typhoid is spread and controlled. Their project had been very carefully researched, so that although on the face of it nothing could seem less entertaining than this kind of information, the group contrived to present it in such a way that their audience was both entertained and informed.

Finally, the written reports proved to be the least successful aspect of the experiment. This was primarily due to inadequate preparation for this section of the project. In the future much more time and attention will be given to work on report writing, particularly as such writing is important for teachers and educational administrators. It is clear that the students need specific training in the correct format and style for such reports, and this can be included as part of the lead-in to the simulation study-role playing project.

### Conclusion

As a means of providing contextualized language practice in 'real-life' settings the combined simulation study-role playing project has been found a notable success. It provides for meaningful follow-up of language items already acquired in controlled language work. It also directs the students into playing the part of initiator as well as of respondent in an interchange. Perhaps most importantly of all, it forces the students to consider how to use English appropriately, and how the selection of particular features—tone of voice, intonation, lexical items, and syntactical patterns—may be used to convey extra-linguistic information related to character, relationship between participants, emotional state of interlocutors, and so on.

For advanced ESL students such work can be integrated with other parts of their English program, especially if, as is so often the case at this level, English is a major means of personal education. The follow-through to drama is obvious. Less obvious, but of even more interest, is the possibility of applying some of the techniques of the simulation study-role playing project to those other parts of the English program which need enlivening; Essay, report and letter writing could benefit from the type of contextualization that this kind of project provides. Furthermore, for students doing a liberal studies course, role playing can be an effective means of increasing their understanding and appreciation of literature. This is especially important at the advanced level when the students want to *do* something with the English that they have painfully acquired over many years of work. Although it is not by any means suggested that the kind of project described above is the ultimate answer to the problems faced by teachers of advanced ESL students, the success that has been achieved with a difficult and heterogeneous class suggests that this type of activity has considerable potential. With varying degrees of control in the setting of the topics and in the language to be used, such projects can form a useful and stimulating component of the advanced ESL program.

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## ***Controlled Writing vs. Free Composition*** \*

Maryruth Bracy

The purpose of this paper is to offer some suggestions for those who have tried to tackle the area of free (or advanced) composition. The suggestions, based on a review of the literature and on my experience in teaching composition courses at UCLA, center around the following three areas: 1) the revision of current classes in intermediate English so as to teach free composition instead of merely advanced controlled writing; 2) the unwanted and partially-opened Pandora's box of composition correction coupled with the question of what students do with the 'corrected' compositions to affect change and improvement in their writing techniques and use of language; and 3) the improvement of the over-all composition-teaching approach.

Much has been written about the teaching of composition for foreign students; however, the stress always seems to be on the level of the beginning learner of English, or in the area of controlled writing. There seems to be a well-defined, though varied, set of sequenced skills for advancing from extreme control to entirely free compositions. Free composition is that euphoric stage where the student has mastered sufficient language skills and organization to be able to handle the writing of a chosen topic when given only a specific amount of time and a definite length. His improvement from that point on revolves around increasing the number of words he can write while decreasing the number of errors per page.

To evaluate a student for placement in a program for second language instruction at UCLA, a free composition is used as one measurement of his level of language acquisition: that is, if a student can write 200 words and make fewer than five errors, he is on a level to compete with intermediate foreign students. When he can write themes from one to three pages and hopefully make less than three errors on a page, he is supposedly ready to compete with native speakers in any college class requiring composition skills.

While the value of teaching controlled writing as a beginning in the acquisition of writing skills is undisputed and while the methods are well-defined and materials plentiful, there is a dearth in materials, rationale, and methodology for the teacher interested only in the improvement of free composition. Once a student has arrived at this plateau (and one is never sure what the writing looks like at that precise moment), he usually is turned loose with sets of arbitrary topics and lengths and then told to re-write and rewrite. After having had a highly controlled and thorough diet

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\* This is a revised version of a paper presented at the TESOL Convention, March 1971.

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of manipulating sentences, followed by a slow and steady progression of writing paragraphs, he finds himself armed only with a dictionary, paper, and pencils to face topic after topic. Then, in retrospect, he deals with various aspects of grammar, vocabulary, usage, style, and documentation. It is much like the girl raised in a convent who faces membership in the Women's Liberation Front.

Even the texts for the teaching of advanced composition to foreign students are scarce. However, there are, to my knowledge, a few books written specifically for that purpose: Lois Robinson's *Guided Writing and Free Writing*, Ann Eljenholm Nichol's *English Syntax: Advanced Composition for Non-Native Speakers*, and Nancy Arapoff's *Writing Through Understanding*.

For the last two years at UCLA we have been using books which are written specifically for native speakers to teach our foreign student composition courses; books such as John Ostrom's *Better Paragraphs* and Shurter and Reid's *A Program for Effective Writing*. These require a great deal of explanation of vocabulary, and often the exercises are too American in flavor to be expedient for classroom use. While the principles in them are useful and readily applicable to foreign students, they are best utilized only as reference books for the teachers unless daily revisions are made.

An even more serious lack, from the standpoint of someone wanting to teach a practical yet appealing course in composition, is the format of the textbooks, whether designed for native or non-native speakers. Most either rely solely on literature analysis or teach the theoretical aspects of improved writing with the emphasis on exposition. While there is often mention of the other styles—narration, description, and argumentation—the material for development within the course is straight exposition. Few teachers, and fewer engineering and math-oriented students, see any relevance in delving into the other styles; hence, the student acquires skills of analysis and explanation, but comments at the end that he hates composition and is glad that his requirement is now filled and he'll never have to write in English again.

Still another problem is the varied composition needs of students enrolled in a college level course: graduates want practice in writing term papers with the emphasis on research and documentation; undergraduates want to discuss the relevance of the topics and have their grammatical errors corrected.

The purpose of this paper is to present some of the problems and offer suggestions for those who have tried to tackle the area of free composition and have been as frustrated as I in the attempt.

During a seminar in the certificate program for teachers of English as a second language at UCLA, there was a panel discussion on writing and composition. After members of the panel (ranging from teaching assistants to associate professors) presented the objectives, exercises, and content of material for writing manipulation on both the sentence and the paragraph levels, they attempted to venture beyond the paragraph into the develop-

men of critical skills in the writing of free compositions. It was felt that the term *composition* had been used in the past for everything from copying sentences to writing dissertations, and that now a distinction between *writing* and *composition* should be made: they saw *writing* as teaching anything controlled and *composition* as anything free. The purpose of teaching composition was explained as one of motivation and practice, with the hope (often more fervent than realistic) that the students would leave with a love of writing and an ability to compete adequately in their writing skills with native speakers. The suggestions made for revising current classes in intermediate English so as to teach composition were the following:

1) Change the source materials from literature analysis (which had little relevance to what was occupying the thoughts of the students outside the class) to activities such as panels, group discussions, individual speeches and lectures—the content of which would be based on both fact and fictional readings from magazines and newspapers.

2) Use these activities as the basis for compositions rather than the previously used articles drawn exclusively from literature texts.

3) Incorporate in the composition exercises those skills necessary for the students in their regular academic classes: i.e., note-taking, summaries, critiques, comparisons, paraphrases, term papers,<sup>1</sup> book reports, bibliography and footnotes. (It should be confessed that the panel never did offer an answer for the inclusion of the writing styles of narration and description, except to suggest that the students keep a journal for a limited period of time in which they would write everyday and try to vary their writing style.)

The seminar served two useful purposes: first, it opened up the area of the teaching of writing and composition for examination and discussion; second, a bibliography was prepared by Joseph Taylor, a panel member, of some books related to the teaching of both writing and composition.<sup>2</sup>

While there are many problems inherent in the teaching of composition (again separated from writing), I would like to present one which I feel deserves immediate, if not continued, attention by masters' candidates in TESL programs and by educators in the field: the unwanted and partially-opened Pandora's box of composition correction. Each teaching assistant in our department has his own modified or unique system for correcting papers, ranging from total avoidance to complete revision. A somewhat standardized set of symbols is often handed out to students as a guide to the teachers' markings; these also have a range—from three or four in number to a small booklet complete with an index to the symbols. Once the teacher has

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<sup>1</sup> It should be pointed out that the teaching of term papers does not necessitate the writing of one for the class. It is my feeling that if the student is writing a paper for another class that same quarter or would like to revise a previously written one he should be allowed to do so. Those who have never written a term paper should have a choice of topics relevant to their own fields of interest, not arbitrary ones interesting only to the teacher.

<sup>2</sup> The bibliography presented at a TESL methodology seminar by Joseph Taylor during a panel discussion on writing and composition is included in the list of references at the end of this article.

developed his own method of correction, the problem still remains of whether the whole process will somehow improve the students' writing. Tests need to be made on various techniques for their effectiveness in eliminating or at least reducing the number of errors in compositions.<sup>3</sup>

There have been several variations in methods of correction tried in our department over the past two years, but without any measurement of their effectiveness. Some teachers corrected all the errors of style and grammar for the student and pointed out the weaknesses in content. (To my knowledge no teacher has as yet rewritten an entire paper; however, at the opposite end of the continuum, I question the constructive value of using only a few terms like *vague* and *awkward*.) Others pointed out the errors using a set of symbols and then corrected only those which the student could not easily remedy himself—idioms, appropriate usage, vocabulary. Then, some teachers, instead of categorizing errors by using symbols, simply underlined, circled or checked where errors occurred. Still others forgot the errors and gave a letter grade with comments, reviewing certain aspects of grammar throughout the quarter or semester. Even handing back papers with a letter grade and no comments was tried, but instantly reported as unsatisfactory by students who felt cheated.

Once the papers have been handed back to the students, there remains the question of what they can do with the so-called 'corrected' compositions to affect change and improvement in their writing techniques and use of the language. The following also have been tried without any test of their effectiveness: first, while correcting the first composition of each student, the teacher made a list of the errors to be checked against the student's future papers. However, the pragmatics of carrying out this technique for 50 to 75 students over a semester soon resulted in a shift from the teacher to the students making the list. Another teacher had each student keep a notebook of all his compositions to be turned in at the end of the quarter for review by the teacher. Other students were asked to rewrite their papers, making the corrections by following the symbols or by copying the corrected sentences. To insure the revision, the grade was not recorded until the rewritten copy was turned in.<sup>4</sup> A variation of this would be to have the student copy over only the incorrect sentences instead of the entire composition. A further learning device would be to have him then explain the correction to see if he understood his mistake. One teacher made a list of only the 'general' errors—errors which could be applicable to the majority of the

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<sup>3</sup> Empirical testing of data in both controlled and free writing is suggested by Eugène J. Brière in his articles "Testing the Control of Parts of Speech in FL Compositions," *Language Learning*, XIV (1964), 1-10, and "Quantity before Quality in Second Language Composition," *Language Learning*, XVI (1966), 141-152.

<sup>4</sup> In developing his theory of fluency, Edward T. Erasmus wrote in 1960 that the rewriting of corrected compositions is of dubious value since it punishes the student who writes a lot of copy and rewards the one who writes briefly. "Second Language Composition Teaching at the Intermediate Level," *Language Learning*, 10:1-2 (1960), 26-31. Brière's pilot study (footnote 3, second article) also supported the "quantity before quality" postulate.

students—and then went over these in class when the papers were handed back. (In advanced courses, this technique replaced a sequenced teaching of grammar with a weekly review of only the aspects of grammar and style found to be incorrect in the students' compositions.) Lois McIntosh offered an addition to this technique: provide an exercise on the prevalent mistakes in the composition for the individual student. Thus, if one student consistently made errors in capitalization, the teacher would give him an exercise (attached to the corrected composition) which afforded him immediate practice on his particular problem.<sup>5</sup> Other teachers, in desperation, simply pointed out to the students when handing back the compositions that their corrections would be of no use if they didn't do something with them, warning them that they 'shouldn't' make the same error twice. However, the problem of 'idle threats' soon appeared with the use of this technique.

Donald Knapp, in his article "A Focused Efficient Method to Relate Composition Correction to Teaching Aims," gives perhaps the most complete system for composition correction to date. His basic premise is that students learn from their successes, not their failures; thus, a teacher should not mark all the mistakes in a student's composition. Teachers are not to be proofreaders, but are to isolate specific skills as units for focus in teaching. By following his checklist, where a check is given to indicate something well done, no negative marks are made and both the student and the teacher become aware of the improvement as the number of checks increase. Corrections are made; however, no attempt is made to either correct or point out all the errors in any given paper. According to Knapp, the students are to think of the compositions as exercises, not as models; hence, he avoids the frequent criticism of the fluency theory—that the student thinks his paper is better than it really is.<sup>6</sup>

Aside from correction, there are several other undeveloped areas within the teaching of advanced composition which I feel need attention and revision. The following are suggestions which hopefully would improve the overall process.

The first concerns the sequencing of content in addition to the sequencing of language skills. At present there exists a broad gap between the least-controlled writing and the entirely free composition. As stated at the beginning of this paper, once sentence structure and vocabulary are no longer manipulated, frequently only general topics are assigned with no restrictions or guidelines other than a specific length. (An exception is Lois Robinson's *Guided Writing and Free Writing*, where she does progress gradually to the topic.)

Since the free composition is often introduced relatively early in the student's formal exposure to English, he still makes a great number of

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<sup>5</sup> Lois McIntosh, Professor of English at UCLA, has tried this technique in her literature-for-foreign-students course.

<sup>6</sup> Donald Knapp, "A Focused Efficient Method to Relate Composition Correction to Teaching Aims," in H. B. Allen, *Teaching English as a Second Language: a Book of Readings* (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1965), pp. 271-280.

errors. In contrast, when the content is controlled (I prefer *directed*), with the vocabulary and sentence structure still absolutely free, there are fewer errors. This has been the result in several of my courses when I compared the number of errors in a simple evaluation composition (200 words on any one of four topics) with a letter to 'Roger' (a fictitious American university student) where there were instructions as to what general topics should be covered in each paragraph, not just at the beginning of the paper.<sup>7</sup>

The problem is not to structure the content so that specific sentence structures will result; otherwise, the students are back to controlled writing. The suggestion is to explore ways of restructuring topics so as to graduate the control, rather than immediately jumping from paragraph manipulation to broad topics which leave the student with the temptation to think it out in his native language and then translate it into English words and sentences. The result would be a range of 'freeness' in composition similar to the already well-defined range of control in writing. Even in Robinson's book, the control is on the paragraph level; free writing of more than one paragraph is directed by topic only.

The second suggestion involves the use of supplementary texts in composition such as *Letters from Roger: Exercises in Communication*, which Dr. Russell N. Campbell and I co-authored.<sup>8</sup> In the advanced composition course for foreign teachers of ESL, a debate ensued over literature-based vs. literature-free composition. The question was asked, "Why can't a teacher simply assign the analysis of a five-line poem and teach all there is to know about composition within that context?" The students answered the question in several ways, but the significant outcome was the conclusion that there is more to composition than what can come from an analysis of literature. Most writing done by students during their high school and college experience involves term papers, and most term papers involve analysis; hence, the skills derived from the use of literature are valuable. At the same time, the writing which students *enjoy* and which they are faced with outside of and after the end of their formal education involves communication; i.e., letter writing, notes, messages, telegrams, speeches, journals; and thus the use of supplementary texts which are not literature-based. Letter writing was deemed crucial by most of the foreign students, and within this framework, aspects of style and language which had previously been inaccessible were brought out and successfully adopted into their writing. There was also a transference of these skills to their academic compositions which resulted in a more interesting and lively treatment of the analytical topics based on literature analyses.

The practice of teachers' arbitrarily choosing the topics and lengths of

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<sup>7</sup> By writing to a specific individual, with the content directed throughout the letter, the student is participating in composition which is relevant to his experience, interesting, and minimally controlled.

<sup>8</sup> Bracy, Maryruth and Russell N. Campbell, *Letters from Roger: Exercises in Communication* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., forthcoming). It was designed as a supplementary composition textbook for intermediate and advanced foreign students, based on the letter format mentioned above.

compositions is the cause of my third suggestion. Topics should be varied, show some creativity, and present realistic choices—not just be variations on one given theme. As often as possible, they should be relevant to what is going on in the world outside the classroom and should be on a level of sophistication and maturity equal to or above that of the students. (There was much dissatisfaction expressed over the testing topics for placement used this year: “When I Was a Child,” “A Person I Know,” and “What I Plan to Do When I Finish School.”) There is also the possibility of allowing the student to reject all of the suggested topics and choose one of his own. As one of my students put it, “I’m sorry, Miss Bracy, I can’t write on any of these. My muse isn’t on my shoulder today.”

Also, there should be some attempt to show the student the correlation between length and topic. Except for the need to set length for evaluation purposes, the governing factor is supposed to be appropriateness. In other words, a restriction is set of one to three or five to ten pages so the student will learn what topics can be successfully covered in which amount of space. Here the teacher has two obligations: one, to make his choice of topics appropriate to his own length restriction; and the other, where the topics are not provided, to furnish an opportunity to evaluate the appropriateness of his students’ topics before they begin writing the papers. The very least a teacher can do is at some time point out the relationship between length and complexity of topic so the student does not always feel the restriction to be strictly arbitrary.

My final suggestions relate specifically to our program of teaching composition at UCLA, but I hope they may be more widely applicable. First, there is the potential in the classes of advanced composition for native and foreign teachers in a certificate program for evaluative work in composition and writing techniques. Unfortunately, there is still too much emphasis only on research in and material preparation for controlled writing. This year some headway was made with the inclusion of annotated bibliographies on the teaching of composition as one of the possible choices for a term project. Also, revisions of a native-speaker college composition textbook were begun. A continuation as well as an expansion of these types of activities would do much to bring the teaching of composition to the forefront for investigation and development.

Second, teachers should include composition as a possible topic in the contrastive analysis classes for certificate students. To date, most papers only deal with studies in pronunciation) grammar, literature, or attitude. Much in the writing of compositions could be fruitfully contrasted—skills, topics, style, and organization of ideas.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Robert B. Kaplan, in his article “Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education,” *Language Learning*, XVI (1966), 1-20, makes a tentative contrastive analysis of the differences in paragraph development among English, Semitic, Oriental, Romance and Russian languages. While his studies offered certain insights, he felt that “. . . much more detailed and accurate descriptions are required before any meaningful contrastive analysis can be elaborated.”

Third, there should be a consideration of composition as a topic for masters theses in TESOL—especially along the lines of testing various techniques of correction for effectiveness in error reduction—such as Knapp's composition checklist, which still needs to be empirically tested against other methods.

The last suggestion is for the publication of an anthology of original compositions, with the inclusion of poetry, short stories, and other forms written by foreign students in both ESL and TESOL programs. As an alternative, an attempt could be made to make the English department's student publication international by insuring the presence of a foreign student representative on the staff. Perhaps such a student could even receive partial credit in one of his composition classes for his work. If the separate publication is decided upon, then I can see it as an appropriate project for a TESL Student Association, an advanced composition teacher, or a native-speaker and foreign student in the program.

In conclusion, there appear to be some useful techniques which we can adopt as teachers of intermediate and advanced composition in ESL by following these suggestions and others to bring structure and direction into the area of free composition.

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## ***Ann and Abby: The Agony Column on the Air***

Richard W. Hall

This article suggests that the syndicated columns published under the by-lines "Dear Abby" and "Ann Landers" contain useful textual material for intermediate and advanced ESL students. The following characteristics seem valuable: 1) the columns offer sharp insights into implicit American cultural values; 2) they are modeled on the spoken, rather than written language; 3) they stimulate classroom discussion.

Advice-to-the-lovelorn columns have none of the characteristics of conventional texts in ESL. They contain no facts of American history or mythology; the emotional tone ranges from intense to very intense; the information is personal and the advice is often whimsical. Yet in spite of these factors—or perhaps because of them—I have been using the Ann Landers and Dear Abby columns in intermediate and advanced classes with remarkable success. Reading and discussion of the day's column are usually the high points of the session—a fact which leads me to schedule it for the last ten or fifteen minutes, after more difficult and predictable material has been covered. Almost invariably the class is refreshed and stimulated by what we call the Agony Column on the Air, and they depart with a renewed sense of the communicative power of English.

Contrary to the general impression, the columns contain much more than woeful recitals of doomed romance and domestic stress. They offer capsule narratives on a wide spectrum of human problems, with a strong cultural slant. We read about the problems of aging parents, dating behavior, boss-employee relationships, home entertainment, nursing homes, funeral practices, and much more. American cultural values are revealed in both the questions asked and the answers given—always in concrete and fascinating detail. They contain more insight and revelation about American mores and values than do many more lofty summations.

Even more to the point, the columns offer structural, syntactical, and vocabulary features that are ideal for intermediate and advanced students. The letters, like all letters, are modeled on the spoken, rather than the written, language. There is heavy use of two-word verbs and idiomatic expressions. Slang heard only in speech is common. There is frequent use of devices indicating varying degrees of obligation—*ought to, have to, must*. The verb *to get*, in many shades of meaning, is used frequently. Since the letters are written in the first person, they offer reinforcement in this speech mode.

As with all unscreened material, there are some pitfalls for the unwary, especially with reference to selection of the appropriate letter and control

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of the class during the discussion period. These are discussed below. But first a word about the methods I have found most useful in getting the Agony Column launched on the classroom airwaves.

The first step is to go over any vocabulary items that may present difficulties in the day's selection. I find it best to set these items in the largest possible content: for example, writing on the board not *sulky* but *My husband has been sulky for days*.

Next, I tell the class what the general content of the letter is and who is writing it. This gives them a framework on which to hang the sentences they will hear, and fixes an image of the author.

The actual reading follows. Occasionally sentences may have to be shortened, either by converting dependent clauses into independent sentences or by deleting connectors and chopping compound sentences in half. However, this should be done sparingly. If the vocabulary has been adequately prepared, the class is usually able to absorb rather lengthy structures. I follow one of these four procedures in reading:

- 1) Read a paragraph, stopping to ask individual students questions about the content just heard.

- 2) Ask students to take notes as they listen to the entire letter read without interruption. Then ask questions about the content, which they answer by referral to their notes. (This is a drill that combines listening with writing and speaking.)

- 3) Read the selection aloud, breaking it up into units small enough for immediate choral repetition by the class.

- 4) Straight dictation.

Once the letter—but not the columnist's answer—has been read, I open the floor for discussion. This is the fun part, when students can give advice on their own. Most students will have an opinion, and even those who speak only infrequently in class can usually be prodded into expressing agreement or disagreement with classmates' opinions. Boys and girls will often take opposing positions on questions that concern behavior roles of the sexes—not unexpectedly. The class should be encouraged to make use of new vocabulary items that have been written on the board.

The last step is to read aloud the advice printed in the newspaper, again after preparing the vocabulary in advance. This is the climax of the exercise, and breathless attention is always given to the advice proffered by Ann or Abby. With surprising frequency, my classes find the published advice sound and practical.

Various changes can be rung on these procedures. The class may be asked to write an answer to the problem posed in the column. Or they may be asked to write a letter to the columnist asking for advice, on one of several topics suggested by the teachers. (These topics should be fairly impersonal—for example, where to travel on vacation, or what kind of wedding gift to give a friend).

I always review previous days' vocabulary—perhaps going back three or four days—at some point in the proceedings. I find retention surpris-

ingly high, due probably to the strong personal contexts in which the items have originally appeared.

Much of the criticism of using materials of this nature in class has centered around their emotional content. It is argued that students whose control of English is imperfect will find themselves badly mismatched when it comes to finding language to express deeply felt opinions on personal questions; their 'language age' in English is infantile, while the responses required by the text are adult.

Certainly there is some truth in this criticism, and it must be taken into account when making use of ungraded and unscreened material. At the same time, such objections should not be allowed to eliminate material that ranks high in situational interest and encourages students to use English for important communication. To limit reading and discussion to sanitized texts or banal dialogue situations is to exile the student to a language ghetto where the rewards are not commensurate with the effort he is putting into English acquisition.

By taking certain precautions, the major pitfalls can be avoided, and these materials can provide refreshment to the class and relief for the teacher. The following caveats are the only ones I have found necessary:

- 1) Avoid any letters that deal with topics sure to over-excite the class. Certainly explicit sexual matters belong in this category, as well as drug use and any kind of criminal behavior. The teacher's discretion and knowledge of his students will guide him here. As I mentioned above, this still leaves a wide selection of letters to choose from.

- 2) The discussion period must be rigorously controlled, with certain rules agreed on in advance by everyone. A time limit for expressing each opinion should be set—a minute or less. All opinions must be shared with the class, not with a neighbor. There will be no rebuttals or defenses of one's positions; students will speak only once. There will be time out for correction of errors in syntax, vocabulary, or phonology during the discussion period.

With these simple precautions, the Agony Column on the Air can be useful and gratifying teaching material. In fact—let me confess—I enjoy it as much as my students do.

## *English for Foreign Students Goes Out on the Streets*

Ruth M. Blackburn

There is much discussion these days about what to do in the foreign language classroom to develop skills in communication. For the foreign students in our universities the best laboratory is outside the classroom—in the community of native speakers of English. It is obvious that this setting is more natural and more challenging for the students and that, as they talk with Americans, their oral fluency will improve. What is not so obvious is that when students draw upon community experiences for their themes their writing improves. Field experiences, featuring interviews with native speakers as a source of information and ideas, help to wean the foreign students away from over-reliance on the bilingual dictionary and on the authority of the textbook. Careful preparation for the field experiences will help the students to develop more self-confidence and to be more observant of details, more independent in their thinking, and more responsible in their statements.

“How can I lead my students from pattern practice to fluent communication?” asks the ESL teacher. “Yes, and I would like to know how to help foreign students in the university write better themes,” says another. My answer to both is: put them out on the streets in quest of something they really want to find or to know.

I learned something about this one summer as a student in a school in southern France where foreigners were supposed to learn to speak French. “Study French in France” sounds good, but the ideal of “total immersion” just doesn’t exist in a school like the one I attended. In fact, I wasn’t even getting my feet wet in the language—surrounded as I was by foreign students speaking French as badly as I. The summer was half gone without my being able to use the language for my own purposes—until calamity struck.

On August 4 I went to pick up my suit at the cleaners. Alas, the place was locked and a sign indicated that it would be closed August 1-30, while the proprietor was on vacation. On August 28 I would be sailing home to America! I had about three weeks in which to get someone to open the establishment and give me my suit. But who?

The first week was discouraging. My French was so faltering that people seemed relieved to give me the name of someone else to see so I would be on my way. My list of interviews grew long as I trudged all over town—to the butcher, the baker, the café proprietor, the pharmacist, to homes of employees, of relatives, or friends, and so on and on.

During the second week it occurred to me that talking with people was growing easier. In fact, I became so elated over the discovery that my interest in retrieving the suit was not nearly so keen as my new enthusiasm

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in going about town conversing with people, the problem of the suit merely an excuse for intruding upon them. At the beginning of the third week I observed that my conversations with people became more relaxed and pleasant, that some people were encouraging me to tell them a little about myself just to show their friendliness. My French was reaching the stage of being a bit tolerable to the native speaker. My last visit, on August 25, was a crowning success: an hour's visit with the family of an employee.

The next day the suit was packed in my case. I had had a beautiful time talking with French people. And I might have come home tongue-tied in French!

This experience suggested a way I might restructure an English course for foreign students in the United States: to develop better oral fluency in communication by having students go into the community interviewing people. The first time I tried this with my students I discovered other benefits, not the least of which was improvement in writing skills. This aspect of an ESL course featuring field experiences I shall focus on in this paper.

The ability to write articulately and cogently stands high on the list of skills to be acquired in undergraduate ESL courses. I have observed that when foreign students are writing about things they know well and have experienced, they write reasonably well; but when confronted with the task of handling thematic materials and organizing abstract ideas into a convincing essay, many of them strain for ideas, and as they do so their English grammar 'falls apart.' They call upon old, overworked ideas, often moralizing tirades, that in their culture are suitable topics for essays; and their sentences, abetted by a bilingual dictionary, are translations from their native language—not really English sentences.

To free the foreign student of his bilingual dictionary, writing assignments might focus on topics Americans talk about. Students can learn something from the professional writer who draws material directly from experience. Too often student writing comes out of just reading and discussion. It should come out of reading, discussion, and experience. Students can learn to write better by going out in the street for theme materials and talking with Americans. Through experience they can learn to be more observant of details and even more responsible in expressing their observations. These too are worthy goals in the ESL class.

When I first tried field experiences as a part of an ESL class, the topics the students selected included modern art, theater, political elections, race problems, crime, and the courts. Since then, concerns have shifted to such interests as rock-and-roll, campus unrest, drugs, welfare, and Black power. Following each field trip the students write whatever they wish to about the experience. The same experience, but how different the treatment in the themes which follow!

For a course of this type three to five topics are enough to handle in one semester. The class trips are scheduled during the first half of the course. During the second half each student goes out into the community

alone, working on his own project for which information is gathered largely through interviews. "Times Square: Then and Now, As Seen by Elderly New Yorkers" is one example of a project topic.

While the instructor is busy making arrangements for the field trips and selecting good reading materials, the students have some ground work to do in preparing themselves for the adventure. The class must be well prepared for the trip. The questions they will ask the experts to be interviewed must be well chosen; therefore, at the beginning of the course attention is given to the techniques of interviewing and ways to reporting an interview. The first reading list includes some interviews taken from magazines and newspapers. The *Saturday Review* and *The Christian Science Monitor* have furnished good ones. In class we discuss the way the interview is written up, the kinds of questions that draw interesting ideas out of the person being interviewed, and the interview as an effective way of writing when it fits the situation.

The students then interview someone they think may suggest interesting ideas, not necessarily an exotic person, perhaps a neighbor, another foreign student, a roommate, or the old newsman on the corner. Some of them use the interview, with carefully placed questions, to put across to the reader certain concepts in a way far more interesting and effective than straight exposition could have done. The interview has the advantage of human interest—the personality and ideas of a particular person. The dialogue gives added vitality and sparkle. Some of the students use details that give a character flesh and blood, and class discussion of the best parts of their themes brings out the need for the students to make penetrating observations, to notice the revealing details. They can share their experience with each other when they tell what they see, what they hear, and (who knows) what they smell. Such direct approach to materials and the first-hand knowledge that comes to a student through meeting people and noticing the details of their personal style and surroundings, which give them their uniqueness, is very germane to the art of writing.

Another skill very necessary for the success of the course is the ability to react thoughtfully to what the students read and experience. Early in the term a large part of two periods is spent in learning to read creatively. The time is well spent when the students carry over, to their field experiences, the training in questioning what they do not understand and what they do not agree with, in noting what they find is new and exciting and worth exploring further, in comparing ways in which one expert agrees or disagrees with the views of another, and in considering how new ideas can be related to other problems. This is a way a student can "free himself from reliance on authority, be it book, lecture, the work of art, or the great idea."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Helen Merrell Lynd's book, *Field Work in College Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945) for guiding insights and the phrase quoted here.

Our procedure has been first to read articles in current or recent magazines on the subject being explored, discuss them in class, and formulate appropriate questions to ask an expert. Each student writes on a 5" x 8" card a summary of each article he has read and his reaction. The discussion before a trip we took to Harlem was especially spirited. The class was excited because the trip seemed like a daring adventure for them. I recall with amusement the dressing-down the Iraqi student received from members of the class because he proposed to ask: "Why do Negroes always live in ghettos? Why don't they spread out and live among other people?" The students were shocked by his ignorance. They turned upon him and sternly told him he would have to get busy and read more before the trip, or the impression they would make as a class would be very unfavorable. When the time came, during our visit to the NAACP headquarters in Harlem, for discussion after the lecture, the Iraqi student redeemed himself with a question on the political activities of the NAACP, which gave the lecturer an opportunity to explain something important about the organization's methods.

When students are asked to draw their ideas from people and from adventures into community life more than from books, a group spirit develops in the class. The adventures the students have shared give them a camaraderie not usual in a college class. This good fellowship is very helpful when individual themes are considered critically by the whole class. The students are free with their criticism, which they express sympathetically, and the criticism is well received. They help each other develop a reader awareness. Writing for each other, they try harder to make their writing interesting and clear and free of errors.

Other ESL teachers have asked how time can be used for field experiences when student themes are loaded with mistakes that must be dealt with one by one in a systematic manner and when there is not enough time in the usual ESL class to eliminate them. Actually each field trip takes the place of one class session, only five out of thirty. So linguistic problems which occur frequently in students' themes need not be neglected. However, some structural errors tend to be eliminated as the students move among Americans and talk with them. When they write about an interview they have had with an American, the language used in that context pours out as they think about what was said. Examples show how this may be so. Below are excerpts from the first two themes by the Iraqi student mentioned above. The first theme was not based on an interview and the second one was. Both show his writing before revision.

Excerpt from theme No. 1:

Some people have their homes in the city. While sitting for dinner, the windows are usually closed because otherwise they will get the exhaust fumes of all the cars passing downstairs. If these people, while looking for a sight of comfort, happened to look outside the window, they will see the ugly sight of cars crawling. Everything is hardly moving, everything is frustrating and damned.

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[He then suggested replacing old buildings with trees and grass.]

This for sure help the driver to commit less traffic violations. It help the pedestrian forget his problems for a while. Every person struggle for living, and so will be carried by the tide of our materialistic age. Does such kind of person has to take the subway to Central Park to enjoy the beauty of nature?

Excerpt from theme No. 2—written a week later after his first interview with an artist in a basement art gallery:

I asked him if he wouldn't mind telling me something about his paintings, which seemed to me no more than illusions of different objects. He called them 'Still life' paintings. "They indicate objects we see every day," he said. "Besides that, there is the feeling that I want to put across. Usually the rich imagination present cannot possibly be understood at first sight. The observer has to look at these paintings for a few minutes in order to see and feel what I've worked for." He conveyed his feelings by distorting the figures and making them unrealistic. Besides, he mentioned that he usually applied jerky, nervous brush strokes. Then he started describing the over-all effect. "By applying all these methods I can impress upon the observer that everything is moving and vibrating. This applies to all my paintings."

He finished talking and suddenly I felt something new inside me. Even though it was a brief explanation, it was a sufficient start for me; a start that gave me the means for judging art. I began to look for feeling, order and imagination present in every work of art; without imagination it would be deadly dull; without some degree of order it would be chaotic; without feeling it would leave me unmoved.

The student, for the most part, is quoting what the artist said, but he is writing better English. He has learned some new vocabulary and new ways of expressing ideas, and he has some new ideas to write about.

Field experiences can provide foreign students with advantages other than better language skills. Interviewing strangers, discovering how to win their confidence, and realizing success in this gives the students a feeling of inner strength. Certainly growth in self-confidence, in cultural insight, and in power of observation is valuable and worthy of a place in an undergraduate program for foreign students. Development of these qualities and of better fluency in speaking and writing should serve a foreign student well in his academic career. If an ESL program offers only one English course for the undergraduate foreign student, a course featuring field experience might be added.

The question arises: When they are talking with people on the street who speak a non-standard dialect of English, won't the students begin to pick up the features of that dialect in their own speech? This has not been a serious problem, for they have been taught standard English for the most part. It is true that a few of the errors that they commonly make would not be mistakes in some non-standard varieties of American English; so there may be some reinforcement of those features in such conversations. I consider this whole situation as an excellent opportunity for them to begin to learn about the varieties of American speech and the class or regional distinctions that are attached to the varieties. In cases where a foreign

student habitually speaks a non-standard dialect of English, I have found that he lives among or frequently associates with speakers of that dialect. But students who come to our universities directly from another country have been taught only prestigious varieties of English. I see no problem of 'contamination' resulting from their talking with people from all walks of life; rather, it seems like a great opportunity for them to appreciate the interesting diversity in American life.

## Reviews

Cotto, Lucila S. de, Adrian L. Hull and Filomena P. Pono. *American English Series: English as a Second Language*. Books 1-3. Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1965-69.

The *Fries American English Series* began to appear in 1952 as a "pioneer attempt to apply to the teaching of English as a second language in elementary and secondary schools, the recent advances of linguistic science." The *American English Series* (AES), begun in 1965, is essentially a re-writing and restructuring of the earlier materials—old wine in new bottles.

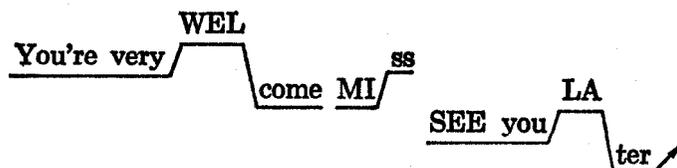
The new arrangement is better. It converts the materials of the old four 40-lesson units into six units of 20 lessons apiece, each unit intended to cover a year's work and to be supplemented by a volume of reading selections. Like its predecessor, the AES is an undertaking of the English Section of the Puerto Rico Department of Education and is geared to the needs of students in Puerto Rico's public school system, though there is no reason why the series could not be used elsewhere.

The AES is frankly conservative in its linguistic and methodological orientation. It accepts without soul-searching the now classic postulates of descriptive linguistics and the "oral approach" to second-language teaching: the primacy of speech in language acquisition; listening-speaking-reading-writing as the natural learning order; avoidance of explicit statements about language; minimal recourse to the students' native language; and mastery of a select corpus of basic structural patterns through the use of prepared dialogues and repetition and substitution drills. These postulates have, of course, been subject to searching theoretical criticism (see, for example, Robert L. Cooper's "What Do We Learn When We Learn a Language," *TESOL Quarterly* 4:4, December, 1970, 304-314) and to challenges from teaching materials based on different assumptions—situational reinforcement, transformational grammar and others. But this review will not be concerned with the adequacy of underlying theories. The AES is presented as an improved version of materials which users have found sufficiently effective to merit reworking and republication. That should be the frame of reference used in evaluation.

The large, detailed teacher's guides, one for each student volume, continue to be an outstanding feature of this series. Each page of the student text is reproduced in the teacher's guide and surrounded by a wealth of exercises, suggestions, and exact instructions for class procedures. These guides set the lessons up so well that the materials could be presented effectively even by persons inexperienced in second language teaching methodology. Other things being equal, of course, teachers using this series will

be more successful to the degree they approach native speaker competence and have been schooled in the assumptions and techniques of applied descriptive linguistics. New to each of the teacher's guides is an appendix containing some useful and some not-so-useful additions. The unit-by-unit summaries of linguistic content and the vocabulary indices will help teachers understand the proper emphases to be given in class presentation and review, and provide for the uninitiated some sense of the language theory underlying the teaching system. There is little justification, however, for the inclusion of the linguistic summaries in the student volumes, since they are not intended for student use.

The AES does not present, or attempt to present, a comprehensive treatment of English phonology. It has scattered phonemic drills on sounds requiring special attention (drawn from Spanish-English contrastive analyses though applicable in other language situations as well), but practice in sound production is essentially through oral pattern repetition, which may be the most effective approach for young learners. Stress and intonation are indicated by light and dark letters and by the familiar up and down lines to indicate pitch levels. This system of representation works well with teachers who have had considerable training in its use; without such training, however, non-native speakers of English cannot be expected to interpret the system accurately. And even native speakers are sometimes led to falsify normal intonation patterns when they try to interpret representations like the following:



which is selected at random from page 35 of the teacher guide for Book 3. Another limitation of the AES presentation is that the contrastive significance of particular intonation patterns is not pointed out. Presumably it is to be inferred from its context, a risky assumption at the early stages of second-language learning. We really don't know very much about how students of a second language perceive intonation "contrasts" which are perfectly obvious to a native speaker.

Surprisingly, the AES makes no reference—in these first three books, at least—to the use of taped or recorded materials to supplement the classroom exercises, yet a check with the publisher indicates that tapes are available to accompany all three volumes. Since it is assumed that many of the teachers of this series will not be native speakers of English, recordings by native speakers should certainly play an important part in guiding the teachers and in serving as models for the pupils.

The structural patterns chosen for inclusion are those one would expect in a system of this sort. Insufficient attention is paid, however, to the arrangement of patterns in relation to one another or to the advantages of

presenting certain patterns contrastively. Compare, for example, the following patterns and their order of presentation:

1. What does Mr. Morton do?  
He's a fireman. (Book 1, Unit 2)
2. What does Betty do every day?  
She plays. (Book 1, Unit 10)
3. What does a doctor do?  
He treats patients. (Book 3, Unit 9)

Now it is clear that the first question-response pattern offers special problems for the learner, particularly since the response is related to the question semantically but not syntactically through the verb structure; this makes it highly atypical as an English question-response pattern. And it cannot be of very high frequency among elementary school pupils. Its introduction should have been postponed considerably, certainly until after the introduction of pattern 2, perhaps until the introduction of pattern 3 to which it is related.

Another example of carelessness in the presentation of contrastive patterns is the concurrence of the following directions for the teacher in Book 1, Unit 14:

- TEACHER: (*holding up a pen*) That's a pen.  
 TEACHER: (*holding up a book*) This is a book.  
 TEACHER: (*holding up several pencils*) Those are pencils.  
 TEACHER: (*holding up several notebooks*) Those are notebooks.

The vocabulary items introduced in these first three books are generally useful and of broad cultural relevance. Anachronistic and low-frequency terms—*iceman, clothing store, yodelers, masquerade party, wooden apartment building*—are rare.

One serious drawback to the exercises in these books is their monotony. The same types of exercises are used in every unit and are highly controlled. Repetitive, controlled exercises have proven effective in short-term programs with limited objectives, but in a program of long duration there develops a contradiction between continuous control in the exercises and the language mastery which the exercises are expected to achieve. There is, moreover, the very real danger of stifling interest and initiative. Hopefully the forthcoming books of this series will provide for greater variety and spontaneity of student response.

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Saville, Muriel R. & Rudolph C. Troike. *A Handbook of Bilingual Education*. Revised edition. Washington, D. C.: TESOL, 1971. Pp. vii + 71. Paper. \$1.75 to TESOL members, \$2.00 to non-members.

The handbook prepared by Saville and Troike forms a welcome addition to the rapidly expanding body of literature addressed specifically to educa-

tors affiliated with or contemplating the establishment of bilingual education programs (cf., Alatis, 1970; Andersson and Boyer, 1970; John and Horner, 1971; Ulibarri, 1970). The monograph contains six sections: Introduction, Rationale, Design, The Languages of Instruction, Pedagogical Considerations and Evaluation. The authors end each section with a "Selected [but not annotated] Bibliography," and have included a definition of key terms in the first chapter.

In the first two chapters, the authors place the issue of bilingual education in clear perspective for the reader by raising questions concerning the purpose of bilingual education, and the nature of the relationship between learning and linguistic, psychological, sociological and anthropological factors. Unfortunately, a substantive error appears on the first page. The authors state that:

Recent experience in many places proves, however, that an equal or better command of the second language is achieved if school begins with the native language as the medium of instruction and introduces the second language gradually ( Lambert, 1970).

In fact, the research conducted by Lambert and his associates (reported in Alatis, 1970) evaluates the effects of a continuing program of home-school language switch on the linguistic, cognitive, and attitudinal development of English-speaking elementary school pupils living in Montreal. These children attend kindergarten and grade 1 classes taught exclusively via French. English, their mother tongue, is formally introduced for the first time in grade 2. The amount of English instruction is gradually increased so that by grade 5, the children are participating in an essentially balanced bilingual program. Lambert concludes that after four years the children speak, understand, read and write English as well as carefully selected, conventionally educated English youngsters, but that, in addition, they appear to be able to speak, understand, read, and write French far better than students who follow typical French as a Second Language programs. It is unfortunate that Lambert's work has been misinterpreted in this way. Since the socio-cultural conditions prevailing in Canada and the United States at the present time are so very different (cf., pp. 19-22), I find it quite easy to accept Lambert's Canadian data *and* the essence of the arguments by Saville and Troike. In fact, I thought that their discussion of some of the Psychological and Social and Cultural factors which make bilingual education so desirable was particularly well formulated.

Likewise, I found the material presented in Chapter 3 to be very useful. The authors outline briefly various program designs, a representative class schedule, suggested criteria for hiring teachers, suggested topics to be covered in teacher training programs, and suggestions for encouraging parental and community involvement. My only complaint with Chapter 3 is that the authors chose to be so brief, a decision which I'm sure contributed to the rapid publication of the monograph and its relatively low price.

The sections concerning The Languages of Instruction and Pedagogical Considerations are interesting; but again much too brief. They should, how-

ever, serve to focus teachers' attention on the nature of the problems which they will encounter in their classrooms. The use of both Spanish and Navajo examples in Chapter 4 enhances the value of the monograph by calling attention to the general applicability of the authors' statements.

I agree completely with the authors' position in Chapter 6 that "Evaluation is one of the most important and one of the most often ignored components in any educational program," and that special attention should be paid to evaluating innovative programs of this type. Although they provide several useful summary statements and hints for investigators, I feel that they do not go quite far enough in specifying the types of rigorous testing programs which project directors or administrators should consider implementing (cf., Tucker and d'Anglejan, 1971).

In summary, their handbook should be considered required reading for educators affiliated with bilingual education programs. It is clearly written, attractively reproduced, and relatively free of typographical errors (one notable exception occurring on the cover).

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#### CORRECTION

Please note the following errata in the article by Ruth Hok (IV,3, September 1970), "The Concept of 'General-Specific' and Its Application to *The/A* and *Some/Any*": p. 232, line 10: "The sentence beginning "The word *focus* . . ." should read: "The word *focus* is not an unusual one in literature—but its meaning always seems to be 'the view from here'. The dimension I suggest be added is 'the view from there'"; p. 233, footnote 5, line 2: "a church" should read "the church"; p. 233, footnote 6, line 2: "a Wagner's sex" should read "Wagner's sex"; p. 235, line 5: The second line in (b) should read: "The view is microscopic."

The editor apologizes for these errors.

# Announcement

Changes in dates for 1972 TESOL Convention:

New dates: February 26 – March 1, 1972

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