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Editor’s Note

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to edit the TESOL Quarterly. As you look over this issue, you will note a number of changes. Although the most apparent are in format and design, there are other changes as well: Research Notes and Book Reviews, two very popular Quarterly sections, have both been expanded in scope; The Forum has been redefined; the Style Sheet has been rewritten and renamed. The Editorial Policy, which informs potential contributors of the kinds of manuscripts we would most like to publish, has also been revised. As you read the new policy, you will note that the Quarterly intends to continue to publish a wide range of articles, but with a preference for those which bridge theory and practice. We will also be striving to make the content of Quarterly articles accessible to all interested readers, regardless of their familiarity with the topics addressed.

Whether you are a reader or a future contributor, these changes have been made with one goal in mind: to keep the Quarterly a relevant and valuable resource for all of us, no matter what our areas of interest or expertise within the TESOL profession. The TESOL Quarterly is our journal. I invite you to contribute, to comment, to react, or to suggest. I would very much enjoy hearing from you.

Barry P. Taylor
The Composing Processes of Advanced ESL Students: Six Case Studies

VIVIAN ZAMEL
University of Massachusetts, Boston

The most recent research in composition has given us important insights into the composing process. This research has revealed that composing is a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning.

A study of the composing processes of advanced ESL students was undertaken to investigate the extent to which these students experience writing as a process of discovering and creating meaning and the extent to which second language factors affect this process. The findings indicate that skilled ESL writers explore and clarify ideas and attend to language-related concerns primarily after their ideas have been delineated.

Since it is believed that the teaching of composition should be informed by and based upon what writing actually entails, an understanding of the composing process calls into question approaches that are prescriptive, formulaic, and overly concerned with correctness. Instead, it suggests the importance of instruction that gives students direct experiences with the composing process, that establishes a dynamic teaching/learning relationship between writers and their readers, and that enhances further linguistic development in the context of making and communicating meaning.

RESEARCH IN FIRST LANGUAGE COMPOSITION

It is clear from the current research in composition that a concern with process—that is, how writers generate ideas, record them, and refine them in order to form a text—predominates. Having recognized that the investigation of students' written products tells us very little about their instructional needs, researchers are now exploring writing behaviors, convinced that by studying and understanding the process of composing we can gain insight into how to teach it:

We cannot teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. We must also understand how that product came into being, and
why it assumed the form that it did. We have to try to understand what
goes on during the act of writing . . . if we want to affect its outcome. We
have to do the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than the
easy thing, evaluate the tangible product (Hairston 1982:84).

This line of research has taught us a great deal not only about writers’
behaviors, but also about the constraints that tend to influence these
behaviors. Emig’s (1971) classic case study revealed the complex, non-
linear nature of the composing process. More recently, Pianko’s
description of the composing processes of college freshmen indicated
that, rather than being predetermined from the outset, “the text of a
written composition unfolds” (1979:20). Perl (1980a, 1980b) found that
both skilled and unskilled writers discover their ideas in the process of
composing, although unskilled writers are prematurely distracted from
the exploration of these ideas because of surface-level concerns.
Sommers’ investigation (1980) of revising strategies indicated that, in
the case of more proficient writers, revising is an integral part of
composing for it leads to further writing, whereas in the case of less
experienced writers, revising manifests itself in very local changes, a
finding that has been corroborated by Faigley and Witte (1981). Rose
found that writers who understand that composing is a “highly fluid
process [that] calls for open, even adventurous thinking” (1980:398-
399) have the least trouble writing. And finally, in an attempt to put
these and their own observations into some theoretical framework,
Flower and Hayes (1981) have formulated a model of writing that
underlines the inventive and generative nature of the composing
process and makes explicit how a writer’s knowledge of and relation-
ship to a topic and sense of audience and purpose inform the ongoing
process.

These and other investigations have reinforced the notion that writ-
ing is indeed a process of discovering and making meaning. Through
the act of writing itself, ideas are explored, clarified, and reformulated
and, as this process continues, new ideas suggest themselves and
become assimilated into the developing pattern of thought. Under-
standing that writing may be recursive, non-linear, and convoluted,
writers are able to modify or even discard chunks of discourse or
original plans as they review their writing, reconsider its function, and
distance themselves from it in order to meet their readers’ expectations.
It is in this way that they approximate more closely in writing what
may only have existed on an intuitive level.

However, unskilled and beginning writers rarely experience writing
as a cyclical process of generating and integrating ideas. Rather,
because they do not understand this process, they are convinced that
writers know beforehand what it is they will say (Shaughnessy 1977,
Bloom 1980). And this is no less reinforced by a pedagogy that seems
to be based on the same assumption, a pedagogy that requires elabo-
rate preliminary outlining, that provides models to analyze and imitate, and that insists on teaching writing systematically and prescriptively (for a more extended criticism of these approaches, see Berthoff 1980, Bloom 1980, Hairston 1982, Young 1978). It is no wonder then that these inexperienced writers do not allow themselves the freedom to explore their thoughts on paper. As Flower has pointed out, their early decisions to proceed in a certain direction may “lock writers into a premature solution before they have entered the problem” (1980:63). And it is these very decisions, what Rose (1980) calls “inflexible plans,” in addition to an almost constant concern with mechanics, correctness, and form, that keeps hidden from these writers the “shuttling back-and-forth movements of the composing process, the move from sense to words and from words to sense, from inner experience to outer judgment and from judgment back to experience” (Perl 1980b:369).

RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGY IN ESL

While process-centered studies have already had an impact on writing instruction (see, for example, Donovan and McClelland 1980, Tate and Corbett 1981), ESL composition teachers, researchers, and textbook writers have by and large paid little attention to the findings reported above. Influenced by second language writing research, the implications of which continue to emphasize the linearity of writing in English (see, for example, Ostler and Kaplan 1982), and concerned with promoting language learning, ESL writing continues to be taught as if form preceded content, as if composing were a matter of adopting preconceived rhetorical frameworks, as if correct language usage took priority over the purposes for which language is used. A case in point is a recent ESL textbook, entitled The Process of Composition, which, contrary to what its title suggests, presumes to teach students “to write according to a nearly mathematical set of rules, to write in a very specific format, according to a formula” (Reid 1982: xii).

ESL teachers and researchers, however, are becoming aware of the paradigm shift in composition teaching and are beginning to consider the extent to which the findings of process-centered studies are related to the teaching of ESL composition. Raimes (1979, 1981), McKay (1981), and Taylor (1981) have all recognized the importance of these findings and have suggested approaches to the teaching of composition that take these findings into account. Watson (1982) has called into question the widespread use of models in the ESL classroom, and several presentations at the 1982 TESOL Convention dealt with research on the composing process and its implications for ESL (for example, Buchanan 1982 and Zamel 1982a). There have even been some attempts to study the composing processes of ESL students. My
own investigation into these processes (Zamel 1982b), based on the self-reports and written work of such students, revealed that proficient ESL writers, like their native language counterparts, experience writing as a process of creating meaning. Rather than knowing from the outset what it is they will say, these students explore their ideas and thoughts on paper, discovering in the act of doing so not only what these ideas and thoughts are, but also the form with which best to express them. Moreover, they recognize the importance of being flexible, starting anew when necessary, and continuing to rework their papers over time as they take into account another reader’s frame of reference. Jacobs’ (1982) work, though primarily an analysis of student writing, described how native and non-native speakers of English deal with the composing constraints of different assignments. Her observations indicate that the skill with which students write essays may be related more to the complexity of the assignment and their own misconceptions about how to meet the requirements of a particular task than to their linguistic backgrounds. It seems that certain composing problems transcend language factors and are shared by both native and non-native speakers of English. Finally, Jones (1981, 1982) used videotape and “think aloud” techniques to investigate ESL writing strategies. In one study (1982) he found that ESL and native English-speaking writers may experience similar difficulties with the composing process. In yet another, Jones (1981), using Krashen’s (1982) monitor model as a framework, identified the writing behaviors of a monitor under-user and a monitor over-user as they responded to different discourse tasks. The most interesting aspect of these data is the finding that although the two writers in this study “differ dramatically from each other” (Jones 1981:6), neither one of them seems to understand what the composing process entails. The over-user appears determined to get everything written down correctly the first time, and the under-user, who does make textual changes, never revises on more than a surface level. These are writing behaviors which are very similar to those displayed by the unskilled and basic writers studied by Perl (1980a) and others.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study represents an attempt to further examine the composing processes of ESL students. It is based on the assumption that only by studying these processes can we begin to evaluate the appropriateness of our teaching methods and approaches, an assumption that not only underlies native composition research but also work carried out by researchers in second language acquisition. For example, Stern’s (1980) description of language learning strategies, Krashen’s (1978) study of language learners’ use of the monitor, and Stevick’s (1981) first-hand accounts of the process of learning languages all reinforce Corder’s
conviction about language teaching: we will never be able to improve our ability to help our students until we learn more about how and what they learn. This is no less true for the teaching of writing.

The questions addressed here with particular reference to ESL student writers are similar to those raised by other process-centered studies: How do writers write? How do their ideas seem to get generated? What happens to these ideas after they are recorded? To what extent do these writers attend to the development and clarification of these ideas? To what extent and at what point during the process do they deal with more mechanical matters? In addition, questions that have concerned second language acquisition researchers were asked: “Does communication come to a halt because the learner needs a lexical item that he or she doesn’t have?” (Larsen-Freeman 1981:119). What kinds of strategies do these “learners exploit when they lack essential vocabulary items?” (Larsen-Freeman 1981:119).

While these questions are similar to those raised in my previous investigation (Zamel: 1982b), it should be noted that the answers obtained at that time were based on interviews with students and an analysis of their written work. Thus, their composing behaviors were not actually observed and could only be inferred. As a result, a more rigorous methodology was adopted here. Using again a case study approach, which has proven to be the most effective way to examine the writing process, and again conducting interviews which were administered at the end of the study, ESL students were observed while composing, and both their writing behaviors and what they wrote were recorded. However, they were not required to compose aloud (a technique that is used in most process studies), for there is some doubt about the extent to which verbalizing aloud one’s thoughts while writing simulates the real composing situation. Perl, although she herself collected “think aloud” protocols, admitted that “it is conceivable that asking students to compose aloud changes the process substantially, that composing aloud is not the same as silent composing” (1980a:19). Faigley and Witte reiterated this notion:

Verbal protocols require writers to do two things at once—they must write and they must attempt to verbalize what they are thinking as they pause. Perhaps some subjects can be trained to do both tasks with facility, but many writers find that analyzing orally what they are doing as they write interferes with their normal composing processes, interrupting their trains of thought (1981:412).

In addition to directing students to write as they would under normal circumstances, other attempts were made not to impose upon them the constraints of more conventional experimental situations. Not only were they assigned a course-related writing task, but they were also encouraged to take as much time as necessary to complete this
assignment. This was based on the recognition that the controlled conditions of most process studies, asking students, for example, to compose about an artificial topic for a predetermined amount of time, may result in writing that is not truly representative. As Freedman and Pringle have pointed out, “writing done in such a context implies a composing process that is radically different from the process each of us undergoes in the course of our normal writing” (1980:312). They go on to explain why it is important to examine writing that students actually do for course assignments:

Such essays have two advantages: first, they are typical of the writing most students do most often; second, they entail far more intense intellectual engagement in the process than the conventional one-session assignment, and consequently involve the students in [the] composing process (1980:314).

The students were therefore observed as they wrote papers that were assumed to represent the kind of formal, expository writing they are most often required to undertake for course-related purposes, the kind of writing Emig (1981) has termed “extensive” and Britton (1978) has termed “transactional.” More specifically, they wrote essays that were based on a set of thematically related readings and the in-class discussions that resulted as the issues raised by these readings were considered.

The students who participated in the study were members of my own intermediate composition class, a course that ESL students can opt to take after having completed two semesters of freshman composition. The coursework parallels the freshman composition requirement for native speakers of English and typically addresses the different rhetorical models during the first semester and focuses on more analytical and research-oriented papers during the second. The subjects could therefore be characterized as advanced ESL students, students who have had substantial instruction in composition and other language skills and who are completing university-level essay assignments at the sophomore and junior levels, but who may still be troubled by the problematical nature of composing in a second language. Advanced ESL student writers were chosen for the purposes of this study in order to examine the extent to which their composing processes compared with those of the skilled writers identified by previous studies. I wanted to find out, for example, whether they understood what the composition process entailed and the extent to which linguistic concerns affected this process. The decision to use students from my own

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1 While this study sought answers to these questions with reference to second language composition, it would be revealing to examine the composing behaviors writers exhibit both in their native and second languages. Such an investigation would help determine how process and language-related concerns differentially affect the ability of individuals to compose in both languages and whether, as is suggested by Edelsky’s study of the L1 and L2 writing of bilingual children, “general process universals” operate “regardless of the language” (1982:227).
writing class as subjects for this study was prompted by reasons similar to those offered by Perl:

First, by selecting my own students, I would know firsthand what they were studying . . . and thus would be able to construct topics for the writing sessions that legitimately reflected classroom work. Second, from working with, relating to, and getting to know my students in the daily, interactive manner that enhances teaching, I would most likely develop the rapport and trust necessary for case study, process research (1980a: 17).

After I explained to these students the purpose of the study—that is, to discover what advanced ESL students actually do in the process of writing—they were all enthusiastic about and interested in participating. In addition to understanding that their participation would provide valuable information for teachers of writing, they were excited by the notion of such individualized attention and detailed observation and analysis. They had never thought about their composing processes, a telling commentary about their previous writing instruction, and felt they themselves had much to gain from such a study since I had promised to share with them my observations. As one student put it, “I can’t believe you’re going to spend your time watching me while I write. Nobody ever did that before.”

Despite the fact that there were so many willing subjects, other factors helped limit the number of participants. For one thing, their schedules had to be flexible enough to allow for as many sessions as necessary to complete the writing task. It was also explained to them that sessions should ideally be as open-ended as possible to give them the opportunity to continue writing as they would under more realistic circumstances. Secondly, I felt it important that the participants represent a range of linguistic backgrounds since research in ESL writing seems to indicate that how a student writes in English may be related to the thought patterns of that student’s native language (see, for example, Kaplan 1967). As a result of these considerations, six students, whose schedules provided for extended blocks of composing time and who represented a variety of language groups (Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew, and Persian), were finally selected.

FINDINGS

Although I had anticipated presenting data that would reflect the various stages of the students’ composing processes, stages usually characterized as pre-writing, writing, and revising, the students’ writing behaviors were not entirely amenable to this type of breakdown, a fact which in and of itself attests to the non-linear nature of writing. This was generally the case for all six writers, both skilled and
unskilled. The thinking, brainstorming, and note-making that is believed to precede actual composing took place even after the writing began, illustrating that “planning is not a unitary stage, but a distinctive thinking process which writers use over and over again during composing” (Flower and Hayes 1981:375). Thus, students who started out by creating an informal list of ideas or questions to consider may have found themselves totally discarding it once they undertook the writing itself. It seems that while some planning was necessary to help them think through the topic, they were quite willing to shift directions once they discovered an alternative, and more satisfying, solution. Revising, too, was evident throughout, for students rewrote as they wrote, some revising entire chunks of discourse, some attending to the clarification of a previously stated idea. Thus, one of the major findings of this study was the extent to which ESL advanced writers understood that composing involves the constant interplay of thinking, writing, and rewriting.

A more detailed description of their composing processes indicates how this interplay took place. All of the students spent a great deal of time thinking about the essay at the outset, trying to figure out how to proceed. While several transcribed some of these thoughts in the form of notes, lists, or diagrams that mapped out the students’ thought processes, others looked at their blank pages or into space until a beginning seemed to suggest itself. However, whether these ideas were written down or not seemed to have little to do with the students’ writing skills, for both the least skilled and two of the best writers wrote nothing before actually beginning the essay. Another very skilled writer, interestingly enough, began composing his paper only after writing down what he thought would make a fine conclusion. (This same writer, incidentally, wrote his introduction only after completing his paper.) It seems then that these writers have developed their own individual strategies for “getting into” a topic, strategies that may not necessarily involve pre-writing at all.

Once the essays were actually underway, the writing was consistent-

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2 Writing skill was determined by holistic assessments of each of the following: an in-class writing sample collected at the beginning of the semester, papers which the students had written in their previous courses, and the essay which was the final product of the writing sessions described here. (Unfortunately, it was not possible to determine native language writing skill, which of course would provide important data on the question of the existence and transfer of writing skills across languages.) Although the students did not always perform consistently from paper to paper, reflecting, no doubt, the effects of the topic and the complexity of the task, a range of writing proficiency was identifiable: based on the assessments of two readers (experienced ESL writing teachers), four writers were considered to be skilled while the other two were found to be unskilled. While such a range of skills is not atypical of ESL classes, even at the advanced level, the students’ fairly sophisticated level of oral proficiency had led me to expect a greater homogeneity in their writing skills. That this was not the case makes one particularly aware of the differences between speaking and writing, and the demands made by each of these skills (for a comprehensive overview of these differences, see Kroll and Vann 1981).
ly recursive and generative and sometimes even verbalized aloud, this
despite the fact that the students were not required to do so. All of the
students, their writing skill notwithstanding, reread and considered
what was already written in order to evaluate whether the form of
expression matched their intent and to discover from this interaction
the ideas that were about to be recorded. Clearly, through this
backward process of rereading, the writers were constructing meaning
while assessing it at the same time. This reciprocal activity was often
extremely easy to pinpoint, for students not only reread aloud but also
reacted to their writing by audibly commenting on it. One student, for
example, shook her head “No” while reading to indicate dissatisfaction,
while another would engage in self-dialogues: “Is it necessary to
include this here? Yes, I think so.” These reactions to their texts, what
Murray describes as “a conversation between two workmen muttering
to each other” (1982:140), seemed to enable the students to move on,
for it was after such reactions that more of the text seemed to unfold.
This was particularly obvious when, after reacting negatively to some
aspect of their writing, students wrote a note to themselves to return to
the problem later and chose instead to continue writing in order not to
“lose” the idea that had suggested itself. This type of interaction with
their writing was also noticeable when students claimed to be “stuck,”
but then, after rereading their texts several times, they discovered how
to go on. It should be noted, however, that although all of the students
seemed to be aware of the recursive nature of writing, not all of them
manifested this understanding in equally effective ways. The more
skilled writers showed much greater variability in their application of
this understanding, sometimes reviewing one sentence or two, some-
times reconsidering an entire idea which usually transcended sentence
boundaries, and frequently rereading whole paragraphs. Like Perl’s
skilled writers, they seemed to have “an easier time with waiting,
looking and discovering” (1980b:368). The least skilled writer, how-
ever, paused so often and between such short chunks of discourse, that
the overall relationship between ideas seemed to suffer. She was
obviously looking at her writing in such a “piecemeal” fashion that she
was not able to develop a substantial thread of discourse very
success fully. She was thus very much like other unskilled writers who
“frequently lose track of what they mean by becoming caught up in
correcting details on grammatical or logical grounds before they have
clearly sensed and expressed in some form what they mean to say”
(Perl and Egendorf 1979:127).

Revising, like pre-writing, occurred throughout the process and
generally meant composing anew. While exploring their ideas and the
form with which to express them, changes were most often global:
sentences were deleted and added to clarify ideas and make them
more concrete; sentences were rewritten until they expressed the writer’s intention more accurately; paragraphs or parts of paragraphs were shifted around when writers realized that they were related to ideas presented elsewhere in their texts; new paragraphs were formed as thoughts were developed and expanded. In the case of one writer, after writing several pages, he discovered that one of the paragraphs on the third page would make a good introduction. In the case of another, entire pages of writing were eliminated once she discovered what she really wanted to say. Revisions of this sort often took place during writing sessions that inevitably began with rereading what had been written during a previous session. It seems that the intervention of time had given students the ability to distance themselves from their ideas and thus re-view their written work as if with the eyes of another reader. As one student remarked as she reread what she had written at another session, “The order is not quite right here. It doesn’t seem to make sense.” Very often these revisions would occur after rereading the text aloud, as if hearing it spoken meant “seeing” it in a new and more removed way. And very striking were the revisions that took place almost simultaneously with the rereading and that were recorded with such a sense of urgency that the first version was not crossed out until a later rereading. While all of the writers also attended to surface-level features and changes, the skilled writers seemed to be much less concerned with these features at the outset and addressed them primarily toward the end of the process. The least skilled writer, on the other hand, was distracted by local problems from the very beginning, changing words or phrases but rarely making changes that affected meaning.

Several drafts were written by each student (the skilled writers taking from fourteen to eighteen hours to do so, the least skilled writer taking approximately four hours), but the time spent on each of these drafts varied, depending upon the way individual students viewed and worked on the writing task. Generally, students devoted the greatest proportion of time to the creation of their first drafts, during which time they dealt with the substantial content changes referred to above. Subsequent drafts reflected a greater number of changes in vocabulary, syntax, and spelling, and therefore required less composing time. However, in the case of one student, the second draft entailed so much rewriting that it barely resembled the original. This was due to the fact that, while the student reconsidered her first draft, the clarifications and additions that were made necessitated further revisions. She clearly understood the delicate relationship that exists among pieces of discourse, that when one change is made, “everything must be read again to see how the change affects the reading” (Murray 1982:141). In the case of another student, substantial changes occurred from draft to
draft, the student writing no fewer than five drafts. The least skilled writer, like the others, spent most of her composing time on the first draft but, unlike them, basically copied this draft twice as she readied it for completion, this even though she admitted that she knew parts of her essay were not clear and, as she put it, “pieces were missing.”

One of the major questions addressed in this study was the extent to which writing in a second language affected the composing processes of advanced-level students. Not surprisingly, given the description of the process thus far, the linguistic problems seemed to concern the students the least. While the least skilled writer, like other non-native speakers of English observed by their teachers (Harris 1982), was determined not to commit errors and therefore attended to them prematurely, the more skilled writers devised strategies that allowed them to pursue the development of their ideas without being sidetracked by lexical and syntactic difficulties. These strategies included writing down the English word in question and circling it, leaving a blank space for a word or phrase, or using their own native language when the word(s) in English failed them. These students were aware that they could return to these matters, that the exploration of their ideas was of primary importance, that being “unduly concerned about exactness in the middle of a thought may cause [them] to lose the thought altogether” (Irmscher 1979:107). Once the ideas were in place, the students began to focus on the grammar, adding missing inflections and correcting erroneous forms, and to locate words in dictionaries, trying to confirm meaning and/or spelling. They generally were proficient at these skills, but this does not mean that their papers were error-free. On the contrary, problems with articles, agreement, and usage, for example, were still in evidence, but having observed the diligence with which these students edited, it became obvious that these errors were more the result of an incomplete control of the language than the result of carelessness. For example, observing one student grapple with alternative forms for words revealed the source of her difficulties, difficulties that were not obvious from the erroneous forms that appeared in her final draft.

While generalizations of this sort could be made about how students dealt with this part of the process, there were particular language and editing skills that some individuals handled better than others. For example, only two students were able to make decisions about the appropriateness of complex words they found in dictionaries, decisions that rested on their ability to understand word connotations. As a result, some of the writing was marked by vocabulary items that were impressive but inappropriate for their contexts. Others who did not realize that locating the correct spelling of a word often requires trial and error and guesswork opted instead to use a word that they could
spell. And yet others repeatedly looked up words in their native language dictionaries to confirm whether they had used the correct English equivalents but, having found these words, did nothing to change the way they had misspelled them. Perhaps too much attention to meaning alone kept these students from carefully examining certain surface features of writing, illustrating what Shaughnessy calls a “lack of visual acuity with words and letters” (1977:173).

This description of the composing process was based on the data collected during the writing/observation sessions. However, additional information about these students’ writing behaviors was obtained at the ends of and even during the sessions when students, without being prompted to do so, informally discussed their writing. The students also offered insightful comments about their writing experiences after the essay had been completed, at which point they were interviewed.

The least skilled writer admitted that she felt troubled by her inability to construct a plan on which to base her paper, for she believed that composing necessitated such a plan. She also seemed to view writing as a straightforward expansion of such a plan. At one point, for example, she asked me, “Can I add something later?” The skilled writers, on the other hand, provided a very different account of the process. They were well aware that they could leave half-finished thoughts and return to them later, that ideas did not always come to them when they sat down to write, that “they may come at the strangest time,” that an introduction was not always written first.

These writers also talked about having some overall general sense of direction, but not knowing in particular what they would say. Some of the students put this in remarkably similar ways:

At the beginning I have some order in mind, but I don’t really know what’s going to happen.
I don’t know how it’s going to come out. I know what I basically want to do but I don’t know exactly what I’m going to say.
I know the general goal of the paper before starting, but I don’t worry about the details.
Writing is difficult and requires a lot of concentration because there’s something you want to say, but you may not know how to reach it.

The students also indicated that the writing itself helped them discover their ideas:

Unless you write about something, you can’t find out exactly what you know about it.
Even though I don’t keep all of this writing, it was necessary until I found out what I wanted to say and how to say it.
I don’t even know what I’m thinking sometimes, but I’m finding out by writing.
One student described her writing experience as one of recording on paper the moving pictures which appeared before her:

I don’t know what the movie will be before I sit down. Certainly I have certain ideas in my mind. I have ideas about the whole paper but not the pictures to describe my ideas. I discover these pictures while I’m writing.

In addition to understanding the heuristic power of writing, these writers were aware of the need to reread and evaluate their writing as they proceeded:

When I write there’s the me that writes the ideas and there’s the other part of me that needs to control the way these ideas are said, and these two parts of me have to cooperate together. When I reread, I find out that I didn’t write what I had in mind. The thing that I wanted to say was not what I wrote.

I reread to see if the words fit the idea. If it does, I go on.

These students also understood that rereading resulted in revisions, and that these revisions were part of the process of approximating one’s meaning in writing. Thus, unlike the least skilled writer who never attempted meaning-level changes, the skilled writers recognized the importance of these changes:

Rereading is for getting rid of too much decoration. The ideas are complex and need to be simplified. My prime motivation by rereading is to make it clear, to make it readable.

I get angry at myself when I cross out an entire paragraph after spending so much time on it, but I know I have to do it if it doesn’t make sense.

I might start writing about the same idea a few times on different pieces of paper but this doesn’t bother me. Every time I start again I feel that I’ve gotten in greater touch with what I wanted to say and this gives me satisfaction.

The real work is taking all the ideas and writing them in a clear way. The real labor is discriminating between the ideas and deciding what to throw out . . . It’s only by writing it all down that I can judge what to eliminate.

One writer created a very apt analogy:

The way I write is like playing chess. I plan for four or five plays in advance so that I know what I will do. But you can never predict what you opponent will do, so you may have to change your plans.

Finally, these writers were able to explain why they scrutinized their writing closely:

Lots of my words don’t seem wrong when I first write them. But when I reread them, the possibility of error appears to me.

When I write a word I write it the way I say it, but when I look at the words, I use my memory of the word and am able to correct the spelling.
I can catch errors when I reread because I see the word out of context. When I reread, I see it for the first time because when I first write I only think about my thoughts.

The way the students characterized the overall process certainly was an accurate verbal representation of what they did when they wrote. Thus, it was not surprising that the least skilled writer talked about being anxious about vocabulary and grammar and “getting it correct because teachers care about that.” The skilled writers, however, discussed the fact that they had a clear sense of priorities with reference to the different aspects of the composing process and that they made deliberate decisions about when it was appropriate to address each of these aspects:

The first draft is for getting the ideas down. The second is for finding the way to say it the way I want . . . I enjoy the first draft because I don’t have to worry about correct grammar and vocabulary.

At the end I’m not concerned so much with my ideas. I’m more concerned with grammar, structure . . . I know what I will anticipate when I write a paper. I know the struggle. I know I may not have the vocabulary but I need to put my thoughts on paper first. I know I’ll have grammar mistakes but I don’t worry about it till later . . . If I worry about grammar, my thoughts will disappear.

I need lots of time to go back because I can’t write and correct at the same time.

Most of the words I underline I know I’ve gotten wrong but I don’t bother with it now. This is the last part and the least enjoyable.

Other comments made by these students pointed to additional factors that determined why they wrote the way they did. For example, some mentioned the difference between speaking and writing:

You can’t write like you speak.

I think talking and writing are two different things. When I talk, I don’t have to be exact. But what I write has to be exactly what I mean.

Some writers understood the importance of taking into account a reader’s expectations:

When you write a paper, you have to block yourself from it so that the reader will understand what you are saying.

By rereading I try to figure out if the reader will understand what I mean here . . . If what I relate doesn’t relate back to the topic, the reader won’t know what this has to do with the rest of the paper.

I need to write down everything in order to understand my ideas, but the reader doesn’t need all those ideas so I need to cross them out . . . It’s so important that you say only what is necessary so that it will be understood.
Others revealed the sense of satisfaction writing provided them:

Writing is like creating. It’s joyful. But the most enjoyable part is at the beginning when you are searching for your ideas.

Writing is like a problem to solve. It’s fun. I enjoy choosing the way to write my ideas and making the connections and putting it into words.

I feel like I’ve accomplished a very complicated task and I’m glad to have the ability to do it.

One of the most interesting findings was the fact that these students did not view composing in a second language in and of itself problematical:

If I have an idea, but I don’t have the words, I write it in Chinese so I don’t lose it. Language is not the big problem. Most of the difficulty is how to put the ideas together.

I may write a word in Portuguese, but I know I’ll find it later. It doesn’t affect my writing in stopping me. Sometimes it helps to have two languages because you can write it down in another language and get on with your ideas without stopping. You have another way to say it.

Language isn’t a real part of the problem. I think it’s just hard to write, to get the ideas down the way I want them.

However, they did refer to the types of individual frustrations and difficulties they experienced as non-native writers of English, most of which had to do with very specific concerns:

My big problem is spelling. I may have no idea how to put it down. I even sometimes can’t reread what I’ve written because the word is spelled so strangely that I don’t know the word I meant.

I don’t like some of my expressions because they’re too weak. I feel angry because when I say something, it’s said a simple way. I don’t have the words that are adequate to explain my ideas.

I sometimes get stuck on one word because the Spanish word I have in my mind is right, but I know the English word is not quite right. My problem is that sometimes I don’t like what I’ve written because it isn’t said exactly the way I would like it to be said, in a sophisticated way.

As is obvious, none of these writers viewed grammar or other mechanical considerations as areas of particular concern. This was probably due to the fact that they demonstrated good syntactic control and because they knew how and during what part of the process to exercise this control. However, their papers, as noted earlier, were not totally devoid of grammatically related errors, and the interviews revealed the sources of some of these errors, indicating the basis upon which some of the grammatical decisions were made. For example, one student explained that the verb to be was left unconjugated when she used it in conjunction with the adverb always because the adverb
itself implied time. Another assumed that under certain circumstances the obligatory third person singular inflection \( s \) was not necessary: “You don’t need to add \( s \) to the second verb after you’ve done so for the first verb.” The interviews thus allowed insight into the language rules that students applied to their writing and demonstrated, as did the observation sessions, that errors were far from random. Rather, errors often represented deliberate choices which were based on reasonable conclusions about the way the language worked.

To sum up these findings, composing, as it has been experienced and described by the skilled ESL writers, seems to be a process of discovering and exploring ideas and constructing a framework with which to best present these ideas. This process is creative and generative and may not always be based on a clear sense of direction or explicit plan, but rather a plan that allows for further discovery and exploration. It involves integrating new ideas, revising those that have already been recorded, and may entail reconstructing one’s framework to accommodate these changes. It requires the ability to assess clarity of thought and logic and to distance oneself from the text, thereby taking into account the reader’s point of view. Finally, while there is some concern with language-related difficulties, these difficulties do not seem to interrupt the ongoing process, but rather are addressed in the context of making and communicating meaning.

These students clearly understand what writing entails. They know what to anticipate, how to pace themselves, and what to focus on as they write and rewrite. While each of these writers may have individual strategies for dealing with different aspects of the composing process, these strategies seem to reflect a shared understanding about the process. They all considered how to make meaning first, then how to order it, and finally how it can best be expressed. It should be kept in mind, however, that these considerations did not necessarily reflect the sequence of writing events, given the constant evaluation and reformulation, but rather the writers’ sense of priorities.

In striking contrast to these writers, the least skilled writer seemed to have a very different understanding of what composing required. She seemed to view writing as a static transcription of “a series of parts—words, sentences, paragraphs,” rather than the creation of a “whole discourse” (Sommers 1982:151). She edited her writing throughout, her changes reflecting a constant concern with usage and expression, as if she assumed that “individual words . . . bear the burden of communication” (Sommers and Schliefer 1980:71). Her second and third drafts, which were basically neater copies of her original, indicated a failure to appreciate the purposes for which we write successive drafts. And even her own admission that she thought her paper needed further work did not result in any major revisions. It is as
if once her essay was “finished,” it could not be broken into or reconstructed anew. Perhaps she was overcome with the kind of anxiety we all feel at “reducing what looks like a finished draft into fragments and chaos” (Sommers 1982:156). Perhaps because her evaluation of her work was premature, she had no sense of the “possibility of revision” which makes “improvement possible” (Miller 1982:181). Or perhaps her previous writing experiences had convinced her that communicating ideas had little to do with what teachers attended to and thus made her unwilling to expend any further effort. This would not be surprising, given the fact that teachers respond to student writing by finding and correcting errors rather than reacting to the ideas expressed by the text (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982, Irmscher 1979, Sommers 1982).

IMPLICATIONS

Given the findings of this study, instructional approaches that view writing as the sequential completion of separate tasks, beginning with a thesis sentence and outlines and requiring topic sentences before one has even begun to explore ideas (see, for example, Reid 1982), may be as inappropriate for ESL students as they are for native speakers of English. ESL students should be allowed the opportunity to explore their ideas with reference to a topic, hopefully a topic that truly engages them, and to make decisions about the most effective way to communicate these ideas. They must be taught to understand that writing is to some extent problem solving, since writers discover solutions as they go along, which thus enables them to modify their discourse as it becomes necessary. Rather than asking them to construct neatly developed outlines, our students should be encouraged to work with preliminary and tentative lists and notes. While good writers, as seemed to be the case for two of the ESL skilled writers, may be able to design a mental blueprint of their composition and retain this plan even as they develop and reconstruct it, unskilled writers may have little insight into the direction of their ideas and may be helped by creating what Shaughnessy (1977) called a “conceptual map.” Rather than assigning essays that are supposed to represent ideal rhetorical models and which are often the imitation of such models, we should be helping students understand that decisions about form and organization only make sense with reference to the particular ideas being expressed. The tendency to do otherwise, to “appropriate” students’ texts by taking “primary control of the choices that writers make,” gives students the impression that what they wanted to say is less relevant than the teacher’s expectations about how they should have said it (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982:158).
Teachers and students should be working on the problems of writing as they arise. When students are incapable of generating lists or notes, which seemed to be the case for the least skilled writer in this study, classroom time needs to be devoted to brainstorming (either oral or written) and the development of pre-writing strategies (for further explanations and applications of invention techniques of this sort, see Irmscher 1979, Larson 1975, Maimon et al. 1981, Young, Becker, and Pike 1970, Winterowd 1981). As students articulate their ideas, their teacher, rather than imposing some predetermined order on these ideas, should be helping them find this order by raising questions about the writer’s intentions and focusing on the discrepancies that exist between what the writer wanted to communicate and what is in fact communicated. As students come to understand the importance of this dialogue, both through one-to-one conferences and through classroom discussions centering on student writing, they can begin to serve as “teachers” for each other, either in pairs or small group collaborations, and can then incorporate this teacher-reader voice into their very own interactions with their texts. It is in this way, and not through the post hoc comments that appear on students’ papers, comments that tend to perpetuate the erroneous notion that writing is a matter of following a set of prescribed rules (Sommers 1982), that they are likely to develop a real sense of reader expectations.

Intervening throughout the process sets up a dynamic relationship which gives writers the opportunity to tell their readers what they mean to say before these writers are told what they ought to have done. It is through such a relationship that readers (teachers) can gain insight into the writers’ (students’) thoughts and discover that, although the text may appear illogical, it was in fact produced quite rationally but “followed misunderstood instruction, inappropriate principles or logical processes that did not work” (Murray 1982:144). The instruction they are then provided is truly effective feedback, based upon their real needs rather than a syllabus, curriculum, or textbook that by its very nature cannot take these individual needs into account. In the case of ESL writing instruction, for example, the outlines that students are asked to formulate or the models that they are asked to imitate in order to inhibit the transfer of certain cultural thought patterns, as is suggested by Kaplan (1967), may have little effect on writing since these approaches are based on predictions about students’ performances, predictions that are hypothetical and consequently not necessarily accurate. It is much more sensible and productive, therefore, to adopt an approach more akin to error analysis and to create syllabi (rather than one single syllabus) which are student-centered; by studying what it is our students do in their writing, we can learn from them what they still need to be taught. All of this, of course, applies no
less to language-related concerns. Through the interaction that is shared by writers and their readers, it is possible to discover the individual problems students have with reference to syntax, vocabulary, and spelling. It is possible to find out which errors are the result of carelessness, and can therefore be dealt with by closer proofreading and editing, and which are the result of incorrectly formed rules about the language (for one account of this type of analysis of writing errors, see Bartholomae 1980). One can even discover that errors may be the result of an ineffective monitor (Krashen 1982). For example, one might be able to determine, as I did with reference to several students, that spelling errors may be the result of not “seeing” the words in the dictionary rather than a failure to have looked them up. This of course makes the typical exhortation to our students to use the dictionary totally irrelevant and also makes us aware of the need to teach specific strategies for dictionary use (Schofield 1982).

Responding to writing in this way is based on the assumptions that establishing the cause for error is necessary before prescribing corrective measures and that addressing individual needs, letting our students teach us what they need to know, should form the basis of further instruction. Corder made this same point about language learning and teaching:

By examining the learner’s own “built-in” syllabus, we may be able to allow the learner’s innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to his needs rather than impose upon him our preconceptions of how he ought to learn, what he ought to learn and when he ought to learn it (1967:170).

Brumfit, too, critical of an “accuracy-based curriculum [which] is by definition a deficit curriculum for students, because it does not start from what the student does,” has explained the importance of a “student-centered curriculum”:

A course which was based on what the student could do himself most naturally would simultaneously indicate to the teacher what his next moves should be, and to the student where he needed to adjust his intuitions and where, therefore, he required help most (1979:188).

Such an approach is especially warranted when we are dealing with ESL students who are seemingly quite advanced by virtue of their class placement and their oral language skills, but whose writing may reflect a different situation entirely.

As students work through a set of successive drafts, coming to appreciate the purposefulness of revision, they should learn from their teachers and fellow students that issues of content and meaning must be addressed first and that language is of concern only when the ideas to be communicated have been delineated. This is no easy matter for
either ESL teachers or students to accept, given the fact that these students are still developing linguistic competencies and that their teachers feel responsible for advancing this development. However, it makes little sense to pinpoint errors in first drafts, since these first papers may undergo substantial changes once they have been read and responded to (Sommers 1982). Furthermore, a premature focus on correctness and usage gives students the impression that language form, rather than how language functions, is what is important and may discourage them from making further serious attempts to communicate:

If we preempt the writer's control by ignoring intended meanings in favor of formal and technical flaws, we also remove the incentive to write and the motivation to improve skills (Brannon and Knoblauch 1982:165).

The most recent approaches to language instruction have underlined the fact that language learning can best be promoted when language is used purposefully and communicatively, when language is viewed as the means for true expression, when language accuracy serves linguistic fluency and is subordinate to it. As one proponent of such approaches, Widdowson insists that language teaching allow for the “capacity for making sense, for negotiating meaning, for finding expression for new experience,” that the creative use of language is not “the sole prerogative of the native speaker” (1981:212). The language learning process characterized in this way, as a process of making meaning, parallels exactly the process of composing. It is time for ESL teachers of composition to begin to see the relationship between these two processes and to recognize that meaning is created through language, even when the language is written down.

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Classroom-Centered Research in Language Teaching: Two Articles on the State of the Art

Introduction

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The following two articles were originally presented at the TESOL Research Committee’s yearly session on the state of the art at the 16th Annual TESOL Convention in Honolulu in May, 1982. A third presentation at this session, on the role of instruction in second language learning, was given by Michael Long. Due to constraints on time, that article is not presented here and will appear in a future issue of the TESOL Quarterly.

For the past four years, the Research Committee of TESOL has convened a session on the state of the art at the Annual TESOL Convention. The purpose of these sessions has been to discuss an area of research in second language acquisition or use in terms of its relevance to the teacher of English as a second language. In general, these sessions have provided an overview of a particular research area for those not involved in such research and have explored implications of this research for the ESL classroom.

The topic of the 1982 session was classroom research in second language teaching. Those of us who are ESL teachers, teacher trainers, and researchers realize that the mixing of research findings and classroom practice is sometimes akin to mixing oil and water. The practical implications or applications of research are not always clear and, from time to time, research findings are applied to practice prematurely, before the researchers themselves know the full value of their work.

However, we all recognize that good teaching involves a constant re-evaluation of how we perceive the role of the classroom, the learner,
and the process of language acquisition within the classroom, as opposed to within naturalistic contexts. For these reasons, we feel that the two articles presented here have very direct relevance to the classroom and the ESL practitioner. Richard Allwright’s article reviews the history of the past twenty years in language teaching research. He demonstrates how the goals and expectations for such research have varied with our own perceptions of the roles of the classroom, method, and teacher. He examines various paradigms of classroom research and questions whether such research can decide which methods or approaches are superior, and which are not. If the role of classroom research is not to prescribe, as once believed, but to describe, what in the myriad phenomena of the language class should research focus on?

Where Allwright’s overview may be defined as diachronic, Stephen J. Gaies presents a synchronic review of current trends in classroom research. He divides current classroom research in language teaching and learning into three general areas: studies concerned with classroom language input, that is, the kind of linguistic environment from which learners develop their grammar of English; studies of patterns of classroom participation, which are concerned with the more sociolinguistic and ethnographic aspects of second language learning and teaching; and finally, studies dealing with the treatment of learner errors.

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This overview of classroom-centered research on language teaching and learning is a survey of themes, not of research findings. Beginning with the problems of definition and of research method, it then looks at the origins of such research in general educational and teacher-training studies and in the failure of method research in the sixties. It then traces the development both of the concerns and of the research tools of classroom-centered research on language teaching and learning. Finally, the development of a productive controversy over research methods is briefly described. Fundamental to the survey is the conception of classroom-centered research as an approach to the study of language pedagogy that draws its unity from the belief that the classroom is the proper place to look first for insights and understanding.

WHAT IS CLASSROOM-CENTERED RESEARCH?

Classroom-centered research is just that—research centered on the classroom, as distinct from, for example, research that concentrates on the inputs to the classroom (the syllabus, the teaching materials) or on the outputs from the classroom (learner achievement scores). It does not ignore in any way or try to devalue the importance of such inputs and outputs. It simply tries to investigate what happens inside the classroom when learners and teachers come together. At its most narrow, classroom-centered research is in fact research that treats the language classroom not just as the setting for investigation but, more importantly, as the object of investigation. Classroom processes become the central focus. We want to understand why it is that things happen as they do in the classroom—how it is, for example, that some learners participate more and others less than planned by the teacher.
and how we might expect such factors to affect language learning itself.

As this and the article by Gaies (which follows) will demonstrate, however, this very narrow conception of classroom-centered research is far too narrow to characterize much of the research we shall want to refer to in depicting the "state of the art." Here we shall adopt a more general and generous viewpoint and deal with a wide variety of studies that focus on classroom language learning, including a good many that do not specifically investigate teacher-learner interaction.

We take classroom-centered research as a cover-term, then, for a whole range of research studies on classroom language learning. The obvious unifying factors are that the emphasis is solidly on research, and on research in the classroom setting.

**HOW IS IT DONE?**

Basically, research on classroom language learning can be done either by observation, or by some form of introspection, or (and probably most often, in fact) by some combination of these two. (Please note that these brief methodological remarks are intended to serve as scene-setting for any readers who are generally unfamiliar with this research field. They therefore make no pretense to comprehensiveness, but we will return to methodological issues later. For methodological surveys, see Ochsner 1979, Long 1980, and Bailey, forthcoming.)

**Observation**

Observation necessarily involves keeping a record of what goes on in the classrooms observed. At its simplest, an audio-cassette recorder may suffice. A trained observer, however, will also be able to take useful field notes or use a set of predetermined categories to classify events as they occur and thus keep a written record of a lesson. An audio (or video) recording is probably not of very much use for research purposes until it has been transcribed. Although a full transcription is a more complete record than a set of field notes or a page of categorizations, it will still need to be analyzed, somehow, to see what light, if any, it sheds on the topic being investigated.

Some researchers will want to quantify their data analysis by reducing it to numbers that can be subjected to statistical treatment. In this way they will be able to report their findings in terms of, for example, positive or negative associations between different types of classroom behavior. Others will prefer a more qualitative approach and will interpret their data in a way that does not rely on statistics (for
example, see Mehan 1979). Still others (probably most) will combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to their data.

Most researchers study whole classes of learners, but others prefer to do case studies of one or two learners at a time. As before, a combination of approaches is also possible.

**Introspection**

I am using this term (somewhat broadly) to refer to research techniques that involve, for example, asking people to answer questions rather than asking them to allow themselves to be observed in action. We ask them to introspect, to reflect on their experience, and we do so by interviewing them or by giving them questionnaires to respond to; or, we combine the two and use a *structured interview* technique, in which the interviewer works through a set of questions equivalent to a questionnaire and records (on paper and/or on tape) the interviewees’ responses.

A fairly recent development (since 1976, approximately) has been the use of diary-keeping as an introspective technique. In a diary study the diarist (whether learner or teacher) keeps a personal record of classroom events and uses these as the research data for investigating classroom language learning. Diary-keeping is, in effect, the participants’ equivalent of field notes. We cannot expect learners, let alone teachers, to make notes during the lesson, but we may be able to learn something from the notes they make in their personal diaries after each lesson.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation refers to the important point that multiple viewpoints (at least three, as suggested by the term itself) may be necessary if we are to understand what goes on in classrooms, rather than merely record it in a way that confirms our personal prejudices. In practice, the principle of triangulation can simply mean that it is wisest to opt for a combination of observation and introspection and, within each, for a variety of observers and “introspectors.” We might well, for example, ask learners, and not just teachers, for their recollections and interpretations of classroom events. Together with our own, the researcher’s, that will make three points of view, none of which can claim to have the “truth,” but all of which need to be taken into account in our attempt to understand classroom language learning.
WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

Classroom-centered research is certainly not unique to language teaching and did not even originate among language teaching researchers. In fact, it took language teaching some time to begin to catch up with the rest of the educational research world. Modern classroom-centered research began in the fifties among teacher trainers and arose in response to the need to provide student teachers with adequate feedback on their teaching. The trainers realized that they needed to investigate what constituted effective teaching and then find a way of incorporating their findings into effective teacher training. As we shall see, the first of these issues (what constitutes effective teaching) has proved so complex in itself, and so fascinating a research problem, that teacher training has slipped progressively into the background as an immediate concern.

HOW HAS IT DEVELOPED?

Just as teacher training provided the earliest concerns, which centered on the attempt to determine what constitutes “good” teaching, so teacher training also provided the basic tools of classroom observation, the observation instruments themselves. Researchers such as Flanders (1960) had used direct observation to study teaching and had developed observation schedules that could be used to help teachers in training to see just how well their teaching behavior matched the patterns that research had suggested would be effective. But the early, almost euphoric, confidence in the findings of such research did not survive many years of scrutiny by an increasing number of researchers who found classroom behavior altogether too complex to be reduced to a few categories (for a full review up to 1974, see Dunkin and Biddle’s [1974] classic survey of research on teaching). It seemed that applications to teacher training were therefore premature, and that a major effort should first be put into trying to unravel the enormous complexities of classroom behavior.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE EARLIEST CONCERNS IN THE FIELD OF LANGUAGE TEACHING?

One probable reason why the language teaching profession came late to classroom-centered research was that, just when teachers of other subjects were losing confidence in their methods, language teachers were enjoying a period of unprecedented confidence in theirs; audiolingualism was being used widely as a method that had
been proven, in practice, by its success in military language-training programs during World War II and, in theory, by its highly developed origins in linguistics and psychology. This confidence in method, per se, was hardly disturbed by Chomsky’s challenge to behaviorism (Chomsky 1959), since that challenge quickly found expression in the form of an alternative method (dubbed “cognitive code” by Carroll [1966]) in which, despite Carroll’s careful warnings, it seemed right to many to place just as much confidence.

At that time, the training of language teachers could be seen as revolving around the issue of which of the major methods to prescribe (that is, the issue of global methodological prescriptions), leaving what actually happened in the classroom to be fully determined by the choice of method. Unfortunately for the methodologists, however, the major experiments conducted in the sixties to decide which method was to be advocated (see especially Scherer and Wertheimer 1964, Smith 1970, and Otto 1969) proved inconclusive at best, if not simply invalid. The ultimate loser, however, was of course neither the audiolingual method nor its cognitive code rival, but the very notion of global methodological prescriptions. It no longer made sense to imagine that any one method would prove in some absolute way superior to its competitors and could therefore be prescribed, like a patent medicine, with complete confidence in its overall effectiveness.

Grittner summed up the situation by suggesting that “. . . perhaps we should ask for a cease fire while we search for a more productive means of investigation” (Grittner 1968:7). Some researchers decided to move a step down in the approach, method, technique hierarchy (Anthony 1963) and do small-scale research at the level of technique instead of large-scale research at the level of method. In Sweden the GUME (Gothenburg English Teaching Method) Project compromised by working at the level of technique but still in the hope of establishing the relative validity of large-scale ideas (see Carlsson 1969). They were, in fact, hoping to test the usefulness of grammatical explanations framed according to Chomsky’s (1957) version of transformational-generative grammar. In essence, this meant trying to test an approach (Chomsky’s theory) by experimentation with techniques (in this case, the provision of certain types of grammatical explanation as against no explanation at all). The results were again inconclusive, at least until they switched from children to adults (see Oskarsson 1973), who did seem to learn better from explanations and practice than from practice alone. Even these positive findings, however, were far from an ultimate verification of the absolute validity of any broad-based methodological (or technical) prescription. The mere fact that they had obtained different results with adults as compared with children destroyed any truly far-reaching claims, of course, and the relatively
small-scale nature of the project (in terms of number of lessons, number of learners, number of teaching points covered, the fact that the teaching was not live but on audiotape) would prompt great caution in drawing global conclusions.

Meanwhile, in the United States, Politzer (1970) had already conducted and reported upon a seminal study in which he videotaped a number of language classes, recorded the frequency with which certain techniques (mostly different types of structural pattern practice) were used, and correlated the frequencies with learner achievement in the different classes. His results were complex and make very interesting reading. However, they add up to strong evidence that small-scale research at the level of technique is by no means ready to support a prescriptive approach to teacher training. We do not yet have, and cannot expect to have in the foreseeable future, a situation where teacher trainers can, with the confidence born of a background of solid experimental results, tell their trainees what techniques to use and what not to use. As Politzer wrote, “the very high complexity of the teaching process makes it very difficult to talk in absolute terms about ‘bad’ and ‘good’ teaching devices” (1970:42). Language teaching, it was becoming increasingly clear, is much more complicated than that.

Having already retreated from method to technique, it therefore seemed necessary to retreat at least one step further back into the unknown. In fact, two moves were involved. First, it meant retreating from prescription altogether in favor of adopting a descriptive approach (see Allwright 1972 for an early call for this particular move). Second, it meant retreating from techniques to classroom processes. These two moves, taken together, meant trying to find ways of describing classroom processes to find out what actually happens in language classes, not assuming that all that happens is that a particular method or a particular set of techniques is simply implemented, but assuming that something below the level of technique, something less obviously pedagogic, takes place, something that is more likely to provide a fruitful subject for investigation.

In the pursuit of these two retreats, to the description of classroom processes, two somewhat different viewpoints have emerged in the last decade. Researchers with more of a sociological outlook on education have tended to look at the language lesson as a socially constructed event, as something that is the product of the interactive work of all the people present. Put more simply, such researchers have stopped looking at teaching as if everything of importance came from the teacher and have instead started looking at the way in which people interact in the classroom to collectively produce the learning opportunities that arise there. In my own work, for example, I have
gone from looking at how teachers correct errors, to how learners and
teachers together determine each learner’s level of participation in
classroom activities, and have now moved on to looking at how
learners’ contributions to classroom interaction affect the syllabus the
teacher is trying to implement.

More directly, language-oriented researchers have chosen to look at
the classroom as a setting for classroom language acquisition and
learning in terms of the language input provided by the teacher’s talk.
Gaies’ (1977) work is important in this connection by demonstrating,
for example, the way teachers may be able to adjust their classroom
language to the level of their students.

These two viewpoints, however, are complementary rather than
mutually exclusive, and it is probably already clear that the sociological
interest in the way learner behavior affects the syllabus can easily be
related to the linguistic interest in the nature of the language the
learners are exposed to in the classroom. In fact, the two viewpoints
must come together, I would suggest, if we are not to miss potentially
valuable insights.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE BASIC TOOLS?

In the move from teacher training to something more like fundamen-
tal research, typified in the twin moves from prescription to descrip-
tion and from technique to process, what has happened to the basic
tools of classroom-centered research? It should be remembered that
they were originally borrowed from general educational research and
consisted of techniques that used observational schedules for the in-
class categorization of teacher behavior (relatively little attention
being paid to learner behavior at that time, given the focus on teacher
training). Observation schedules (essentially lists of categories) had to
be modified to be appropriate to the obvious complexities of language
teaching, where language is medium as well as content, where more
than one language may be used, and where, as in pronunciation
practice, all the learners may need to have a chance to try to produce
the same answer to exactly the same question. Moskowitz (1971)
produced the most widely known and used modification of a general
educational schedule (Flanders’ [1960] FIAC) and called it FLint
(Foreign Language interaction system). She expanded and refined
Flanders’ categories and then used FLint both as a research tool, to
pursue the issue of “what constitutes ‘good’ language teaching,” and as
a feedback tool for her important work in teacher training, where she
trained her student teachers to analyze their own teaching using the
FLint categories so that they could have objective feedback about
their teaching behavior and a firm basis for comparison in their later
attempts to behave differently in class. In another important contribu-
tion in this area, Fanselow made major modifications and elaborations
of Bellack’s pioneering analytical system (Bellack et al. 1966) to
produce FOCUS (Fanselow 1977), an observation schedule developed
with language teacher training in mind, but a descriptive system
applicable to any human interaction.

These refinements of the basic tools, however, seem not to have
been quite as generally productive as one might have expected. One
possible explanation, embarrassing but difficult to ignore, is that
researchers may be such “prima donnas” that they cannot bear to use
anyone else’s observational instruments. There does seem to be some
truth in this suggestion, and, for general educational research, it was
made a long time ago. In 1968 Komisar wrote: “We are rapidly
approaching chaos in the production, by researchers, of ‘new’ category
systems” (quoted in Nuthall 1968). I am reluctant to believe this is the
whole story, however, and certainly there is another, more intellectu-
ally respectable possibility: that there is something inherently proble-
matic about trying to keep the close link between fundamental
research, with its need for properly validated observational techniques,
and teacher training, with its need for relatively crude instruments that
can be very quickly taught to novice teachers and reliably used by
them on recordings of their own teaching without their having to
spend inordinate amounts of time transcribing and analyzing their
data. When we consider that, for research purposes, we can expect to
take twenty hours to produce a good, working transcription of a one-
hour language lesson (and that is before we start to analyze it), and
then consider how we would justify that use of time in a teacher
training course, we can see that the two enterprises, fundamental
research and teacher training, make very different demands on these
observational tools and can therefore be expected to diverge. Of
course, this implies that teacher training cannot afford the time to use
the more sophisticated tools that might come somewhere near reflect-
ing all of the complexities of the language classroom, and that, in
essence, a somewhat “rough and ready” approach to teacher training is
the best we can do, for purely practical, logistical reasons. This sounds,
perhaps, like a wholesale condemnation of teacher training as being
necessarily simple-minded and crude. Perhaps teacher training, like
any applied activity, has to be simple-minded and crude relative to
fundamental research, but that should in no way be taken as a criticism
of it. And in language teacher training (perhaps in all subject areas) we
should remember that what may matter most to the trainee is not that
the particular categories used for the analysis of teaching should be
highly refined and fully validated by research, but that the process of
obtaining feedback by self-analysis should act to stimulate productive

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thinking about classroom processes. Productive thought, experience suggests, does not depend on the ultimate and proven validity of the categories used as a starting point. As a starting point, categories devised by the trainee teachers themselves may suffice to provide fruitful thought and useful behavioral change (for some research evidence, see Bailey 1976).

Fundamental research on classroom language learning, then, has moved away from teacher training not only in its moves from prescription to description, and from technique to process, but also in the search for appropriate research tools. The ultimate aim is still to end up with something helpful to say to teachers and their trainers, but we have been retreating on all such fronts in the hope of being able to return someday with properly justified confidence. Meanwhile we, as researchers, have retained the basic idea of classroom observation as central to our data collection procedures and have concentrated on developing our own analytical tools for our own particular purposes.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In this section I will not try to outline further developments in terms of research findings, since that is the job of the article which follows. Instead, I will draw attention to current issues in the field, issues that lie behind the topics being investigated.

The first issue was introduced earlier when I suggested that the retreat from prescription to description and from technique to process had resulted in the emergence of two viewpoints on classroom-centered research: one focusing on the interactive aspect of classroom behavior, and the other focusing more on the teacher's talk as input. The first of these, based as it is on a sociological view of education, has brought classroom research on language teaching and learning nearer the sociological tradition of such educational researchers as Hymes (see Cazden, John, and Hymes 1972) and the particular ethnomethodological work of such researchers as Mehan (1979). The second viewpoint, focusing on teacher talk, has brought us much closer to what is now the mainstream of second language acquisition research, where the hunt is on for the crucial variables and where one of the prime candidates is input (see Krashen 1981).

The issue concerning these two viewpoints is simply that they should be seen as complementary, not in any way as in conflict with each other. Second language acquisition studies can benefit from trying to take the interactive nature of talk into account, and interaction studies can certainly benefit from all the work that has been and is being done to investigate the natural process of language acquisition itself.

Our second issue is closely related to this last point. Second language
acquisition studies have generally become more concerned with the elaboration of an overall conceptual framework, a theory of second language acquisition in the natural setting. Krashen’s work in particular has been stimulating in this respect since he has dared to speculate boldly about the implications of acquisition studies for classroom language work. By contrast, classroom-centered research typically lacks such an overall framework, and perhaps rightly so. In a way, classroom-centered research, as mentioned in my introductory remarks, is simply research centered on the classroom. The field is defined by its choice of where to look for its data, rather than by any consensus about what to look for in its data. For that, perhaps, we need to go outside and get the real motivation for our classroom studies from hypotheses being developed in the most closely related field, second language acquisition research. Even this is premature, because we cannot yet expect a second language acquisition theory to be so well developed that it provides us with precise hypotheses to test in the classroom, but at least it gives us a body of research and a set of general hypotheses to relate to.

The third issue within classroom-centered research is something of a controversy, a controversy over research methods. Put crudely, there are objectivists and there are subjectivists. The objectivists are perhaps closer to the practical origins of classroom observation work, where for teacher-training purposes it was seen as crucial to attempt to eliminate the unreliability inherent in supervisors’ impressionistic reports of classroom visits. Classroom observation schedules, using agreed-upon categories, could attempt to objectify observers’ reports and therefore make teacher evaluation much less subjective. This objective approach fits well with the desire to quantify data in research studies, where one is looking for generalizable findings that will defy the cynics and the skeptics who always want to say, “So what?” The objectivists see progress in terms of hard, unassailable findings that will accumulate to strengthen or weaken our confidence in particular hypotheses that are properly derived from a coherent theoretical framework.

The subjectivists might not wish to quarrel with this goal, but they would probably argue, at least, that it cannot be attained by way of the objectivist route since objectivity itself is ultimately illusory. They claim that it is, first of all, quite impossible to fully eliminate the subjective element. They go further, however, and argue that it is precisely the subjective element that is most worthy of investigation. From this point of view we should not even be looking for ways of eliminating the subjective, therefore, but for ways of studying it rigorously. Diary studies represent this point of view most clearly, where diarists must not “wallow” in their subjective record of classroom
events, but somehow study it rigorously for whatever insights it may offer (see Bailey and Ochsner, in press).

The fundamental issue at stake is the status of the findings of classroom-centered research studies. The objectivists want hard findings and can easily point to the difficulties the subjectivists face in their attempts to be rigorously subjective; the subjectivists can easily point to the difficulties objectivists face in their attempts to be rigorously objective in such a human, and therefore infinitely complex, endeavor as language learning in the classroom (for overviews, see again Ochsner 1979; Long 1980; Bailey, forthcoming, in press; Bailey and Ochsner, in press). Perhaps the basic question is, can we test hypotheses in some way that meets any generally accepted criteria for any serious research enterprise, or can we only illuminate issues? Some have suggested a sort of compromise, whereby the “illuminators” would feed their insights to the “hypothesis testers,” thus putting the “issue illuminators” (the subjectivists) in a sort of service capacity. However, the hard-line subjectivists maintain strongly that the illumination of issues by insightfully rigorous subjective research is just the best that we can do and that we should not persist in the illusion that classroom language learning research could ever be usefully objective.

The controversy continues, rather than rages, and performs the useful service of helping keep all of us a little more on our toes about what we are doing and what we can sensibly claim about our results.

SUMMARY

In this article I have deliberately presented an overview of themes, rather than of findings, in order to trace the origins of classroom-centered research on language teaching and learning and to trace the various changes it has gone through in terms of the development of its central concerns and of its research methods.

It has been a history of retreat from the simplistic optimism that we now see in the earliest attempts to determine what constitutes “good” language teaching and to train language teachers accordingly. It has been a history of movement in general away from traditional pedagogic concerns (the best method to adopt, the best techniques to use) toward other areas (the classroom interaction process) that promise insights of eventual value to language pedagogy—a retreat to what may reasonably be called fundamental research, and a retreat that has brought us much closer to other educational researchers and to second language acquisition specialists.

It has brought us to a state of considerable diversity and healthy controversy, where unresolved (and perhaps unresolvable) methodological issues are a key concern but hardly a major worry, except for
those with a very low tolerance of ambiguity, those who still expect quick and easy answers to simple questions. Perhaps the most important point to end with is that what unites classroom-centered researchers is precisely their concern for what happens in classrooms, their conviction that (to borrow a phrase from Stephen Gaies, personal communication) “the classroom is the crucible,” and thus the first place to look if we really want to understand how to help our learners learn more effectively.

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REFERENCES


CLASSROOM-CENTERED RESEARCH: BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW


The second language classroom has long been a center of research interest. In the last several years, attempts to examine the second language classroom—to clarify how the language classroom experience differs from what is available outside the classroom and how language classrooms differ among themselves—have been increasingly guided by a shared set of goals and premises. Classroom process research is based on the priority of direct observation of second language classroom activity and is directed primarily at identifying the numerous factors which shape the second language instructional experience. The result has been a marked departure from earlier research on the nature and effects of classroom instruction in a second language.

Selected studies in three areas are reviewed: the linguistic environment of second language instruction, patterns of participation in the language classroom, and error treatment. Also reviewed are recent applications of introspective (mentalistic) research to the problem of describing the second language classroom experience.

The purpose of this article is to examine recent attempts to characterize the second language instructional experience. The research to be summarized all too briefly and selectively here has aimed at describing the linguistic and instructional environment which second language learners encounter in the classroom and how that environment might differ from what is available outside the classroom. The goals of such research have been both to specify what, if anything, is common to second language instruction and to identify the factors which cause classroom activities to vary from one setting to another.

The research in question, which will be referred to collectively as classroom process research, is at first glance highly diverse. One is struck by the enormous differences among settings investigated—foreign language classrooms, ESL programs, immersion programs, bilingual classrooms in a variety of cultural contexts, involving learners of all ages representing a variety of ethnic and educational backgrounds—and by the diversity of the investigative approaches employed. Indeed,
it might sometimes appear that the only common feature of such research is that data are collected in language classrooms. In fact, however, classroom process research is based on several shared premises, which it might be well to summarize at the outset:

1. As Allwright (in the previous article) has already discussed, there has been a perceptible trend away from global categorizations of second language classroom instruction. We have largely rejected the notion that classrooms differ simply along a single variable such as method. The failure of experimental research to demonstrate the clear-cut superiority of any one method has undoubtedly been a factor in this, as has been the sheer difficulty of conducting such research. Classroom process research rejects as simplistic any univariate classification of the second language instructional experience.

2. The second premise underlying classroom process research is to some degree a corollary of the first one. The emphasis is on describing as fully as possible the complexity of the second language instructional environment. The key term here is description. The immediate goal of classroom process research is, as has often been stated (Long 1980a, Gaies 1981, Bailey, forthcoming), to identify variables of second language instruction and in so doing to generate hypotheses rather than to test hypotheses. This premise explains in large part the avowedly non-prescriptive nature of classroom process research. Classroom process research does not lead directly to empirically validated applications; rather, it is directed more at clarifying those factors which must ultimately be taken into account in any attempt to examine the effects of particular classroom treatments.

3. Another premise which unifies classroom process research is the priority of direct observation of classroom activity. All of the research summarized in this article is based on data collected wholly or substantially through the observation and measurement of second language classroom activity. Classroom process research seeks to inform our understanding of how teachers and learners “accomplish classroom lessons,” to borrow a phrase from Mehan (1974); this can be done, it is argued, only through direct examination of the process.

To provide an overview of classroom process research, selected studies in three areas will be summarized. These areas are second language classroom language (classroom input), patterns of classroom participation, and error treatment. Toward the end of this article, recent attempts to investigate individual or psychological process variables will be briefly discussed.
THE LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT

The first area of language classroom research to be reviewed here is the nature of the linguistic input available to learners in the classroom setting. One of the obvious differences between instructional and non-instructional settings, at least as far as language acquisition is concerned, is that while outside the classroom access to and opportunities for interaction with native speakers may be limited by a number of factors, the language classroom has, as a primary feature, a native (or at least a relatively proficient) speaker delegated to interact with learners. This delegated speaker—the teacher—thus provides, in many cases, an important source of linguistic input. Early studies of teachers’ classroom language focused on the linguistic characteristics of teacher input. Many of these studies were intended to determine how teachers’ classroom language differs from normal speech—that is, speech between native speakers. Specifically, researchers sought to determine whether second language teachers make linguistic accommodations on behalf of learners similar to the modifications present in caretaker speech to children acquiring their first language. Indeed, it was hypothesized that teachers’ classroom language constituted a simple code which would facilitate the second language acquisition process.

An investigation by Gaies (1977) of the syntactic features of ESL teachers’ classroom speech reflects the assumptions and goals of this line of research. A comparison of the language used by eight ESL teachers in the classroom and out of the classroom revealed that the subjects’ classroom speech was syntactically less complex on a number of variables. Of considerable importance was the finding that the complexity of the subjects’ classroom language was remarkably fine-tuned to their learners’ level of proficiency. Along with similar data from a study (Chaudron 1979) of teachers’ speech in French immersion classes, the Gaies study lends empirical support to the notion that classroom input, like caretaker speech, may facilitate acquisition.

A more recent study by Hamayan and Tucker (1980) extends research in language classroom input considerably by examining the effect of classroom input on learners’ production. Hamayan and Tucker examined the speech and teaching behaviors at the third and fifth grade levels of three teachers in two French immersion schools and three teachers from regular French schools in Montreal. One aspect of the study was the tabulation of the frequency of occurrence in the teachers’ classroom speech of nine structures in French, among which were indirect questions, contractions, reflexives, and subjunctives. The investigators found a strong correlation in the frequency with which these structures occurred at the two grade levels and in the two school systems. Furthermore, they found that the frequency of occurrence of these nine structures in teachers’ speech correlated significantly with...
the frequency with which these structures were produced by the learners in a story-retelling task. Thus, the researchers found evidence to support an earlier claim by Larsen-Freeman (1976) that production of particular features by second language learners is related to the frequency with which those features occur in linguistic input.

The Hamayan and Tucker study is a logical extension of earlier work to describe the linguistic environment of the second language classroom. As is the case for all correlational studies, however, the results do not automatically indicate a cause-and-effect relationship. Indeed, for the present, our ability to test for such a relationship under adequately controlled conditions is highly doubtful.

PATTERNS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION

More recently, attention has shifted from the nature of input to the nature of interaction between native speakers and second language acquirers. While modified input, such as can be observed both in and outside the classroom, is frequently available to second language acquirers, it is the interfactional adjustments which native speakers make consistently in speech with non-native speakers that is now considered to be most crucial to second language attainment. Most notably, Krashen (1978, 1980) has argued that, through interaction, second language acquirers obtain “optimal input”—that is, input which is likely to lead to further acquisition. Long (1980b) has claimed that the modified interaction available through speech between native speakers and second language acquirers is the necessary and sufficient condition for second language acquisition to take place. This theoretical reorientation has caused the focus of research in teachers’ classroom language to shift from the examination of the linguistic features of teachers’ speech to the study of interfactional patterns in the second language classroom, patterns which may indicate how learners internalize in- and out-of-classroom input.

A research study which reflects this change in focus is Long and Sato’s (in press) examination of the forms and functions of ESL teachers’ classroom questions. These were compared with previously established patterns of native speaker questioning behavior in native speaker/non-native speaker conversations outside classrooms. Long and Sato hypothesized that questions in and outside the classroom tend to serve different interfactional functions; specifically, ESL teachers’ classroom questions typically aim at having learners display knowledge of material covered in class rather than at eliciting referential or expressive information unknown to the teacher. The findings of Long and Sato confirmed this prediction. In the six ESL, classrooms investigated, display questions (for example, “What’s the opposite of up in English?”), which are intended to elicit information already known to
the questioner, constituted more than half of all questions; furthermore, they outnumbered referential questions by almost four-to-one. In contrast, referential questions were the predominant question type in native/non-native speaker interaction outside the classroom; even more striking was the almost total absence of display questions. The fundamental feature of display questions is that they do not generally invite learners to respond at length and, even less, to initiate new topics and thus sustain interaction. Therefore, the predominance of display questions is seen by Long and Sato to diminish the value of second language classroom interaction as a source for learners to obtain optimal input.

Long and Sato’s study does not concern itself with the actual patterns of verbal participation that took place in the classrooms they observed. This, however, has been a central focus of classroom process research; furthermore, it reflects, even more than other areas, the influence of general educational research on the study of language classroom phenomena. Roughly at the time when language classroom process research began on a large scale, interaction analysis (e.g., Flanders 1970) predominated in educational research. The large issues addressed were: who talked in classrooms? how much? and with what effect on the classroom verbal performance of others? Seliger’s (1977) study of ESL classes lent empirical support to the notion that learners’ participation in classroom activity is highly variable. Seliger identified, on the basis of a numerical count of classroom participations, two broad categories of learners: high input generators and low input generators. He found a correlation between membership in either of these groups and performance on a measure of field dependence; high input generators, who were more active in classroom interaction, tended to be more field independent. There was also evidence that they generated more input, or at least were likely to do so, in out-of-class contact with native speakers than did the low input generators. For Seliger, the distinction between high and low input generators is an important one, since it suggests that the experience of second language instruction is far from uniform; while some may exploit the classroom for extensive practice opportunities, others may be far more passive in this respect and may in fact require a different instructional experience altogether.

Sato’s (1981) study of turn-taking in university-level ESL classes is an excellent illustration of how classroom process research may serve to refine our understanding of patterns of participation. Sato explored the relationship between ethnicity and the distribution of interfactional turns in two intermediate ESL classrooms. Her comparison of nineteen Asian and twelve non-Asian learners showed that the Asian students initiated significantly fewer turns than did the non-Asians; furthermore, the Asian learners were called upon by their teachers significantly less
often. Sato has thus added important evidence for ethnicity as a variable in the second language instructional process. She suggests that the relatively greater reticence of Asian students to participate may have caused their teachers to perceive them as “unwilling” to participate; thus, the teachers were led to call upon them less often. Learners, then, who do not avail themselves of the opportunity for taking turns in class and who rely on teacher-allocated turns may end up losing even this opportunity for classroom participation.

Schinke (1981) has examined patterns of participation in all-English content classes. Whereas Seliger’s and Sato’s studies were concerned with ESL classes, Schinke investigated the experience of limited English proficiency (LEP) students who had been mainstreamed and examined the linguistic and interactional environment available to learners in non-ESL classrooms. Schinke’s study revealed findings about that environment that may, if confirmed by subsequent research, significantly alter the argument made on behalf of mainstreaming. She found that LEP learners have significantly fewer interactions with their teachers than do their native speaker counterparts—91% of the LEP students received six or fewer turns per hour. In addition, when interactions between teachers and LEP students do occur, they are functionally quite different from those between teachers and native speaker students; teacher-LEP student interactions tend to involve classroom and lesson management much more than genuinely instructional goals. Schinke argued that her findings have implications for the LEP students’ acquisition, development of content skills, and self-esteem. These findings, of course, do not in themselves lead to suggestions for pedagogical reform; as has already been mentioned, classroom process research has been, and must be, at least for the present, decidedly non-prescriptive. These studies of patterns of participation by Seliger, Sato, and Schinke nonetheless point out how the direct examination of classroom processes may prevent the spread of misconceptions about the actual nature of the second language experience for groups of learners and for individual learners.

ERROR TREATMENT

One aspect of second language classroom patterns of participation which has received special attention for several years is the way in

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1 The Schinke study is also important in suggesting that native speakers (in this case, the teachers in her study) may choose avoidance as a strategy for dealing with non-native speakers (the LEP students in this study). Schinke’s data put into better perspective some of the data collected in quasi-experimental investigations of native speaker/non-native speaker interaction, in which subjects have been, in effect, forced to communicate during a period of time. Indeed, one of the merits of classroom-based research is that it draws data from a “natural” participant group; for this reason, it should be viewed as an extremely useful complement to quasi-experimental approaches to research in language use.
which learner errors are treated. The emphasis which classroom researchers have given to corrective feedback is easy to understand. Second language research has come to attach great significance to the role of errors in acquisition. In the last fifteen years, errors have been viewed as windows to the language acquisition process; errors are seen as overt reflections of a learner’s internalized knowledge of the language. They are furthermore regarded as an inevitable part of acquiring a second language; indeed, for some, errors are the best evidence that acquisition is taking place. In turn, methodologists have abandoned an “all-out” or global approach to error correction in the classroom and have sought a basis on which errors might be selectively treated.

Research to date in error treatment can only serve to encourage the search for classroom practices which promote a selective treatment of errors, since one of the consistent findings of such research is that errors are not treated in the second language classroom as universally as might be supposed. Fanselow’s (1977) study of error treatment by eleven teachers using the same lesson plans and materials for a class in oral drillwork was one of the first quantitative accounts of error treatment. Fanselow found that fully 22% of the errors made by students received no treatment; either the teachers did not perceive the errors, or they chose to ignore them. Nystrom’s (in press) study of four public school teachers of Spanish-dominant children also showed that a sizeable proportion of learner errors go untreated. Nystrom’s data are even more striking, since the identification of errors in her study was made by teachers reviewing videotapes of their classes. Thus, as Nystrom points out, her data only include errors which her teachers identified either in class or on videotapes.

A second major focus in research on corrective feedback has been the kind of treatment which is provided. An important finding is that when teachers treat errors in the second language classroom, they do not necessarily provide overt corrections. Indeed, explicit correction of an error—that is, where the major thrust of a teacher’s response to a learner utterance is to provide the correct form—often occurs less frequently than indirect or implicit feedback. Furthermore, teachers have available, and exploit to varying degrees, a wide variety of implicit corrective treatments. Several researchers (Allwright 1975, Chaudron 1977, Long 1977) have offered taxonomies or models of error treatment options and the decision-making process which governs choices.

An especially interesting investigation of the variety of error treatment procedures available to teachers was conducted by Cathcart and Olsen (1976). In this study, twenty-one teachers of adult and university ESL classes responded to a questionnaire concerning their use of and preferences among twelve error treatment types. The twelve error
treatments had been compiled from an analysis of videotapes of classes which these same teachers had taught. Cathcart and Olsen found that, in general, the teachers used those correcting moves in class which they preferred and which they reported using. They found also that the preferences expressed by these teachers’ students on the same questionnaire corresponded fairly closely to the treatments which the teachers used in class. The only striking discrepancy between the teachers’ and students’ preferences was the students’ wish to be corrected much more frequently than their teachers tended to.

Research in error treatment has also identified some of the specific variables which influence the nature of error treatment. Several studies (Fanselow 1977, Cathcart and Olsen 1976, Ramirez and Stromquist 1979, Nystrom, in press) have demonstrated empirically that linguistic errors are treated differentially, depending on whether they are phonological, lexical, or syntactic in nature. The type of classroom activity during which an error occurs also plays a role in the error treatment decisions made by a teacher. So too does the level of instruction. Hamayan and Tucker (1980) found that the third grade learners in a French immersion program received more explicit corrective feedback than did native speaker third graders; in contrast, the learners in a fifth grade immersion class received explicit correction less frequently than did the fifth grade native speaker learners. Nystrom’s (in press) study provides forceful evidence of the importance of individual teacher styles as a variable in error treatment; one of her teachers treated 87% of all errors, two corrected 24% of all errors, and the other corrected no errors at all.

Several researchers have noted that error treatment in language classrooms is often inconsistent and ambiguous (Allwright 1975, Fanselow 1977, Long 1977). It has even been suggested (Long 1977) that in view of such inconsistency, error treatment may not make as vital a contribution to language classroom instruction as has generally been supposed (e.g., Krashen and Seliger 1975). Others have stressed that greater consistency and clarity in error treatment may be extremely difficult to achieve, but that the way in which teachers treat errors is indeed central to teaching effectiveness. Allwright, for example, argues that “teachers need to be aware of the potential they have for creating confusion in the minds of learners” (1975:99), yet recognizes that the task of the teacher is “to sum up the whole situation on the spot, and then to react appropriately, in public, conscious of the need

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2 The Ramirez and Stromquist study investigates the relationship between selected teaching behaviors and pupil achievement. Thus, unlike most of the studies on error treatment, it is correlational, rather than purely descriptive, in design. Ramirez and Stromquist found that while overt correction of grammatical errors correlated with pupil achievement (to a significant degree in the case of comprehension ability), correction of pronunciation errors was counterproductive to learner achievement.

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to treat the problems of the individual without misleading or confusing the other learners” (103).

The complexity of the task of error treatment is compounded in other ways. Chaudron (1977) has pointed out that error treatment usually consists not of a single teacher response, but rather of an exchange or cycle of verbal moves; thus, as Salica’s (1981) empirical investigation of error treatment suggests, the treatment of errors often involves not a response, but a series of responses which follow each other in rapid succession. Furthermore, much research needs to be done to determine how error treatment choices reflect teachers’ awareness of the need to find the proper balance, both for individual students and for classes as a whole, between feedback which focuses attention on an error (negative cognitive feedback) and feedback which encourages the learner to make further attempts at communication (positive affective channel feedback) (Vigil and Oller 1976).

Indeed, one of the most consistent results of research in error treatment in particular and language classroom processes in general has been to underscore the enormous complexity of the language classroom teaching and learning process. We should not underestimate how greatly such research has heightened our awareness of the demands that classroom activity places on teachers’ decision making. Again and again, the point of view expressed by Mehan that “the teacher’s attention is demanded in too many places to make rationally calculated, statistically valid decisions during the flow of [classroom] conversation” (1974: 113) has been persuasively confirmed by current classroom research.

Much of this greater sensitivity to the complexity of language classroom processes is of course the result of having made direct observation a key component of classroom research. The language classroom is no longer a “black box” (Long 1980a) whose complexity we can conveniently choose to ignore, and it is the intensive observation, description, and analysis of classroom activity that makes current research so promising as a prelude to controlled investigation of the variables of second language teaching and learning. Recently, however, alternative—or perhaps better, complementary—approaches to the investigation of language classroom processes have been promoted, and some mention must be made of research which, in the view of many, can lead to an even fuller understanding of the nature of second language teaching and learning.

ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH APPROACHES

These alternative approaches are known by a variety of headings, among which are anthropological, qualitative, and mentalistic re-
search. These are certainly not new approaches in any way, as Ochsner (1979) has pointed out. Indeed, their recent use in our field has resulted largely from the influence of related fields such as anthropology and sociology, in which such methodological approaches have a long tradition of use. With regard to classroom process research, these alternative research approaches are perhaps best known through the learner and (in a few cases) teacher diary studies (in which a participant observes his or her own classroom activity as well as that of other participants) and through other types of introspective and retrospective research studies which have been recently summarized by Cohen and Hosenfield (1981).

The chief virtue of such research, its advocates claim, is that it allows for the investigation of aspects of classroom language learning which more conventional external observation cannot get at. Indeed, several advantages of non-quantitative research can be argued for on the basis of the limitations of conventional external observation:

1. Conventional classroom observation, in emphasizing the verbal dimension of classroom activity, provides insufficient accounting of learners who are reluctant to participate orally in class.
2. Direct external observation and analysis of classroom activity cannot provide accurate insights into learners’ conscious thought processes and thus does not allow for any direct examination of the means by which input is taken in.
3. Quantitative research requires the pre-selection of variables to be observed and measured, and it is thus not fully appropriate for a field in which it is assumed that many variables remain to be discovered or rediscovered. Thus, for a field of inquiry in which interest is, at present, primarily in generating hypotheses (as opposed to testing hypotheses), research methodologies which allow the investigator wide latitude in exploring classroom processes may be especially welcome.

Perhaps the most fully developed application of qualitative research to the study of language classroom processes is represented by the learner diary studies of recent years. Schumann and Schumann (1977) have argued that diaries can identify individual or psychological variables of the classroom experience. A similar argument was advanced by Bailey (1980), whose diary of her experience in learning French focuses on the role of anxiety and competitiveness in language learning. More recently, Bailey (in press) has compared her own diary to those of others in an attempt to discover to what extent her observations were idiosyncratic and to what degree they were shared by other learners.

It would be an exaggeration to say that alternative research approaches have been widely accepted for use in second language
classroom process research. We might expect the debate over the relative strengths and limitations of quantitative and qualitative research to continue. However, even those who remain skeptical of the reliability of learner intuitions recognize that quantitative research is to some degree shaped by researcher intuitions and biases; and those who criticize the small sample sizes of anthropological studies recognize that most conventional research in language classroom processes is often based on relatively small samples also. Thus, it may be hoped that several research methodologies will be used with the rigor and care which each demands and that they will be viewed as complementing each other, and that in this way the enormous complexity of language classroom processes may be clarified from a number of perspectives.

As mentioned at the outset, a brief and selective review such as this is bound to be frustrating; one can only begin to explore the diversity of work in understanding language classroom processes. By way of conclusion, we might emphasize what may be for now the two most important dimensions of such activity. First, in revealing previously unexplored or underexplored aspects of classroom processes in which teachers and learners are involved, researchers have developed a greater awareness of and respect for the enormous complexity of language classroom activity. One immediate result of this that we might hope for is that practitioners will become more receptive to research efforts that recognize the complexity which confronts them daily in their classroom work. The other outstanding dimension of current classroom process research is that it may ultimately enable us to develop and test hypotheses about second language teaching and learning which reflect better than has been done in the past the complex activity which we seek to understand.

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This article outlines three dimensions in the teaching of listening comprehension. In approach, it discusses the nature of spoken discourse and offers a theory of listening comprehension that takes into account the processes that listeners make use of. In design, it analyzes learners’ listening needs, proposes a taxonomy of micro-skills, and establishes objectives for teaching these skills. And finally, in procedure, it presents classroom activities and exercise types that can be used to attain these objectives.

Not to let a word get in the way of its sentence
Nor to let a sentence get in the way of its intention,
But to send your mind out to meet the intention as a guest;
THAT is understanding.

Chinese proverb, fourth century B.C.

In this article, three dimensions of conceptualization, planning, and performance involved in the teaching of listening comprehension are considered. These are referred to as approach, design, and procedure (Richards and Rodgers 1982). Initially, an outline of some of what is known about the processes involved in listening is presented. This is the level of approach, where assumptions about how listeners proceed in decoding utterances to extract meanings are spelled out. The next level, that of design, is where an operationalization is made of the component micro-skills which constitute our competence as listeners. This in turn enables objectives to be defined for the teaching of listening comprehension. At the third level, that of procedure, questions concerning exercise types and teaching techniques are examined. These three levels illustrate the domain of methodology in language teaching.

APPROACH
Message Factors

Current understanding of the nature of listening comprehension draws on research in psycholinguistics, semantics, pragmatics, dis-
course analysis, and cognitive science (e.g., Clark and Clark 1977, Leech 1977, Schank and Abelson 1977, Marslen-Wilson and Tyler 1980, Dore and McDermott 1982, Clark and Carlson 1982). There is little direct research on second language listening comprehension, however, and what follows is an interpretation of relevant native language research. Three related levels of discourse processing appear to be involved in listening: propositional identification, interpretation of illocutionary force, and activation of real world knowledge. The central question from both a theoretical and pedagogical perspective concerns the nature of the units listeners make use of in understanding language. Do we listen for intonation, stress, words, grammar, sentences, or some other type of language unit?

Much of the linguistic and psycholinguistic literature on comprehension suggests that propositions are the basic units of meaning involved in comprehension and that the listener’s ultimate goal is to determine the propositions which an utterance or speech event expresses (Clark and Clark 1977, Foss and Haikes 1978). But propositions are represented indirectly in the surface structure of utterances. Listeners make use of two kinds of knowledge to identify propositions: knowledge of the syntax of the target language, and real world knowledge. Syntactic knowledge enables the listener to chunk incoming discourse into segments or constituents. The following sentence would have to be chunked as in (1) rather than (2) in order to identify its propositional meaning:

I am informed that your appointment has been terminated.
1. I am informed/that your appointment/has been terminated.
2. I am/informed that your/appointment has/been terminated.

The ability to correctly identify chunks or constituents is a by-product of grammatical competence. Knowledge of the structure of noun phrases, verb phrases, and the grammatical devices used to express such relationships as complementation, relativization, and coordination in English allows us to segment discourse into the appropriate chunks as part of the process of propositional identification. Where segmentation is difficult, comprehension is also difficult.

But knowledge of the world is also used to help identify propositions, enabling listeners to sometimes bypass the constituent identification process. Hence, (1) below is understood as (2) because, in real life, this is a plausible reconstruction of likely events involving cats and rats:

1. and rat cat it chased the ate the
2. The cat chased the rat and ate it.

The following processes therefore appear to be involved in comprehension:
1. The listener takes in raw speech and holds an image of it in short-term memory.

2. An attempt is made to organize what was heard into constituents, identifying their content and function.

3. As constituents are identified, they are used to construct propositions, grouping the propositions together to form a coherent message.

4. Once the listener has identified and reconstructed the propositional meanings, these are held in long-term memory, and the form in which the message was originally received is deleted (Clark and Clark 1977:49). Permanent, or long-term, memory works with meaning, not with form. The propositional meaning of sentences is retained, not the actual words or grammatical devices that were used to express it. Thus, after hearing *Tom said that the car had been fixed and could be collected at 5*, a listener is likely only to remember the fact that the car is now ready to be picked up, and not whether the speaker said *the car is fixed* rather than the *car has been fixed*, or *could be collected* rather than *will be ready to be collected*. Memory works with propositions, not with sentences.

The above is a semantically based view of how a listener decides what a sentence means. Leech distinguishes this view of meaning from a pragmatic perspective, that is, one which focuses on what an utterance means to a person in a particular speech situation. “The semantic structure of a sentence specifies what that sentence means as a structure in a given language, in abstraction from speaker and addressee; whereas pragmatic deals with that meaning as it is interpreted interactionally in a given situation” (Leech 1977:1). Theories which describe how pragmatic meanings are understood derive from speech act theory, conversational analysis, and discourse analysis (Schmidt and Richards 1980).

Speech act theory is concerned with the relationship between the form of utterances and their function in social interaction and rests on the distinction between propositional meaning and the illocutionary force of utterances. For example, the sentence *Helen likes chocolates* as a proposition attributes a certain quality to Helen, but does not tell us whether the sentence was uttered in order to offer an *explanation* of her obesity, a *suggestion* as to what to do with the chocolates, or a *denial* of a previous assertion. Speech act and other interfunctional approaches to meaning assume that when we use language for communication, the meanings that are communicated are a function of the interactions between speakers and hearers meeting in specific circumstances for the achievement of particular goals. In arriving at an interpretation of the illocutionary force of an utterance (that is, in determining the speaker’s intention), listeners call upon their knowledge of the situation, the participants, their purposes, goals, rights, and
duties, as well as the position of the utterance within the sequence of
utterances preceding it. In an illuminating analysis of how the interpr-
etation of talk is organized by context, Dore and McDermott observe
that “. . . in the course of organizing sensible moments with each other,
people use talk as a social tool, relying on the social work they are
doing together to specify the meaning of utterances” (1982:375).

Grice proposed that one source of knowledge listeners make use of
is their understanding of the nature and goals of conversation. He
stated this knowledge in the form of maxims of conversational
behavior, each of which illustrates the “cooperative principle” that
dictates the sort of contributions people make during conversational
interaction:

1. Maxim of quantity: Make your contribution just as informative as
   required.
2. Maxim of quality: Make your contribution one that is true.
3. Maxim of relation: Be relevant.

(Quoted in Clark and Clark 1977:122)

Conversationalists, hence, normally act on the assumption that remarks
made during conversation will be relevant to the ongoing concerns of
speaker and hearer. Thus, if I invite you to dinner, I assume that you
will respond with a remark that is relevant to my purposes. I will try to
interpret what you say as an acceptance or a refusal. But if you respond
with There’s a white Cadillac on the corner of the street, I will have
great difficulty assigning this utterance to the category of reply I
anticipated.

Interfractional views of meaning stress the crucial role of inferencing
and interpretation in listening comprehension and remind us of the
active and creative dimensions of listening. Work in cognitive science
reveals an added dimension of this inferential process.

Script and schema theory (Schank and Abelson 1977) describe the
role of prior knowledge in comprehension. For example, in under-
standing I went to the dentist this morning. He gave me an injection and I
didn’t feel a thing, the following prior knowledge is referred to:

1. We normally go to see a dentist when we need a check-up or when
   we have something wrong with our teeth.
2. Dentists typically check, drill, repair, or remove teeth.
3. This process is painful.
4. An injection can be given to relieve the pain.

This body of knowledge about a specific situation (at the dentist’s),
particular participants (the dentist, the assistant, the patient), goals of
the situation (remedying a problem with the patient’s teeth), and
procedures (drilling a tooth, giving an injection) can be referred to as the dentist's script. Script or schema knowledge is what we know about particular situations, and the goals, participants, and procedures which are commonly associated with them. Much of our knowledge of the world is organized around scripts, that is, memory for typical episodes that occur in specific situations. Our knowledge of dentist’s scripts, cinema scripts, library scripts, drugstore scripts, school scripts, meal scripts, and so on, enables us to interpret a great deal of the language of everyday life. The information needed to understand many utterances is therefore not explicitly present in the utterance but is provided by the listeners from their repertoire of scripts. This means that many of the connections between events need not be specified when we talk about them, since they are already known and can be inferred. But if we lack a relevant script, comprehension may be difficult. For example, we have no available script which can be used to understand this sequence of events: I climbed onto an elephant. The piano was out of tune. The rabbit tasted delicious.

We are able to understand many utterances from our general awareness of how people achieve goals and from our assumptions that most human behavior is purposeful and directed toward particular ends. Non-native speakers, however, may lack many culturally specific scripts; their individual scripts may differ in degree and content from target language scripts, and this poses additional problems for the non-native listener.

We are now able to expand the tentative model of the processes involved in comprehension:

1. The type of interfacational act or speech event in which the listener is involved is determined (e.g., conversation, lecture, discussion, debate).

2. Scripts relevant to the particular situation are recalled.

3. The goals of the speaker are inferred through reference to the situation, the script, and the sequential position of the utterance.

4. The propositional meaning of the utterance is determined.

5. An illocutionary meaning is assigned to the message.

6. This information is retained and acted upon, and the form in which it was originally received is deleted.

Medium Factors

The preceding discussion has focused on how meanings are understood in listening. But listeners confront another dimension of comprehension when processing speech. The act of speaking imposes a
particular form on utterances, and this considerably affects how messages are understood. We call factors which result from this medium factors. Medium factors vary according to the nature of the discourse (whether planned or unplanned), the speaker’s attitude toward the message or the listeners, and the situation in which the act of communication takes place (e.g., classroom, lecture room, or informal setting). We will consider nine such factors here, each of which influences the work listeners must do to process speech.

**Clausal basis of speech.** Whereas the unit of organization of written discourse is the sentence, spoken language is generally delivered one clause at a time (Pawley, undated). The unit of conversational discourse is not the full sentence but the clause, and longer utterances in conversation generally consist of several clauses coordinated. Most of the clauses used are simple conjuncts or adjuncts, and Pawley points out that cases of complex clauses in conversation are rare. Clauses appear to be a major constituent in both the planning and delivery of speech. The frequent use of coordinating conjunctions is illustrated in this example from Stanley:

> Um perhaps the most celebrated near miss was a twin reactor two reactors side by side in Tennessee in 1975, and that was due to a worker at the plant using a candle to test which way the air was flowing, underneath the control room, and it caught fire. And they had a very serious fire there for fourteen hours. They didn’t know how to put it out... And it was only shut down in the end and a very you know, a major accident averted by an operator using a very unusual and and quite clever way of shutting it down by hand (1980:78).

**Reduced forms.** In articulating clauses, speakers are guided by the need to express meanings efficiently. This means that words which play a less crucial role in the message may be slurred or dropped, and other words given more prominence (Brown 1977). In addition, consonants and vowels within words are affected by the positions in which they occur. In speech there is not always time for the tongue to assume the ideal position required to articulate a sound. Consequently, patterns of assimilation are common, leading to the disappearance of word boundaries, to the omission of certain vowels and consonants, and to substitutions occurring for elements within words. Sentences also occur frequently in elliptical forms, with the deletion of such elements as subjects, auxiliaries, verbs, articles, and pronouns when context makes their presence redundant, as in When will you be back? Tomorrow maybe (instead of, Maybe I’ll be back tomorrow).

**Ungrammatical forms.** Due to the effort speakers put into planning and organizing the content of their utterances in ongoing time, grammaticality is often less relevant than ideational coherence. Conse-
quently, ungrammatical forms and constructions are frequent. For example:

Big companies can only really make lots of money out of high technology centralized systems . . . And because of that it is tending to go into high technology solutions.

(lack of agreement)

And after that we arrived in a little town that there was no hotel anywhere . . .

(faulty clause construction)

**Pausing and speech errors.** An important component of human speech consists of the pauses, hesitations, false starts, and corrections which make up such a large portion of what we actually say. In natural speech, between 30% and 50% of speaking time may consist of pauses and hesitations, indicating some of the selection and planning processes speakers make use of. Pauses may be either silent pauses or filled pauses. Filled pauses contain items such as *uh, oh, hmm, ah, well, say, sort of, just, kind of, I mean, I think, I guess*, which indicate that the speaker is searching for a word, or has found the word or an approximation of it.

**Rate of delivery.** Pausing also affects our perception of the pace of speech. The impression of faster or slower speech generally results from the amount of intraclausal pausing that speakers use. If such pauses are eliminated, the impression of rapid speech is created. Fast and slow speakers are hence distinguished by the amount of pausing they make use of. Rivers cites the following figures:

- **Fast:** above 220 wpm
- **Moderately fast:** 190—>220 wpm
- **Average:** 160—>220 wpm
- **Moderately slow:** 130 —> 160 wpm
- **Slow:** below 130 wpm

(1981:173)

**Rhythm and stress.** The rhythmic pattern of spoken English is another of its distinctive features. In many languages, the length of time required to pronounce an utterance depends upon the number of syllables it contains, since syllables are of about equal length. English, however, is a stress-timed language. Within an utterance, only particular syllables are stressed, and the remaining syllables in the utterance, no matter how many there are, must accommodate to the rhythm established by the stressed syllables, which recur at more or less regular intervals. According to Woods (1979), there is a major stressed syllable on the average of every 0.6 seconds in English. This means that the following sentences would take about the same amount of time to articulate, even though the number of syllables contained in each sentence is very different:
The CAT is INterested in proTECTing its KITTens.
LARGE CARS WASTE GAS.

This adds yet another dimension to the listener’s task, since listeners must be able to identify words according to the rhythmic structure within which they occur. They must be able to interpret words in both stressed, mildly stressed, and unstressed forms, and not merely in their ideal forms as listed in a dictionary.

**Cohesive devices.** Speech shares with written discourse the mechanisms for marking grammatical ties within and between sentences, but many function differently in spoken discourse. The referents of cohesive markers such as *this, these,* and *you* are sometimes not readily identifiable in speech. For example:

Well *you* know, there was *this* guy, and here we were talking about, *you* know, girls, and all *that* sort of thing . . . and *here’s* what he says . . .

**Information content.** Since conversation involves both a speaker and a hearer, meanings are constructed cooperatively. A particular speaker does not say everything he or she wants to say in a single burst. Each speaker adds information a little at a time, often by repeating something of what has been said and then adding to it (Brown 1977). For example:

A. Are you pleased with the results?
B. Yes, I’m very pleased with them. They are better than I expected.
A. Is it impossible?
B. No, it’s not impossible, just difficult.

Proposition markers such as *of course* and *really* may indicate the attitude of the speaker to preceding or subsequent propositions, and discourse markers such as *well, anyway, actually, of course,* and *now* signal the continuity between one utterance and another.

This means that the concept of coherence, as applied to conversational discourse, is very different from the way coherence is created in written discourse. Written discourse is planned, tightly organized, and generally the product of a single person. Spoken discourse is not pre-planned, but is produced in ongoing time through mutual cooperation. Consequently, it presents meaning in a very different way from written discourse. Topics are developed gradually, and the conventions for topic development and topic shift are distinctive to the spoken register. Listeners must use cues such as *talking about that,* *reminds you of . . . , by the way,* *as far as that goes* to identify directions in topic development.

**Interactive.** Conversation is interactive. The listener’s presence is indicated by gestures, movement, gaze, and facial expressions. Both
speaker and listener send a variety of verbal and non-verbal signals back and forth indicating attention, interest, understanding, or lack of it (Murphy and Candlin 1979). The degree of formality or informality of the interaction may also be signaled by the presence or absence of idioms, humor, and colloquial expressions, or by the use of solidarity markers such as you see or you know.

DESIGN

The factors reviewed above indicate some of the central processes of listening comprehension and ways in which spoken discourse differs from written text. The application of such information to the teaching of listening comprehension is in the design component of methodology, and it enables the identification of component micro-skills which provide the focus for instructional activities. Design thus refers to the operationalization of information and theory into a form that will enable objectives to be formulated and learning experiences planned. The design phase in curriculum development consists of:

Assessment of learner needs. This refers to procedures aimed at identifying the type of listening skills the learner requires, according to situations and purposes the listener will encounter. Isolation of micro-skills. From the information obtained from needs analysis and from an analysis of the features of the target language discourse that the learner will encounter (e.g., conversation, lectures), particular listening skills are isolated which correspond to the listening abilities the learner requires. The product of this operation is a skills taxonomy. Diagnostic testing. From proficiency or diagnostic testing, a profile is established of the learner's present listening abilities. Particular micro-skills from the skills taxonomy are then selected. Formulation of instructional objectives. Using information from diagnostic or proficiency testing, instructional objectives for a listening comprehension program can be developed. The above procedures are essential before instructional activities can be selected or developed. Let us now consider each of these dimensions in turn.

Needs Assessment

Needs assessment focuses on the purposes for which the learners need listening skills and on an analysis of the situations, activities, and tasks in which the learners will be involved as second language listeners.
learners. Listening purposes vary according to whether learners are involved in listening as a component of social interaction (e.g., conversational listening), listening for information, academic listening (e.g., lectures), listening for pleasure (e.g., radio, movies, television), or for some other reason. Needs assessment procedures may involve interviews with learners, participant observation, questionnaires, target discourse analysis, literature surveys of related research, and other measures designed to obtain a profile of learner needs and to establish priorities among them.

**Taxonomy of Listening Skills**

Taxonomies of micro-skills involved in different types of listening are developed from a variety of sources, including needs analysis, discourse analysis, and related research. The analysis of listening processes and features of spoken discourse which were discussed in the first section of this article suggests that micro-skills such as the following are required for conversational listening:

*Micro-Skills: Conversational Listening*

1. ability to retain chunks of language of different lengths for short periods
2. ability to discriminate among the distinctive sounds of the target language
3. ability to recognize the stress patterns of words
4. ability to recognize the rhythmic structure of English
5. ability to recognize the functions of stress and intonation to signal the information structure of utterances
6. ability to identify words in stressed and unstressed positions
7. ability to recognize reduced forms of words
8. ability to distinguish word boundaries
9. ability to recognize typical word order patterns in the target language
10. ability to recognize vocabulary used in core conversational topics
11. ability to detect key words (i.e., those which identify topics and propositions)
12. ability to guess the meanings of words from the contexts in which they occur
13. ability to recognize grammatical word classes (parts of speech)
14. ability to recognize major syntactic patterns and devices
15. ability to recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse
16. ability to recognize elliptical forms of grammatical units and sentences
17. ability to detect sentence constituents
18. ability to distinguish between major and minor constituents
19. ability to detect meanings expressed in differing grammatical forms/sen-
tence types (i.e., that a particular meaning may be expressed in different ways)

20. ability to recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants, goals

21. ability to reconstruct or infer situations, goals, participants, procedures

22. ability to use real world knowledge and experience to work out purposes, goals, settings, procedures

23. ability to predict outcomes from events described

24. ability to infer links and connections between events

25. ability to deduce causes and effects from events

26. ability to distinguish between literal and implied meanings

27. ability to identify and reconstruct topics and coherent structure from ongoing discourse involving two or more speakers

28. ability to recognize markers of coherence in discourse, and to detect such relations as main idea, supporting idea, given information, new information, generalization, exemplification

29. ability to process speech at different rates

30. ability to process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections

31. ability to make use of facial, paralinguistic, and other clues to work out meanings

32. ability to adjust listening strategies to different kinds of listener purposes or goals

33. ability to signal comprehension or lack of comprehension, verbally and non-verbally

Diagnostic testing or detailed analysis of results of proficiency tests allows particular micro-skills to be further operationalized. Micro-skills relevant to academic listening include the following:

**Micro-Skills: Academic Listening (Listening to Lectures)**

1. ability to identify purpose and scope of lecture

2. ability to identify topic of lecture and follow topic development

3. ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g., major ideas, generalizations, hypotheses, supporting ideas, examples)

4. ability to identify role of discourse markers in signaling structure of a lecture (e.g., conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines)

5. ability to infer relationships (e.g., cause, effect, conclusion)

6. ability to recognize key lexical items related to subject/topic

7. ability to deduce meanings of words from context

8. ability to recognize markers of cohesion

9. ability to recognize function of intonation to signal information structure (e.g., pitch, volume, pace, key)

10. ability to detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter

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11. ability to follow different modes of lecturing: spoken, audio, audio-visual
12. ability to follow lecture despite differences in accent and speed
13. familiarity with different styles of lecturing: formal, conversational, read, unplanned
14. familiarity with different registers: written versus colloquial
15. ability to recognize irrelevant matter: jokes, digressions, meanderings
16. ability to recognize function of non-verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude
17. knowledge of classroom conventions (e.g., turn taking, clarification requests)
18. ability to recognize instructional/learner tasks (e.g., warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, instructions)

The above taxonomies are suggestive of the sort of information that curriculum developers should aim to obtain from tests and other sources.

**Diagnostic Testing/Assessment**

Diagnostic tests and assessment procedures give a detailed breakdown of how learners perform with respect to particular micro-skills. A good example of how detailed information on learner ability can be obtained from the use of a listening proficiency rating scale is provided by an instrument developed by Brindley (1982). By means of interviews, a profile of the student’s learning ability is built up, and the learner is classified into one of eight levels ranging from minimal to native-speaker-like. Brindley describes characteristics of a learner at the second level on the scale in the following way:

**Listening Comprehension**

Able to understand enough to manage a very limited interchange about areas of immediate need. Can understand most predictable requests for basic personal and family information of the kind required by officials, though repetition often necessary if questions are not phrased in familiar form.

Can recognize a few basic intonation patterns (e.g., Yes/no questions).

Little understanding of syntax. Meaning deduced from juxtaposition of words and context. Still responds to isolated words in connected speech.

Can handle very short, simple, ritual social exchanges but rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.

Can identify individual items in very short, simple recorded passages relevant to needs. May get global meaning but would need more than one hearing. However misunderstandings frequent when s/he cannot see person speaking.

When s/he does not understand, can usually ask very simply for repetition.
Characteristic Problems

Has great difficulty coping with subjects other than immediate priorities.
Finds longer utterances (especially those containing subordinate clauses) very hard to understand, owing to limitations on short-term memory load.
Often fails to understand questions which require other than a short, concrete answer (e.g., why or how questions).
Idiomatic expressions (even commonly used ones related to priority areas) normally not understood. Only understands when questions/statements are phrased in simplest, non-idiomatic form.
Has great difficulty using grammatical cues to extrapolate meaning. What seems clear to a native speaker would often be misinterpreted or seen as ambiguous by a listener at this level, owing to his/her inability to recognize the form and function of many syntactic structures.
May identify occasional words in a conversation between native speakers but could not identify topic.
Similar-sounding words/segments often confused, causing misunderstandings. (Brindley 1982:1)

Using information such as this together with a skills taxonomy, it is possible to identify the micro-skills which would be most crucial for a learner at this level. Among the micro-skills which this type of learner lacks, for example, are:

1. ability to identify and reconstruct topics from ongoing discourse
2. ability to recognize typical word order patterns in English
3. ability to recognize major syntactic patterns in English

By systematically comparing information in the skills taxonomy with the learner profile, it is now possible to formulate objectives for the target group of learners.

Formulation of Objectives

Objectives translate the content identified in the skills selection process into a statement of what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of a course of instruction. Objectives defined this way are also known as behavioral objectives (Nicholls and Nicholls 1972). They serve as goals toward which the teacher should be aiming in a course, and hence help determine the choice of appropriate methodology and classroom procedures. They also enable teachers to assess the extent to which learning has been accomplished. Basically, what is required is a clearly set out group of statements identifying what is to be achieved—methodology and the syllabus identify the means; objectives specify the ends. Objectives thus break down the micro-skills into descriptions of behavior or performance in terms which can be taught and tested.
Objectives for the hypothetical target group identified above, for example, might be stated in the following terms:

1. The student will have a listening vocabulary of approximately 800 words, including dates, time, and numbers up to 100.
2. The student can recognize the different intonation patterns used for questions, statements, instructions.
3. The student can understand yes/no questions and wh- questions on topics connected with home life, the family, school, free time, health, shopping, personal identification.
4. The student can understand common phrases used in short conversations and interviews on the above topics,
5. The student can identify the topics of conversations between native speakers on the above topics.
6. The student can understand utterances within an 800 word vocabulary in which the following grammatical constructions are used: sub V comp, sub V obj, . . .
7. The student can understand utterances within an 800 word vocabulary containing subordinate and coordinating clauses.

From the formulation of instructional objectives we are now able to consider the development of instructional procedures and activities which enable the objectives to be realized. These are questions of procedure, that is, of techniques and exercise types.

**PROCEDURE**

In teaching listening comprehension our aim is to provide opportunities for the learner to acquire particular micro-skills, those individual listening abilities which we have identified and used in specifying particular teaching objectives. In teaching listening we can manipulate two variables, both of which serve to develop ability in particular skill areas. We can either manipulate the *input*, that is, the language which the learner hears, controlling for selected features such as grammatical complexity, topic, and rate of delivery, or we can manipulate the *tasks* we set for the learner. Manipulation of either (or both) is directed toward developing particular micro-skills.

![Diagram: INPUT → MICRO-SKILLS ← TASKS](image)

In examining procedures for teaching listening comprehension, we will focus first on some general criteria that can be applied to the
evaluation of exercises and classroom procedures and then look at techniques and procedures themselves.

Criteria for Evaluating Activities and Exercises

In teaching listening skills our aim is to provide comprehensible, focused input and purposeful listening tasks which develop competence in particular listening abilities. The following criteria serve as a checklist in developing listening tasks (British Council 1981, McKeating 1981, Porter and Roberts 1981, Howard 1977, Stanley 1978, Maley and Moulding 1981, Thomas 1982):

Content validity. Does the activity practice listening comprehension or something else? How closely does the input or task relate to the micro-skills which listening comprehension involves? Many listening materials contain activities that depend more on reading or general intelligence than on listening skills. The question of content validity raises the issue of whether the activity adequately or actually makes use of skills and behavior that are part of listening in the real world. Two related factors have to do with memory and purposefulness.

Listening comprehension or memory? We saw above that a variety of processing activities in listening precede storage of information in long-term memory. Many listening activities focus on retrieval of information from long-term memory rather than on the processing activities themselves. An exercise involving listening to a passage and responding to true/false questions about the content of it typically focuses on memory rather than on comprehension.

Purposefulness and transferability. Does the activity reflect a purpose for listening that approximates authentic real life listening? Do the abilities which the exercise develops transfer to real life listening purposes, or is the learner simply developing the ability to perform classroom exercises? An activity which makes use of news broadcasts as input, for example, should reflect the reasons why people typically listen to news broadcasts, such as listening for information about events. Cloze exercises requiring the learner to supply grammatical words on listening to the news item do not reflect the purposes for which people listen to news broadcasts. It is not a situation which corresponds to any real life listening purpose, and hence involves a low degree of transfer.

Testing or teaching. Does the activity or set of procedures assume that a set of skills is already acquired and simply provide opportunities for the learner to practice them, or does it assume that the skills are not known and try to help the learner acquire them? A great
many listening activities test, rather than teach. For example, a set of true/false questions following a passage on a tape might indicate how much of the material the learner can remember, but this kind of activity in no way helps the learner develop the ability to grasp main ideas or extract relevant details. The amount of preparation the learner is given prior to a listening task is often important in giving a teaching rather than a testing focus to an activity. Pre-listening activities generally have this purpose. They activate the learner’s script and set a purpose for listening. They may take the form of discussion, questions, or a short paragraph to read which creates the script, providing information about the situation, the characters, and the events. Activities which teach rather than test may require much more use of pre-listening tasks and tasks completed as the student listens, than post-listening tasks.

**Authenticity.** To what degree does the input resemble natural discourse? While much authentic discourse may be too disfluent or difficult to understand without contextual support, materials should aim for relative authenticity if they are to prepare listeners for real listening. Many current commercial listening materials are spoken at an artificially slow pace, in prestige dialects that are not typical of ordinary speech. They are often oral readings of written material articulated in a precise ‘acting’ style, lacking the pauses and self-corrections of natural speech. Furthermore, the value of such materials must be examined in the light of Krashen’s (1982) proposal that authentic learning experiences should provide an opportunity for acquisition; that is, they should provide comprehensible input which requires negotiation of meaning and which contains linguistic features a little beyond the learner’s current level of competence.

**Exercise Types**

In developing classroom materials and activities we can manipulate the input or the tasks. Input, for example, may be in the form of dialogue or monologue. Dialogue may be scripted or unscripted, between native speakers, between native and non-native speakers, or between non-native speakers. Difficulty in both dialogue and monologue may vary according to the rate of delivery, level of vocabulary, topic, information content, fluency (amount of pausing, errors), and coherence. Tasks may vary according to whether they require **global comprehension** (where the learner is required to attempt to understand the overall meaning) or **partial comprehension** (where only comprehension of specific items is required) (Blundell and Stokes 1981). Tasks may also vary according to whether they require a **mechanical**,
meaningful, or communicative response (Paulston 1971). A task requiring a mechanical response, for example, would be a discrimination task where the learner is required to distinguish between two words or sounds and where comprehension is not required. A meaningful response would be one in which comprehension of the input is required, but no creative abilities are called into play as, for example, when a learner has to match one of two sentence to one which he or she hears. A communicative response is one in which the learner has to create a suitable response on the basis of what is understood, and where interpretation, adaptation, and the addition of new information is required. For example, the listener may hear a problem discussed and then have to suggest a solution. The criterion for selecting and evaluating tasks, however, is not their interest or ingenuity, but the degree to which they relate to teaching rather than testing objectives. Among common task types in materials are:

**Matching or distinguishing.** Choosing a response in written or pictorial form that corresponds with what was heard (e.g., placing pictures in a sequence which matches a story or set of events; choosing a picture to match a situation, such as listening to a radio advertisement and finding the product from a set of pictures).

**Transferring.** Exercises of this type involve receiving information in one form and transferring the information or parts of it into another form (e.g., listening to a discussion about a house and then sketching the house).

**Transcribing.** Listening, and then writing down what was heard. Dictation is the most common example of this activity.

**Scanning.** Exercises in which listeners must extract selected items by scanning the input in order to find a specific piece of information (e.g., listening to a news broadcast and identifying the name of the winning party in an election).

**Extending.** Exercises which involve going beyond what is provided, such as reconstructing a dialogue when alternate lines are missing or providing a conclusion to a story.

**Condensing.** Reducing what is heard to an outline of main points, such as is required in notetaking.

**Answering.** Answering questions from the input. Different sorts of questions will focus on different levels of listening (e.g., questions which require recall of details, those which require inferences and deductions, those which require evaluation or reactions).

**Predicting.** Guessing or predicting outcomes, causes, relationships, and so forth, based on information presented in a conversation or narrative.

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APPLICATIONS

As an example of approach, design, and procedural elements of listening comprehension methodology, we will now show how a listening exercise which was presented to a materials development class at the University of Hawaii was adapted by the students in that class to give it a more relevant focus. This discussion also illustrates the sorts of activities which are useful in teaching workshops for teachers on developing materials for listening comprehension.

The text selected was *Have You Heard* (Underwood 1979), which is described as providing listening comprehension practice for students of English as a foreign language who have had little opportunity to hear native English speakers. Each of the 20 units contains recorded extracts centered around a particular language function. The recordings are of spontaneous conversations in a range of accents and bring the students as close as possible to a real life situation (extract from jacket).

The task set for the teacher trainees who were in this course was first to examine the text and the exercises in terms of content validity, testing or teaching, and the other criteria discussed above. It was found that the existing exercises in the text mainly tested memory rather than listening comprehension, and many were found to have little relation to listening. In considering alternate exercises, the materials were first examined to determine the types of listening tasks and micro-skills that the conversational samples involved. From these, objectives and exercises were developed.  

Unit 1 of the text, for example, focuses on “people talking about things they like.” The unit contains three short conversations on the topic by different people. The first is entitled “Felix talks about his job as a school-master.” The following pre-listening information is given:

Felix shows his pleasure by mentioning the good things about his job. He begins by saying that he decided quite quickly about what he wanted to do as a job (9).

A few difficult vocabulary items are presented, then the teacher is instructed to play the tape. True/false exercises, vocabulary exercises, and a transcription/dictation task follow. The conversational listening extract is as follows:

So there was no great lengthy process deciding what I was going to do—but I don’t feel I’ve made a mistake—I enjoy it—I enjoy the company of other members of the staff in the staff room where they are colleagues of yours but you’re not in a structured system where they are your boss or you are
theirs—everyone is in the same boat—everyone is in the same level and yet—you don’t actually work with one another—you just work with the same boys—and therefore I think that unlike an office situation—you get to know the—the other members of the staff—as friends more than as work-mates—and also I enjoy—the difference in the job—it isn’t the same thing every year—in a yearly situation—you can do things a different way the second year, the third year—and I enjoy the differences it brings—every day—different classes, different age groups, different attitudes . . . (transcribed from tape).

It was decided to replace all the exercises suggested in the text. In developing alternative exercises the trainees produced the following:

**Objectives**
- Listen for general understanding of the gist of a conversation.
- Identify the speaker’s attitude toward a topic.

**Micro-skills**
- Identify and follow the topic of a conversation.
- Recognize vocabulary for expressing positive and negative attitudes.
- Infer speaker’s attitude from reasons given.
- Infer meanings of words from context.

**Pre-listening activities**
- Students work in groups and discuss what makes a job enjoyable or undesirable.
- Students rank their findings.
- Students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of school teaching.
  (The goal of the pre-listening activities is to activate background knowledge or scripts and to prepare students for some of the vocabulary they will hear.)

**Teaching procedure**
1. On first listening, students are given a simple task. They are instructed to answer the following questions as they listen:
   a) What is Felix’s job?
   b) How does he feel about his job? Does he like it or not?
   (By posing the task before the students listen to the tape, the listeners are given a purpose for listening which forces them to focus on selected information. They can also compare information they hear with information they obtained from their pre-listening group discussions.)

2. After listening to the tape and discussing their answers, the students are given a more specific task to be completed during a second listening:
   Which of the following does Felix say are important for him about his job?
   - the salary
   - the holidays
   - not having a fixed routine
   - the power it gives
   - not having a boss
   - his colleagues

3. During a third listening, students answer true/false questions:
a) It took Felix a long time to choose a job.
b) Felix believes he chose the right job.
c) Felix says his job is like working in an office.
d) Felix wants to change his job.
e) Felix has to do the same thing every year.

4. A post-listening exercise involves deducing the meanings of words from the context in which they were used in the conversation:

What do these expressions in the conversation mean?
“To be in the same boat with other people”
“To enjoy the company of other people”

The exercises suggested by the trainees thus involve primarily pre-listening and “complete while listening” tasks, rather than the usual battery of post-listening exercises. They prepare the students for listening before listening begins and focus on a level of comprehension relevant to conversational listening.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of listening comprehension, or of any language skill, involves considering the objectives we are teaching toward and the micro-skills our procedures cover. An educated response is dependent, in turn, on how much of an attempt we have made to appreciate the nature of the listening comprehension process itself. Any informed methodology or teaching program looks both at techniques and classroom routines, and beyond them, to the broader principles which serve as their justification.

THE AUTHOR

Jack Richards, Professor of ESL at the University of Hawaii, has published a wide variety of articles and edited a number of collections on the teaching and learning of English as a second language. He is co-editor of Language Learning and Communication (a new applied linguistics journal), co-author of the forthcoming Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, and is currently writing a comprehensive overview of language teaching methodology entitled The Language Teaching Matrix. He is also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the TESOL Quarterly.

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Previous studies that have examined the relationship between personality factors and second language acquisition have yielded contradictory findings. However, when these studies are divided according to whether they examined *natural communication language* as compared with *formal tested language*, it becomes clear that certain personal characteristics are consistently related to successful language learning. The present study examines seven such characteristics in connection with success at acquiring certain communicative language skills among thirteen Spanish-speaking kindergartners who began the school year with almost no English. The question of motivation to be a part of the target language group and preference for English speakers as playmates and friends is also discussed on the basis of sociometric evidence. Contrary to previous conclusions (e.g., Wong-Fillmore 1976), the faster learners did not seek to befriend or identify more with English speakers than did the slower learners. Faster learners, however, were more talkative, responsive, and gregarious than slower learners. Implications of these findings for teachers and researchers are discussed.

This study attempts to discover some of the reasons why young children from similar backgrounds will acquire a second language at markedly different rates and with varying degrees of success. Studies by Wong-Fillmore (1976), and Cathcart, Strong, and Fillmore (1979) have already shown that, within a given time period, in any group some children will become able to communicate comfortably, some will learn enough to get by, and some will acquire hardly any skills in the second language.

Recently, much second language research (reviewed in Long 1982) has suggested that language learners who can maintain communicative interactions with native speakers experience the optimal conditions for improving their skills in the new language. The focus of most of this
research has been on the interfactional quality of the native speaker input in terms of the modifications which native speakers make (such as repetition, expansion, and clarification) which, it is presumed, increase the comprehensibility of the message for the learner. While this theoretical perspective highlights the importance of the type of language that native speakers use with non-native speakers (known as foreigner talk), it may be reasonable to postulate further that certain personal qualities possessed by learners also play a role in facilitating access to comprehensible second language input. For example, a child skilled at engaging in social relationships can be assumed to have more access to conversations with native speakers than a child who is socially inept. Furthermore, a child who is naturally verbal and responsive to language would probably not only attract more input from the interlocutor but would also encourage further effort on the part of that interlocutor to get the message across.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The notion of examining the possible relationships between learners’ social characteristics and their rate and degree of success in language acquisition is not new, but the findings of the studies which have been conducted to date have been contradictory. The studies which are summarized here are displayed in Table 1. The age of the learner, the

<p>| Second Language Acquisition Studies That Have Measured Personality Variables, Divided According to Age of Learner, Setting and Trait Investigated |
|---|---|---|---|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pritchard (1952)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Sociability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rossier (1976)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Extroversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suter (1977)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Extroversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guirao (1972)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison (1976)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Sociability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart (1970)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Extroversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chastain (1975)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Outgoingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong-Fillmore (1976)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Sociability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metraux (Valette 1964)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Outgoingness</td>
</tr>
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<td>Geneseer (1980)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>FL</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Swain (1976)</td>
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<td>FL</td>
<td>Extroversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong (1978)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td>Outgoingness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = adult, FL = classroom setting, C = child, Nat = naturalistic setting, + = positive correlation, — = no correlation

Co-authored studies are referred to here by the name of the first author only.

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setting, the social trait investigated, and whether or not that trait correlated with proficiency differed from study to study.

Among the studies of adults or adolescents, Pritchard (1952) found an association between sociability (measured from children's playground behavior) and fluency in French in a British school setting. Similarly, Rossier (1976) looked at extroversion and acquisition of English among Spanish-speaking adolescents. He found that extroverted students became more rapidly proficient in English oral fluency than students who were more introverted. This did not hold for other measures of proficiency.

Suter (1977), however, measured English pronunciation skills among university-level students from a variety of backgrounds and found no correlation with extroversion. Morrison (1961), on the other hand, in a study on underachievement in foreign language learning among ninth graders, found that those who performed below their normal academic levels were more awkward, more serious, and less sociable than others. Smart, Elton, and Burnett (1970) measured personality traits among female freshmen and sophomores in a university French program in an attempt to identify over- and under-achievers. Although their main finding was that those who achieved above their predicted grade tended to be introverted, Chastain (1975) found that outgoing students tended to have better grades in certain foreign languages, but not in others. Finally, Guiora, Brannon, and Dull (1972) found a weak correlation between their concept of empathy (the ability to see things from another’s point of view) and pronunciation among a group of language teachers.

Of the studies with children, Wong-Fillmore (1976) followed five young Spanish speakers learning English in Northern California. She concluded, among other things, that the children who made the most progress were those who were predisposed to integrate socially with target language speakers in order to belong to and identify with that group. Similarly, Metraux, in a study of English-speaking children in France (cited in Valette 1964), found that the speedier learners were talkative, outgoing, and adaptable. The quiet, reserved, conformist children learned more slowly.

Genesee and Hamayan (1980) found no relationship between five personality indices (none of which included sociability or talkativeness) and any of their language measures in a study of 54 first graders in an early French immersion program. However, behavioral variables such as “has many friends” and “works in groups” were found to correlate significantly with achievement test results but not with oral production. Similarly, Strong (1978), in a pilot study of kindergartners and first graders from various backgrounds, found a significant correlation between outgoingness and oral production skills. But Swain and
Burnaby (1976) found no correlation between the traits of extroversion, sociability, and talkativeness and children's performance on French tests among a sample of kindergartners in immersion and French as a second language programs in Canada.

The above findings present what appears to be a very conflicting picture of the relationship between second language acquisition and social characteristics. However, one factor which has not been considered thus far is the nature of the language that is being assessed. I suggest that, if the effects of this variable are taken into account, many of the inconsistencies in the results may be resolved. In order to investigate the effects of the type of language assessed, I have chosen to make a distinction between natural communicative language and language that is the product of some linguistic task. Natural communicative language (NCL) refers to language used for interpersonal communication, whereas linguistic task language (LTL) results from a formal test of some kind (such as a comprehension test, a cloze test, a repetition task, or a story-retelling test). Others have made similar distinctions. For example, Cummins (1979) has distinguished between two kinds of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. Basic interpersonal communicative skills refer to "cognitively undemanding language performance in interpersonal situations" (Cummins, personal communication). Cognitive academic language proficiency, on the other hand, seems to describe the dimension of language proficiency that is related to literacy skills and involves a certain measure of metalinguistics awareness or ability to reflect on features of language outside immediate contexts. Recently, Cummins (1981) has referred to the same phenomena as "context-embedded" and "context-reduced" language proficiency. Similarly, Hernandez-Chavez, Burt, and Dulay (1978) have distinguished between "natural communication" tasks and "linguistic manipulation" tasks. The main difference between their distinction and the one I propose, however, is that NCL need not only be the result of a task, but might also be purely naturalistic language used in natural communication.

Table 2 regroups the studies under review, this time taking into account whether they measured NCL, LTL, or both kinds of language. It can be seen that NCL and LTL are fairly evenly distributed across the studies. Table 3 regroups the studies a second time, displaying whether or not the researchers found a relationship between the type of language sampled and personal factors related to social interaction. Now a very clear pattern emerges, It can be seen that in all cases social factors correlated with the NCL measures, except in Suter's (1977)
TABLE 2
Second Language Acquisition Studies That Have Measured Personality Variables, Divided According to Type of Language Sampled and Age of Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NCL</th>
<th>LTL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adults</td>
<td>Pritchard (1952) - FL</td>
<td>Rossier (1976) - Nat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rossier (1976) - Nat</td>
<td>Morrison (1961) - FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suter (1977) - Nat</td>
<td>Smart (1970) - FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiora (1972) - FL</td>
<td>Chastain (1975) - FL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NCL = natural communicative language  FL = classroom setting  LTL = linguistic task language  Nat = naturalistic setting  Co-authored studies are referred to hereby the name of the first author only.

study, in which only pronunciation among adult learners was assessed, and in the Genesee and Hamayan (1980) study, where oral production was measured only by a rating of the “Frenchness” of five-minute interviews.

TABLE 3
Second Language Acquisition Studies Divided According to Type of Language Sampled, and Presence or Absence of a Relationship with Social Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive Relationship</th>
<th>No Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCL</td>
<td>Pritchard (1952)</td>
<td>Suter (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wong-Fillmore (1976)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metraux (Valette 1964)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong (1978)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiora (1972)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chastain (1975)</td>
<td>Smart (1970)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NCL = natural communicative language  LTL = linguistic task language  Co-authored studies are referred to hereby the name of the first author only.
Linguistic task language was sometimes associated with these factors and sometimes not. One possible explanation for this (which might be substantiated by examining the original research reports) is that the language tests may have varied in their degree of in formality, along the lines of the Hernandez-Chavez, Burt, and Dulay (1978) distinction between “natural communication” tasks and “linguistic manipulation” tasks. If in fact they did, then performance on the more informal tasks may have been influenced by the same personal factors which appear to correlate with natural communicative language acquisition, thereby accounting for this discrepancy. In any case, the implication from these studies is that the acquisition of natural communicative language is consistently associated with those characteristics of an individual’s personality which have a bearing on social behavior. Linguistic task language proficiency, on the other hand, is only related to those characteristics under certain conditions (which might be related to the kinds of tasks used in the assessment tests). While there is no suggestion that certain personality traits are either a necessary or a sufficient condition for swift and successful language learning, there is an indication that the social behavior of an individual may have an effect on language acquisition by regulating the amount of contact with speakers of the target language or by reducing inhibitions about speaking the new language in public. It was the object of this research to make a systematic examination of the phenomena suggested by these studies and to incorporate the following features:

1. a focus on NCL as distinguished from LTL
2. use of more than one method to measure personality variables
3. use of natural language samples
4. control for teacher, age, setting, and cultural background.

METHOD

This research explores the relationship between a number of personal characteristics, which I have chosen to call social styles, and the acquisition of English by thirteen Spanish-speaking kindergartners (seven boys and six girls) over a period of one year in a bilingual classroom. The subjects attended an elementary school in a small California industrial community between September 1979 and June 1980. As a subgroup of a single bilingual classroom, they represented all of the children in that class who started out with practically no English and remained in the class throughout the school year. Other members of the class either spoke some English, were bilingual, or were monolingual in English.

Seven social styles were examined: talkativeness, responsiveness, gregariousness, assertiveness, extroversion, social competence, and
popularity. Assessments of talkativeness, responsiveness, and gregariousness were all derived from regular observations of the students’ behavior over the year. On the average, each subject was observed for one fifteen-minute period per week either at recess, during a seatwork lesson, or during a free activity period in the classroom. The observer noted down a description of the context, a record of each interaction in which the subject was a participant, the language of the interaction, the direction of the exchange, and who the other interactants were.

**Talkativeness** is defined as the relative tendency to initiate conversations. It was measured in the following way. All interactions initiated by the subject in Spanish were added together and that number was divided into the total observation time, giving a figure that represented the average number of minutes between verbal initiations with other Spanish speakers. Interactions with English speakers were omitted, as their number might conceivably have varied according to the subject’s English skills, thus confounding the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The final number was scaled so that the most talkative subject was represented by the highest score and the least talkative by the lowest.

**Responsiveness** is another aspect of talkativeness and is defined as the relative tendency to respond to the verbal initiations of others. In order to measure this, a tally was made of the number of times the subject was addressed by another Spanish speaker (in Spanish). Each of these interactions was studied to see if the subject responded verbally or not. A ratio of verbal response to non-response was then obtained and scaled so that the most responsive subject was represented by the highest score. Interactions in English were again omitted.

**Gregariousness** is an aspect of outgoingness or sociability and is defined as the relative propensity to interact with a wide variety of different peers. This factor was measured by counting the number of different interlocutors (of either language group) that the subject interacted with during each observation session. These numbers were then added together and divided into the total observation time and scaled so that the higher scores represented the more gregarious subjects.

Assessments of assertiveness and extroversion were both derived by using the *Early School Personality Questionnaire (ESPQ)*, formulated by Coan and Cattell (1966). Those questions in the *ESPQ* relating to these characteristics were translated into Spanish and administered to the subjects, divided into two groups, the bilingual teacher working with one group and her aide with the other. The children answered the questions by marking symbols on an answer sheet that did not require reading ability.

**Assertiveness** describes the degree to which a child is active, assertive, and aggressive, as opposed to being docile. In children at the kindergarten level, the most likely expression of assertiveness is successful dominance over peers in interpersonal settings.
Extroversion refers to the degree of sociability that a child exhibits, both through a positive emotional response to people and a tendency to interact freely and boldly.

Social competence is defined as the adequacy of a child’s interpersonal behavior and the degree to which that child can assume social responsibility. It was assessed by administering the *California Preschool Social Competency Scale* (Levine, Elzey, and Lewis 1969), which was completed for each subject independently by three researchers. The results were combined and averaged to provide a single score for each child.

Popularity was derived from the children’s own statements about their friends and playmates. It is defined as the relative degree to which a child is nominated by peers as a best friend or as a person they like to play with or sit next to in class. All children in the class were asked for their nominations every two months throughout the school year. The total number of separate nominations received by each subject across all the samplings was divided by the number of times sampled to produce an average number of nominations per sampling and hence, an indication of popularity.

Three language measures were developed from natural communicative language gathered from a playhouse environment, where one Spanish-speaking subject played alone with a native speaker of English, and from informal interviews. The measures were productive structural knowledge, play vocabulary, and pronunciation.

**Productive structural knowledge** was measured by examining interview and playroom language transcripts for the existence of any of 29 features of English sentence structure. (These features had been identified by the Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research [SWRL] in their project to develop a language skills framework which could serve as a resource for bilingual programs. SWRL [1980] found that these structural features were normally within the control of native English-speaking first graders.) Scores on this measure were obtained by awarding one point for each of the 29 structures found in a given number of utterances from the playroom or interview transcripts of the subjects, and then adding them together. This yielded a measure of how many different structures were used by the subject, whereas a simple count of all instances of all structures would have confounded structural breadth with repetitiveness and verbosity.

**Play vocabulary** was assessed from the transcripts of the playroom sessions. All new vocabulary items from the subjects’ verbal interactions with their playmates were recorded separately. Repetitions or echoes were not included. Obvious formulaic utterances like *lemme see* and *I’m gonna, disco dance* and *right here* were treated as single items. The resulting lists were then checked against the spoken word frequency counts published by Hart, Walker, and Gray (1977) in their report on the spoken language of young children between the ages of two-and-a-half and six-and-a-half. Single words which fell outside the one hundred most frequent words at the six-and-a-half year age level were given one point. The same was true
for two- and three-word formulas. In other words, the vocabulary measure was simply a count of non-frequent words produced in a given number of utterances from naturalistic conversation by the subjects in identical settings.

**Pronunciation** was assessed using three independent, paid judges, who listened to segments of the tape-recorded interviews with the subjects and rated them on their pronunciation, intonation, and overall fluency. The resulting scores were averaged to form a single percentage score for each subject.

Correlation analyses were then carried out to test for the association between the seven social styles and the NCL language measures. The Pearson r correlation coefficients for these tests are shown in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4</th>
<th>Pearson r Correlations for Social Styles with NCL Language Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TALK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL Str</td>
<td>.72*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL Voc</td>
<td>.72*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCL Pro</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < .05

Note: NCL = natural communicative language
Str = productive structural knowledge
Voc = play vocabulary
Pro = pronunciation

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

It can be seen that the three variables derived from long-term observation—namely, talkativeness, responsiveness, and gregariousness—account for most of the statistically significant correlations. Clearly these three social styles are closely related to one another (Table 5 shows the inter-style correlation coefficients, i.e., the statistical relationships between the styles themselves), in that each one emphasizes a different manifestation of outgoingness, as determined from behavioral observations. Talkativeness stresses quantity of initiations of verbal contacts, responsiveness highlights quantity of verbal responses to the initiations of others, and gregariousness is a measure of the variety of social encounters. Interestingly enough, it seems that...
variety alone is the least important of the three, while a tendency to talk or respond appears to be more crucial.

**TABLE 5**

Pearson r Correlations Between the Seven Social Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RESP</th>
<th>GREG</th>
<th>ASST</th>
<th>EXTR</th>
<th>SCMP</th>
<th>POP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TALK</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.73*</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESP</td>
<td></td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>-.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCMP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < .05

Note: TALK = talkativeness
      RESP = responsiveness
      GREG = gregariousness
      ASST = assertiveness
      EXTR = extroversion
      SCMP = social competence
      POP = popularity

Furthermore, while talkativeness and responsiveness were measured solely from interactions between Spanish speakers, gregariousness was measured from contacts with members of both language groups. It was hypothesized that the more gregarious children were likely to learn English faster, under the assumption that gregariousness in general would lead to more contact with English speakers. While this was certainly true, it is still not clear whether the added contact with English speakers might have caused superior English language skills or arisen from them. Correlations between number of contacts with children who spoke only English and the language measures showed no further significant associations (Pearson r coefficients for contacts with English-only speakers and NCL measures: NCL Str = .52; NCL Voc = .58* [*p < .05]; NCL Pro = .32). Thus, while gregariousness or the tendency to associate with a wide variety of peers does seem to be associated with increased vocabulary breadth, the additional contact with specifically English-speaking children arising from a gregarious personality does not appear to have the automatic effect of improving a learner’s English skills. It seems that the degree of active participation in the communication is more important than the variety of interactions.

It would appear from this that Wong-Fillmore’s (1976) claim that a key to acquiring a second language centers on a motivation to become a part of the world of the target language group (and so get more second language input) is not true for the learners in this study, and that other aspects of behavior or personality must account for superi-
ority at learning English. (This is also borne out by the sociometric data, described below.) In her study of five Spanish-speaking children learning English, Wong-Fillmore maintained that:

the social problem in second language learning comes down to two major issues—how to get along socially without a common language, and how to get your friends to want to help you learn theirs. Obviously, this means that the learner must want to be a part of the social group that speaks the language, enough to overcome the difficulties associated with initiating contact. Typically, the learner is motivated not so much to learn the language as to become a part of the social world of its speakers (1976:666).

This motivation, which Gardner and Lambert (1972) found to be so important among second language learners in Canada, may represent a sense of social awareness which still has not developed (and may not necessarily develop) among these very young children. In fact, there was no evidence throughout the year that the Spanish speakers attached any special status to the Anglo groups, and aspirations of upward mobility, if they could be divined from observations of recess and from the children’s own friendship nominations, were toward the bilingual children (i.e., those already fluent in both languages), rather than toward the monolingual English group. On occasion, the Spanish children were even observed actively to discourage Anglo peers from entering into their games. These social inclinations, however, did nothing to impede the acquisition of English for many of the children, and it can only be assumed that factors other than the motivation to be a part of the social world of Angles played a major role.

Given this evidence, some might be inclined to suggest other sources of English language input for the faster and more successful learners of English. If they are not interacting significantly more with their English-speaking peers at school, then maybe they are either talking to adults more or enjoying some contact with the language while at home. Evidence of extra contact with English-speaking adults during school hours, however, is not to be found from the observations made in this study. The Pearson r coefficients for contacts with adults and the language measures were all close to zero. No observations were made of their interactions outside of school, but there is little reason to expect that these children would have had a radically different circle of friends outside of school who would have spoken English rather than Spanish. Furthermore, from interviews with the parents, it was clear that no English was spoken in any of the households and, in two cases where older siblings knew English, they rarely, if ever, used the language at home.

The issue is, I propose, not that the better learners are getting more input than their peers, but rather that they are making more active use of the English they are exposed to, both from adults and from other
children in the school. This active use, reflected by traits of talkativeness and responsiveness, might involve not only better concentration or a greater tendency to process what they hear, but also a facility for keeping conversations going. Thus, the exchanges that they were observed to participate in may have been longer than the interactions of slower learners, thereby giving them richer language within a similar number of interactions. Unfortunately, as the conversations were not tape-recorded, analysis of this factor was not possible. It should, however, be a part of any further study of this phenomenon.

Neither of the traits derived from the ESPQ (i.e., assertiveness and extroversion) is significantly associated statistically with any of the language measures. This belies expectations based on previous research and somewhat contradicts the findings on talkativeness, responsiveness, and gregariousness. An explanation for the lack of significance may lie in the nature of the ESPQ and its appropriateness as an instrument to assess social styles. In the ESPQ, a score is obtained by asking the children questions and requiring them to mark one of two given answers. Although the administration of the test was very carefully monitored, it was clear that the children’s answers frequently did not correspond with their observed behavior during school hours. For example, one of the quietest and least active of all the subjects indicated by his choice of answers that he liked to climb trees, play ballgames, and play cowboys and Indians. His behavior at recess, however, was not consistent with these preferences, as he most often played on his own, riding around slowly on a tricycle, or watched other children engaged in the more boisterous activities for which he himself had expressed a preference. One obvious explanation for this is that the ESPQ measures more how children would like to be than how they actually are. In some cases, the child’s wishes may correspond with reality, but in many instances they do not, thereby giving a misleading impression of the child’s personality. The wording of the questions frequently fosters such misconceptions. For example, “Would you rather: (A) play with other children or (B) make something with blocks or metal parts?” clearly appeals for information on the child’s wishes, but implies that these will coincide with the child’s habits, an implication that appears to be unfounded. For this reason we cannot discount the possibility that assertiveness and extroversion are social styles that play important roles in the second language acquisition process. We simply need to find another way to measure them.

Social competence was found to correlate with productive structural knowledge but not with the other language measures. It is difficult to imagine why a high level of social competence would be related to the acquisition of grammatical structures but not to other aspects of communicative language. It is possible that the significant correlation
is unjustifiable, and that it arose in part because some of the questions in the California Preschool Social Competence Scale (Levine, Elzey, and Lewis 1969) related to verbal skills such as the ability to make explanations or to verbalize wants. Unfortunately, for these items in the Scale, the raters were not asked to note whether one or the other language was being used; thus, a certain small portion of the scores on social competence may have been confounded with the children’s ability to express themselves in English. For this reason, the one significant correlation should not be taken too seriously.

The lack of association found between popularity and English skills suggests that social attractiveness, even if it increases the potential for association with English speakers and as a result provides greater exposure to language input, does not enhance language learning. However, the information from the children’s answers on friendship provides us with more than just a measure of popularity, and it is worth describing it in a little more detail. Based on the children’s responses to the friendship questions, diagrams can be drawn to illustrate the relationships between the children as represented by their nominations of one another at each sampling. These diagrams are called sociometric maps, and an example of such a map can be found in Figure 1. These maps provided information on friendship groupings throughout the whole class. The map shown here is a representation of these groupings among all the Spanish speakers (both subjects and non-subjects) and the Anglo children who were involved with them. Arrows represent the direction of nomination from one child to another. A child who receives four or more nominations is considered a social star. A child who receives no nominations is considered a social isolate. Although the positions on these maps varied from sampling to sampling, certain features were typical throughout the year. One such feature is that the bilingual children (i.e., non-subjects who began the year fluent in both Spanish and English, signified here by a box around their labels) were consistently voted stars. Another stable feature was that nominations to and from monolingual English speakers (represented by a circle around their labels) most frequently occurred to and from the bilingual children. In other words, if all the Spanish speakers (both subjects and non-subjects) are taken into account, those who were already fluent in English before the beginning of the school year were both the most popular and the most inclined to associate with and be chosen as friends by the monolingual English group. Thus, it would appear that popularity follows the successful learning of a second language, while it does not necessarily act as an aid to that learning. Similarly, while it was noted from the observational data that the more successful among the subjects (i.e., among the 13 children who began the year with no English) did not interact proportionately more than their peers with
Figure 1. Sociogram for September
the monolingual English speakers, it can also be seen from the sociometric data that there was no tendency for these more successful subjects to prefer the monolingual English speakers as friends or playmates. Table 6 records the subjects’ total votes toward monolingual and bilingual English speakers, ranked in order of their combined communicative proficiency.

We may conclude from the sociometric data, then, that faster and more successful learners neither enjoy more popularity nor seek out monolingual or bilingual English speakers more than slower learners. We do find, however, that both overall popularity and an inclination to associate with the target language group tend to follow fluency in that language.

CONCLUSIONS

This study supports previous research which has found a relationship between aspects of sociability or outgoingness and natural communicative language skills. More specifically, the results of this study indicate that children who by their social styles are characterized as talkative and verbally responsive in their first language tend to be more efficient

\[1\] On the sociogram, the subjects are those children whose designations have no markings around them. The full names of these children are included in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Votes to English Speakers</th>
<th>Votes to Bilingual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Maria (mar)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Enrique (enr)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alberto (alb)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jaime (ja)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aydee (ayd)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chuy (chy)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sandro (san)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Angelica (ang)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Maribel (mab)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>Shirley</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hugo (hug)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ricardo (ric)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = not enrolled until second sampling  
# = not enrolled until third sampling

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than others in learning English. It also shows that speedier learners are more likely to interact with a wider variety of peers than are slower learners. What these findings appear to imply is not so much that faster learners receive more exposure to English from English speakers, but rather a greater ability on the part of those faster learners to make active use of the input they do get. In support of this interpretation, it was also found from the sociometric data that the faster learners among the target children who were non-English-speaking at the beginning of the school year did not befriend English speakers more than their slower-learning peers, nor did they exhibit any stronger motivation to identify with or be a part of the target language group. The group of bilingual children, however, whose fluency in English was already established at the start of school, both attracted a higher proportion of votes overall and accounted for the majority of the inter-language-group nominations. Thus, it would seem that motivation and tendencies toward being a part of the target language group follow a certain level of proficiency in that language, rather than contribute to that proficiency.

Similar social styles measured through a personality questionnaire were not found to be associated with language learning because it appeared that the questionnaire elicited information more about how a child would like to be, rather than how that child actually is. It should be stressed that these findings may only apply to situations similar to the one described in this study. Different characteristics may be important among children of different cultures, may vary in importance with age, and may not play the same role in situations where the proportions of L1 to L2 speakers are different.

Given these findings, teachers who have non-English-speaking children in their classes might see the necessity to encourage their students to talk whenever possible and to arrange that children from different language groups work and play together since, left to their own devices, those children, even at very young ages, would tend to interact mostly with other speakers of their native language. The indication is that contact with English speakers alone does not enhance language learning, but that the active use that is made of the extra input is what counts. Thus, the impetus should be not simply to “throw” the children together, but to create situations where they will want and need to communicate with one another to achieve a common goal. This could be accomplished in a number of ways: small group work where children collaborate on a joint project; peer-tutoring, where English learners have to explain something they know to an English speaker in English; paired assignments; and so forth. Highly structured classrooms where few opportunities exist for communicative interaction will encourage academic language proficiency among the more atten-
tive and self-motivated students, but will not foster the development of natural communicative language among any of the children.

The clearest implications for researchers include the importance of distinguishing between NCL and LTL when considering social style or personality research, the greater reliability of information gained from long-term observation over that acquired from psychological tests, and the valuable information on interrelationships gained from the technique of sociometry.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The data presented here were collected by the author as part of a larger study into individual differences, funded by NIE, and conducted by Lily Wong-Fillmore and Susan Ervin-Tripp. This author, however, takes full responsibility for the analyses and conclusions presented here. The larger study also examines social styles, but their definition and analysis may be different from that reported in this article. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 16th Annual TESOL Convention, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 1-6, 1982.

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Activities to Promote Learning and Communication in the Second Language Classroom

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Recent research in psycholinguistics has suggested that experience with language in its communicative function is essential for learning to speak a second language. A suitable linguistic environment provides for the development of strategies for aural comprehension and for the acquisition of oral production. Such an environment is provided by immersion programs in Canada, whose successful second language learning results are well known. However, teaching techniques are not the same in all immersion classrooms. This article examines a teaching methodology based on activity-centered learning, which is applicable to ESL or FSL classes as well as to immersion programs. Examples are given of activities which foster second language learning both in the classroom and on out-of-school excursions, together with the psycholinguistic principles on which they are based. The activities described are suitable for 11-12 year olds and may be adapted for younger or older learners.

INTRODUCTION

Immersion programs in Canada have typically been designed to provide French language instruction to English-dominant children in the public school system. The aim of immersion programming is communicative competence in the second language (L2), and the main characteristic of this approach is that language instruction is incidental to educational content (McLaughlin 1978).

The success of French immersion programs is well known. They have been monitored by researchers in several parts of the country over a long period of time: Fredericton (Cameron, Feider, and Gray 1974), Montreal-St. Lambert (Lambert and Tucker 1972; Bruck, Lambert, and Tucker 1974), Montreal (Genesee, Morin, and Allister 1974; Genesee and Chaplin 1975), Ottawa (Barik and Swain 1975; Edwards and Casserly 1972; Edwards et al. 1981; Harley 1976; Stern, Swain, and McLean 1976), Toronto (Barik and Swain 1974, 1976). Results are
remarkably consistent among these researchers, who find that children experience virtually no detrimental effects to their mother tongue skills and achieve a degree of competence in the second language that is far superior to the results seen in regular French as a second language (FSL) classes.

The research cited above describes the successful results of the immersion children but does not offer a theoretical explanation for their achievement. Two factors, however, are mentioned as being pertinent: the amount of time devoted to hearing and attempting to speak the second language, and the fact that the language itself is not taught as an object of knowledge, but rather is used to communicate and to transmit information (e.g., facts in history, geography, or science). Other researchers (notably, Saegert et al. 1974, Upshur 1968, Tucker 1977) corroborate this view that language is best learned when it is incidental to some other activity. Still others (d'Anglejan 1978, Johnson 1981, Long et al. 1976) contend that most learners who have had more traditional, grammar-based instruction cannot make use of their knowledge of grammar when attempting to communicate in the L2. Together, these arguments imply that a grammar-based curriculum may not be the most effective way to learn a second language and further support the immersion approach.

Stern (1978a) distinguishes between formal and functional strategies of teaching: regular FSL classes are an example of formal instruction, and immersion classes represent functional instruction. He considers that teaching the school curriculum through the medium of the second language simulates the experience of a bilingual home or of living in the second language community and provides an adequate amount of contact time with the language. The learner is put into a position which is similar to the one in which the mother tongue is acquired. The environment is not linguistically ordered, but rather is organized around content and communication. Language is therefore experienced directly, not rehearsed for later use. The learner has to infer more from both situation and context and must improvise and take risks with the language. These coping techniques are needed in real life communication situations, although little or no provision is typically made for them in many formal teaching situations (see Taylor 1982 for a review of curriculum design founded on grammar-based instruction or a notional/functional syllabus). Immersion instruction, therefore, constitutes a functional approach to language learning, as compared with the formal approach which concentrates on transmitting the code of the second language. It is this difference, according to Stern (1978b), which accounts for the success of immersion programs.
METHODOLOGY FOR IMMERSION INSTRUCTION

However, it should not be assumed that there is a standard instructional methodology used in all immersion classes. Examination reveals that methods can be broadly described as either teacher-centered (TC) or activity-centered (AC).

A TC class is defined as a traditional one in which the curriculum is predetermined (i.e., subjects are chosen, texts are provided, goals are set and tested for level of attainment). All students are expected to cover basically the same material. The goals of the program are primarily aural comprehension and oral fluency. Teachers do not directly correct students’ mistakes in French during regular classes, but do so during the French language arts period. Correct language from the teacher serves as a model for the students’ acquisition of the L2. Student participation generally involves reaction to curriculum content and response to classroom routines.

An AC class, on the other hand, is one in which subject matter is presented using a thematic approach and where students are involved in hands-on experiences. The following are important aspects of AC methodology:

1. There is no attempt to structure linguistic content.
2. Students choose their own areas of study within the theme suggested by the teacher.
3. Students do whatever is necessary to find the information required to pursue their projects (e.g., go out and look for it, ask someone for information, or check reference books).
4. Students present their findings in a form which they have selected, such as a model, a picture, a written hand-out, or whatever means they consider appropriate.
5. Students use each other as well as the teacher as resource persons.

Teachers in an AC program make language corrections indirectly, except during the period devoted to French language arts. While the goals of the program are primarily aural comprehension and oral fluency, reading and writing are used by the students as necessary. In this model, students have opportunities to initiate discourse on several levels: decision making, discussion, information seeking, presentation of facts and ideas, and informal exchanges.

According to Widdowson (1978), students need examples of different kinds of authentic discourse to learn how to use language for communicative purposes. We can hypothesize, therefore, that the AC classroom would provide a more propitious atmosphere for developing communicative and linguistic competence within a school context than
would a TC classroom. This hypothesis was confirmed by a study in the Montreal area (Stevens and Genesee, in preparation) which compared students who spent 50% of their instructional time in an AC immersion program with students who spent 80% of their instructional time in a TC immersion program. Results showed no evidence of loss of English language skills for either group; French language skills of students involved in the AC program were comparable to those of students in the TC program, despite the time differences.

The suggested reasons for this success were the motivation provided by the use of language in real situations (Taylor 1982, 1983) and the opportunities for extended discourse among peers (Johnson 1979, Morrow 1981). While the results of this study pertain to a French immersion program, the underlying principle of this approach—language learning in a setting where the language is a vehicle of communication instead of an object of study—can be applied to the learning of any second or foreign language. Furthermore, by involving students in choosing activities, in working on them, and in talking about them, many current curricula can be adapted to provide for activity-centered learning.

The following are examples of activities which have been successful with 11 and 12 year olds in both FSL and immersion classes in Montreal. They illustrate some of the means possible for putting theory into practice. Both in-school and out-of-school activities are described, and the characteristics which make them good L2 learning experiences are identified.

**IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

These have been grouped according to some events which commonly take place during the school year, academic themes, and activities to develop personal skills. They can easily be adapted to the needs of children at different levels of cognitive development and linguistic ability.

School Events

There are many events in the school year which can be used as a basis for L2 learning. One of these is the science fair, which occurs regularly in most schools. For this event, an individual or a group chooses a topic, prepares an experiment or demonstration, and submits it to the science competition.

This type of activity lends itself well to the learning of new language appropriate for the topic chosen, which itself happens to be of
particular interest to the learner. Before entries are submitted to the science fair, students can benefit from a rehearsal by sharing their information orally with their classmates. Because the information presented is new, it can be assumed that the students will be interested. This fulfills one of the major purposes of communication, which is to bridge an information gap (Johnson 1979, Morrow 1981). Skills are sharpened in the areas of listening and speaking when questions of elaboration or clarification are asked by the audience and answered by the presenter.

A further advantage of this type of activity is that students learn about many subjects which it would be impossible for the teacher to cover. For example, in one science fair different students from the same class prepared and presented the following projects: an exhibit on radios, in which two boys built a crystal set and displayed an old floor model radio from the 1930’s which was still in operating condition; the results of an investigation into the change in growth of plants exposed to rock-and-roll and classical music; a chart on weather together with various instruments to measure rain and wind; a diagram of a piston engine together with examples of racing cars; a model of dinosaurs in their habitat accompanied by a chart showing their names, sizes, and the dates of their existence. None of these would have been covered as part of the curriculum, either because the teacher did not know much about the subject or would not have thought it to be interesting to all students.

Another school event which occurs in Canada and in the colder parts of North America is the winter carnival. This event can give rise to both whole-class activities and individual activities. An example of a whole-class activity is the making of an ice sculpture. During the decision-making process as to the subject and its size, everyone is involved in using language to express ideas, ask questions, or make comments. During the building process, different language is required, both for cooperation on the actual construction and for purposes of socialization. These are important opportunities for students to learn to experience real communication in which they can freely choose both the content and the form of what they want to say in conversational sequences (Morrow 1981).

Frequently, in a winter carnival, a parade is planned which involves constructing floats or figures related to a particular theme. Such projects are best left to individuals and small groups, where designing, planning, and working out the construction processes all require the use of language appropriate to each situation. In the small group situation, each student is involved in goal-oriented communication (Morrow 1981), which provides more opportunities to hear and use the
language (Long et al, 1976) and to control its direction (Long 1975). The atmosphere in a small group is also less threatening to many students and encourages their participation.

**Academic Themes**

An art unit on color can provide opportunities for acquiring pertinent language while exploring phenomena associated with color. Students can learn the names of the primary and secondary colors, make a color wheel and manipulate it, learn how to blend colors by using different shades of tissue paper held against a window, add white and black to any one color to obtain gradations in hue, investigate the green after-image produced by staring at a red circle, and make Rorschach-like figures with two colors of poster paint dripped on one-half of a folded piece of art paper. All of these activities permit talking about concrete objects and creating utterances to express thought while the student is actively engaged in cognitive learning. Although everyone is busy learning about color, each child produces personal work. The focus is on content rather than form, and it becomes possible for the student to apply prior linguistic knowledge from the mother tongue (Keller-Cohen 1979) to the current learning situation to help decode the target language or to construct utterances in it.

Another example of a theme developed through an activity-centered approach is a unit on birds. Although the topic is selected by the teacher, it is explored by individual members of the class according to interest and ability. A preliminary discussion (in the L2) elicits key aspects of the subject, which can be noted on the blackboard. Individuals or small groups then each choose one area to investigate.

The activities which resulted from one such exploration of the topic with 11 year olds in an immersion class included the making of birdfeeders, the identification of birds in the neighborhood and what they ate, the incubation of chicken eggs, the charting of bird migration, and the identification of birds’ nests and an attempt to construct them. As with the science fair, many topics were studied which the teacher would not have covered. These included how a bird flies, and what insects live in a bird’s nest (an accidental discovery when real nests were left on the display table). In addition, when the incubated eggs failed to hatch, it was found that the failure of a project can be as valuable for language learning as its success. The children involved learned a number of things about the necessary components of an incubation period as well as the language to express these notions. They then focused on communicating the results of their experiment to an interested and inquiring audience. This kind of active communica-
Developing Personal Skills

The development of personal skills can also serve as a vehicle for language learning. An example is a sewing project by children in FSL classes, who made stuffed animals for a charitable organization at Christmas. In general, an activity of this kind is best selected by the teacher, who prepares the language elements but allows the learners to choose the materials and the particular animal they are going to make. This kind of project works equally well with boys or girls and enables them to acquire new skills and derive a sense of satisfaction from their contribution. Once again, it is possible to create a situation where communication can take place about real things in real situations (Taylor 1982).

Cooking is another excellent vehicle for learning language and for developing personal skills and is equally appealing to boys and girls. Within the general area of cooking, there are several possibilities open to the L2 teacher. For example, children can make cookies or cupcakes for sale to raise money for a project, such as a field trip. This activity can involve not only the actual preparation of the food, but also the making of posters and invitations to announce the sale to the rest of the school—all good language learning activities.

An ambitious teacher who also happens to like cooking can consider the preparation of an entire meal to be eaten at lunchtime by the children. This activity not only develops skills and promotes language but also permits the teaching of an aspect of the target language culture. It has been found to be successful with many FSL classes, only requiring an extra period of class time for preparations on the day of the lunch. Preliminary planning, of course, can take much longer. In one instance, when the objective was to eat an authentic French meal, the students had to learn the components of such a meal, from hors d’oeuvre to dessert. They then had to plan each of the different courses, estimate the cost, collect the necessary money, and do the shopping. Divided into groups, they each prepared a food course and served it to all. Everyone took a turn at cleaning up afterwards. This activity was one of the highlights of the year, and the recipes, which were made into a booklet, were taken home with pride.

The cultural component of this activity provides an opportunity to broaden students' “social perspectives” (Lambert 1982) and the activity itself incorporates other factors now considered important in L2 learning: motivation to use real language in real communicative situa-
tions (Taylor 1983), work in small groups, and use of language to success-fully complete a task (Morrow 1981).

OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Often a program which includes taking excursions is considered to be an activity-centered program although, as I have shown, this is too limited a definition. But excursions can be useful and entertaining and can lead to many follow-up activities in the classroom.

Some of the principles which underlie successful language learning outings include involving students in information-gathering activities (see d’Anglejan 1978) and in group projects in which those students have an interest (see Allwright 1979, Geddes 1981, Johnson 1981). The students should, therefore, participate in planning the trip and prepare for it by obtaining all of the necessary information themselves. Each group can then share its findings with the rest of the class. This permits using language for several different purposes and provides opportunities for acquiring or exercising both comprehension and production skills. Since the information is new and practical, the audience is likely to be very attentive (see Johnson 1979, Morrow 1981). When preparing for the actual outing, it is best to form sub-groups within the larger group. These smaller units—five or six students with a parent or teacher—operate autonomously on the day of the outing. It appears that when children decide for themselves where they are going to go, they are more committed to the experience and will make special efforts to speak the L2. This also occurs more naturally in a small group than when the class is taken as a whole. After the trip, each group can share the events of their day with the rest of the students, who have not followed the same itinerary. All of these experiences promote language based on the desire to communicate real events and memories of special occasions.

The content areas of regular school subjects can also lend themselves to L2 learning. For example, taking youngsters outdoors to explore a pond results in learning both science and language. Other possibilities for profitable language learning experiences are visiting local sites, taking a shopping trip, and celebrating a regional festival or special event.

Local Visits

Even well known places can become interesting when a challenge is involved. For instance, students from a suburban school were asked to spend a day in Montreal in December without boots or a coat. This is possible in Montreal because there is an extensive underground city. Before the trip, groups of children put in a considerable amount of
preparatory work, researching the facilities accessible by means of the Metro (the underground subway system) and producing maps and information. For the trip, new groups were formed according to the places different children wanted to visit or activities in which they wanted to participate. After the trip, each group reported on their particular adventures to the rest of the class. Many other activities, such as art work, stories, and individual presentations, also occurred as spin-offs from the excursion.

Going to an outdoor market is an excellent activity for both younger and older children. Having something to buy at the market together with a small sum of money acts as a motivation for the child to learn the names of fruits and vegetables and to learn the conversational exchanges necessary to ask how much something costs, to purchase something, and to get change. The real life situation makes this a very worthwhile experience.

Special Events

Each region has its own particular celebrations or festivals, which can serve as special experiences for language learning. One of these in the Montreal area is the spring sugaring-off expedition. This is a visit to a maple syrup farm, where the children can learn about the making of maple syrup, toffee, and sugar. They can eat some of the foods associated with springtime and maple syrup; they can also meet other students at the site, very often native speakers of the students' L2. Because students need a particular motivation to enter into conversation with native speakers, I have used the strategy of giving them simple questionnaires and asking them to interview three people they meet at the site. This permits them to overcome their shyness by blaming the teacher for a “silly assignment,” and it gets them talking to strangers, practicing their conversation skills (see Gunterman 1980).

Such a trip is an excellent time for teachers to discover some of their students’ interests and to talk about non-academic subjects. On one of these occasions, I learned that a quiet child in my class was quite an expert on mosses, something I would never have discovered in a classroom setting.

Frequently, in the newspapers or on television, one hears about special events in the community which can be incorporated into language learning activities. One such event was a local kite-making project, to which everyone was invited. This turned out to be a delightful activity for students: there were new language and motor skills to be learned, and an interesting product as a reward for one’s efforts. There were also opportunities for socialization and for cooperation during the process of kite-making, and then there was the fun of flying the kite afterwards.
A nagging question presents itself. How are children going to use language they have not learned? Krashen argues that language acquisition is “primarily subconscious, not influenced by overt teaching, and is encouraged by simplified input and participation in conversation” (1977:144-145). Observation of the students described in the preceding activities indicates that the children know far more language than they exhibit in response to classroom drills. When they wish to communicate, they find the linguistic—and paralinguistic—means to get their messages across. Second, they are very willing to learn new language when they see a use for it and have only to be furnished with the missing word or phrase to quickly assimilate it. Finally, if the atmosphere of the classroom is non-threatening, and their attempts to speak are met with encouragement and understanding (in the literal sense), children will produce communicative language, even if it is replete with grammatical errors. These should be considered to be creative mistakes, indicating a transition period between non-language and acceptable speech. Practice, they say, makes perfect. But practice here does not mean endless repetition of the same structure. Rather, it means the use of language in numerous situations where meaning is important and where the opportunity exists for students to develop confidence in their ability to cope with the language (Allwright 1979).

The activities I have discussed here are but a small number of the possibilities that are available within any school, within any community, and for practically any age group of children, and they can be used in ESL/FSL classes as successfully as in immersion programs. The effectiveness of the AC program lies in the motivation created when students participate in the decision-making process, in the students’ commitment to learning through choice, which results from that participation, in the opportunity to use meaningful language in real situations, and in the ability to interact with peers and the teacher in an informal atmosphere.

In an AC program, each person acts on the environment to obtain knowledge. This is an application of Piagetian theory to L2 learning. Piaget (1975) emphasized that children must operate on their own environments so as to build personal sets of meanings from experience. This occurs naturally when a child is acquiring the mother tongue, but must be provided for in the L2 classroom. Many new experiences are available to the student in the AC program, and these serve to generate both referential and communicative language. At the same time, cognitive knowledge is being acquired and is linked to linguistic expression.

An additional advantage of the AC technique is the manner in which it readily allows children to explore topics at their own level of
understanding and in their own style, such as those identified by Brown (1980): impulsive or reflective; tolerant or intolerant of ambiguity; with a tendency to skeletonize or to embroider; and field dependent or independent. Furthermore, slower learners are able to select subject matter within their range and develop linguistic competence at their own speed.

It was mentioned earlier that immersion teachers do not correct grammatical errors directly, except during the language arts period. This is a style which can also be adopted by the ESL or FSL teacher, who could note the major language errors heard while the children are busy working on activities and could devote some time to a lesson on these, directed at all the children.

While an L2 learning program which is entirely based on activities may seem too radical to many teachers who must follow a prescribed syllabus, it is possible to incorporate activity-centered learning, based on the principles enumerated, into the curriculum on a regular basis. It will be revealing to the skeptical teacher to observe the amount of language learning which takes place during these sessions and to see how much of the course of instruction is actually covered by the children without specific guidance.

I propose that this progress is due to the fact that language acquisition is favored by the opportunities to create language and to use it frequently: repetition occurs naturally, not as an echo chorus to grammatical exercises; the learner interacts with peers, the teacher, and others in real situations; the language used is a tool for cognitive growth, which in turn promotes the learning of new language.

In addition, the positive effects of an AC program include: the motivation to communicate, because students are not responding to questions to which everyone already knows the answers; a non-threatening atmosphere which permits physical movement during class time (this may be especially important for growing boys); and support for ego development in such areas as decision making and organizing material. The interaction with their peers provides children with feedback on their product or performance, which is directed at the information presented rather than at a personal level. Finally, students take responsibility for their own learning; they make choices and commit themselves, rather than following the same program as everyone else.
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The Development of L2 Intuitions

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Intuitions, particularly judgments of grammaticality, have played an important role in theoretical linguistics, but the nature of grammaticality judgments by second language learners has not received adequate attention. The present study is an investigation of the function of grammaticality judgments in second language acquisition. Two groups of learners of different proficiency levels were asked to give grammaticality judgments of sentences they had written and of sentences other students had written. The results were analyzed in terms of the subjects’ ability to make the appropriate grammaticality judgments and to correct those sentences they had judged to be ungrammatical. The results indicate that with increased proficiency in English, learners move from an overall ability to make general assessments of grammaticality to an ability to identify and/or correct particular details. The results of this study are also discussed in terms of Bialystok’s (1979, 1981) notion of implicit/explicit knowledge and the general function of metalinguistics awareness in second language acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that the language of second language (L2) learners, what Selinker (1972) has called “interlanguage,” or what I shall be referring to as a learner-language (see also Corder’s 1978 “language-learner language”), is a system in its own right. This notion has been further amplified by Adjemian (1976), Gass and Ard (in press), Gundel and Tarone (in press), Eckman (in press), and Schmidt (1980), all of whom have argued that learner-languages are subject to the constraints on natural languages. If we assume similarity to natural languages, we would further suppose that they could be investigated through the same methods as other types of natural languages, for which a chief methodological device is the use of intuitions of native speakers. However, this device has been used relatively rarely in studying L2 learner-languages.

In this article we discuss the significance of intuitions in general as
well as present results of an experiment in which L2 intuitions were the subject of investigation. In particular, a major point of interest is the discovery of how learners evaluate and correct their own utterances. The implications of this study for the overall development of a learner’s knowledge of a second language will be discussed.

Grammaticality Judgments

Judgments of grammaticality refer to a speaker’s intuition concerning the nature of a particular utterance. The basic question is whether or not a given utterance (usually a sentence) is well-formed.

The goal of second language acquisition research is to seek answers to the question of acquisition itself. Not only do we ask ourselves what is acquired, but also when, how, and why. While individual research questions frequently address only limited aspects of the what, the goal of research is to understand the totality of acquisition. We are frequently limited by the type of data collection done and hence the claims that we can make about the process of acquisition. The complete picture of the what of acquisition must come from examining a variety of L2 sources, including production, perception, comprehension, and intuition data. Anything less cannot hope to meet even the minimal requirement of explanatory adequacy (see Gass 1980a, Tarone 1982).

Given the overwhelming reliance on grammaticality judgments within theoretical linguistics, it seems somewhat surprising that the L2 acquisition literature is so rarely based on data obtained from this method. However, there are several reasons why this may be the case. Schachter, Tyson, and Diffley (1976) speculated that the paucity of studies using intuitional data is a reflection of elicitation methodology used in first language acquisition studies, where judgments of grammaticality are often difficult to obtain because the subjects are very young children. Since L2 acquisition research has followed closely on the heels of child language studies, the use of intuitional data in our field has similarly been limited, although clearly the limitations that apply to children are not necessarily applicable to adults.

There are still other reasons which, perhaps, have greater validity in justifying the absence of intuitional data in adult second language acquisition studies, or which may at least provide greater justification for not maintaining the parallel with theoretical linguistics. By and large, grammaticality judgments are not asked of naive speakers. Linguistic theories, in particular generative analyses of languages, are based primarily on judgments made by professional linguists. When one utilizes judgments made by linguistically unsophisticated speakers, and perhaps even linguistically sophisticated ones, one does not always
find consistency between what speakers do and what they say they do. The problem may be further compounded when dealing with non-standard English speakers, since one cannot often be sure just what variety of language the judgments are being made about—that is, are they making judgments about the standard, or what they think the standard is, or about their own dialect? The situation of L2 learners is not dissimilar since these learners are generally asked for judgments about the target language and not necessarily about their own learner-grammar. Despite this, we make inferences from their responses about the nature of their target language (TL) grammar. In other words, in the absence of very explicit instructions, L2 learners most likely assume that they are being asked about what is correct in the language they are learning. It is difficult to convince learners that their attempts at a second language form a systematic entity, which would pave the way for direct questions about their learner-grammar.

A third justification for the limited use of grammaticality judgments as a means of data collection in L2 research concerns the learner's overall ability in the target language. When asking for judgments from adult native speakers (even linguistically unsophisticated ones), one can assume that most of the time there is at least an approximate equivalence in a speaker's ability to produce utterances, to comprehend utterances, to parse utterances, and to judge utterances. For L2 learners this is not necessarily the case since there is often a large discrepancy in one's abilities in these areas. Furthermore, Carroll, Bever, and Pollack (1981) investigated native speaker intuitions of sentence relatedness and showed that linguistic intuitions can be manipulated by altering the conditions under which sentence pairs are presented. The implications of their study are far-reaching in that the one-to-one relationship between grammatical structures and intuitions is called into question. Nonetheless, they suggest that the intuitive process can itself be the object of inquiry:

. . . linguistic intuitions have a dual systematic nature. On the one hand, they can be basic and primitive manifestations of the grammatical knowledge speakers share; but on the other hand, they are complex behavioral performances that can be properly understood and adequately interpreted only by a comprehensive analysis (Carroll, Bever, and Pollack 1981:380).

In fact we claim that linguistic intuitions of L2 learners are important not only for the information they reflect about learners' grammatical knowledge, but also because of the information they can provide about L2 development and the ways in which language knowledge is organized.

Despite the lack of attention that grammaticality judgments have received in the L2 literature, their importance is beginning to be recognized. Corder (1973) originally discussed the value of adding this
type of data to the more commonly collected data, which he called “textual data,” these latter coming from utterances which learners themselves have produced. And recently, several L2 researchers have used intuitional data in their work. Bailey and Madden (1980), Ioup and Kruse (1977), Schmidt (1980), Gass (1979), Bialystok (1979, 1981), and others have all made use of this type of data in attempting to understand the process of acquisition (see Chaudron, undated, for an extensive overview of research in this area).

Although the ultimate goal of L2 research is to determine the nature of non-primary language acquisition (Adjemian 1981), “the immediate goal of research in this field is the description of the grammatical and phonological system which underlies learner performance” (Tarone 1982:70). However, if we limit the scope of our research to descriptions of the learner’s grammar, well-documented phenomena such as avoidance (Gass 1980b, Schachter 1974, Kleinmann 1977) and recent conceptions of language transfer as espoused by Kellerman (1979, in press; Zobl 1980) will not manifest themselves in the data.

Just what information, then, can grammaticality, or intuitional judgments, as they are frequently called, provide us with? As mentioned above, they reflect information about a learner’s knowledge, either static or developing, of the target language and the organization of that knowledge. However, there is yet an additional aspect to be considered. The ability to think about language has sometimes been called metalinguistic awareness, an ability related to a greater facility with language. Metalinguistic activities encompass a wide range of phenomena, of which linguistic intuitions (including grammaticality judgments) are one part.

### Metalinguistic Awareness

With this information as background, let us now turn to a consideration of metalinguistic awareness, what it is and its significance in doing L2 acquisition research. From Bewell and Straw (1981) we find various definitions of this term. Bateson refers to it as “those explicit or implicit messages where the subject of discourse is the language” (1976:127). Cazden says that it is “the ability to make language forms opaque and to attend to them in and for themselves” (1976:603). Another view comes from Fowles and Glanz, who say it is “the ability to manipulate language as an object” (1977:432). There are also differing degrees of awareness referred to by some authors. The common factor in all of this is that we are dealing with some ability on the part of the speaker to view language (or at least a particular aspect of it) in and of itself and to perform certain operations on it. In this sense, grammaticality judgments are crucial in determining this ability. Other evidence sug-
gested for the existence and use of metalinguistic awareness comes from word games, puns, recognition of ambiguities, and perhaps even translation tasks (Sharwood Smith, personal communication).

For second language learners the ability to think and talk about language might involve abstract analyses of a number of different types. For example, it might include 1) analyses of their own language, 2) a comparison between their native language (NL) and the target language, 3) a comparison between their native language and other languages previously learned, or even 4) a comparison between the target language and other languages previously learned.

Clearly, the ability to think about language as an abstract entity and to make cross-linguistic comparisons is manifested in the now familiar strategy of avoidance (Schachter 1974) or in Kellerman’s (in press) concept of psychotypology. Presumably both presuppose a choice on the part of the learner about which linguistic forms will be successful in the target language, or which forms will be difficult. Moreover, metalinguistic awareness has been found to be a facilitator of acquisition. For example, it develops earlier and more rapidly in children with more than one language (Burling 1973, Sharwood Smith 1981, Slobin 1978). Heeschen (1978) suggests that there may be increased linguistic reflectiveness in multilingual situations regardless of whether or not the society is literate. In other words, there is some relationship between knowledge of languages and a greater amount of metalinguistic awareness.

According to Bewell and Straw, “there is strong evidence to suggest that a relationship exists between the development of metalinguistic awareness and language learning” (1981: 117). Initially, self-correction and restatement of utterances may serve to aid the communication process. Word games, puns, and recognitions of ambiguities surface at a later stage (for a full discussion, see Clark 1978).

It is our claim that a similar relationship holds for second language learning. Metalinguistic awareness has an important function for second language learners, allowing them to make comparisons between NL and TL, self-correct, and perhaps even monitor their output. Investigating a learner’s ability to judge grammaticality is therefore essential to an understanding of a learner’s development.

1 Metalinguistic abilities in children have frequently been related to their abilities to develop reading and writing skills and not to their abilities to learn how to speak. That is, all children, regardless of their metalinguistic abilities, acquire native competence. However, as we point out later in this article, metalinguistic abilities do serve a communicative function for children, as Sinclair, Jarvella, and Levelt (1978) show. Furthermore, “success” in a language is not restricted to one’s ability to speak and understand a language for, clearly, all non-impaired children do succeed in this area, but we claim that “success” includes reading and writing abilities. In this sense, greater metalinguistic abilities relate to greater language success.
Obtaining Grammaticality Judgments in L2 Research

Generally, in adult L2 acquisition, intuitional data are obtained by means of a paper and pencil task. Learners are asked to judge the grammaticality of certain test sentences, usually grammatical and ungrammatical versions of the particular structure the researcher is gathering information about. There is considerable variability among researchers as to the percentage of grammatical vs. ungrammatical sentences presented and whether or not the sentences are to be corrected. Some researchers ask the learners to correct those sentences which they consider to be incorrect, others underline the particular structure so as to focus attention on it, and others ask only for responses about grammaticality.

The test sentences typically used on these tasks are either 1) sentences actually produced by learners (Schachter et al. 1976, White 1977), 2) sentences designed by the researcher to test specific aspects of a given structure (Bailey and Madden 1980, Gass 1979, Ioup and Kruse 1977, Schmidt 1980), or 3) sentences in context designed to test grammaticality judgments (Arthur 1980). These researchers have hypothesized errors based on a contrastive analysis and then focused on them in their studies. However, it is important to note that errors actually produced are not always produced by the same person who is making judgments about them. For example, in the Schachter et al. (1976) study, the errors are produced and judged within a language group, but not necessarily by the person who produced them. Underlying this means of formulating a grammaticality judgment task is the implicit assumption that there is an Arabic-English interlanguage, a Spanish-English interlanguage, and so forth. In other words, Arabic speakers learning English all “do” the “same” thing. While this may be true to some degree, we do not yet know which aspects of one’s NL will be influential on one’s production of the TL and which will not be. Nor do we know how uniform this might be across speakers. As Corder (1973) has noted, theoretically, there may be as many different interlanguages as there are individuals who speak them.

In this article we will take a closer look at intuitional data, examining in particular what learners are able to do and how their abilities progress.

METHOD

The study described here is one in which judgments were elicited about a learner’s own output. This, of course, is potentially difficult since learner-languages, unlike natural languages, are in a constant state of flux or, at least, are much less stable than other natural languages. Hence, grammaticality judgments were obtained within 24 hours after the sentences were produced.
The study is based on data from 21 subjects, 13 from an intermediate ESL class at the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan, and 8 from an advanced ESL class there. They were all given an in-class composition on one of two subjects: 1) the method of English language instruction in their own country, or 2) who they would like to be if they could be someone else for a day. There was ample time for students to locate and correct errors. In fact, there was considerable evidence of correction in the form of erasures and cross-outs. On the day following the in-class assignment, they were each given a grammaticality judgment test which consisted of sentences from each of these four categories:

a. four grammatical sentences from their own compositions
b. four ungrammatical sentences from their own compositions
c. two grammatical sentences from compositions of speakers of languages other than their own
d. two ungrammatical sentences from compositions of speakers of a language other than their own.

Hence, ideally, each speaker had 12 sentences (8 of which came from her/his own composition and 4 from someone else’s). Half in each category were grammatical and half were ungrammatical. The sentences were presented to the learners in random order. The subjects were asked to judge each sentence as being either grammatical or ungrammatical (the terms good English sentences vs. bad English sentences were used), and to correct those sentences which they judged to be ungrammatical so as to make them grammatical.

RESULTS

Because a discussion of these results can become confusing, we have adopted terminology following Arthur (1980) to make distinctions concerning the terms grammatical and ungrammatical. We refer to grammatical/ungrammatical from the learner’s point of view as grammatical (L) or ungrammatical (L) respectively, and we refer to grammatical/ungrammatical from the perspective of standard English as grammatical (E)/ungrammatical (E).

There are a number of different measures that can be considered in analyzing the results of this study. The first one we discuss is consistency. By this we mean, how do learners view their own sentences? Theoretically, one could hypothesize that all sentences written by a given learner would be judged grammatical by that learner since students would not intentionally write ungrammatical sentences (especially when writing a composition for a teacher). Thus, all the sentences...
sentences that the learner wrote (regardless of their actual acceptability in the target language) would be marked grammatical. This was clearly not the case, as can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Percentage of Own Sentences Judged Grammatical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Group 1 (Intermediate)</th>
<th>Group 2 (Advanced)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Native Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>Rumanian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \bar{x} = 55.2 \quad \text{sd} = 19.002 \)
\( \bar{x} = 46.65 \quad \text{sd} = 26.78 \)

As displayed in this table, there were many learners who failed to judge a large number of their own sentences as grammatical. However, there was quite a range in how individual learners viewed their sentences. In general, the intermediate students (designated as Group 1) were more consistent in their judgments in that they judged more of their own sentences grammatical than did the advanced group; however, due to the large amount of variability, these numbers must be interpreted with caution.

More interesting are the results regarding accuracy from the point of view of an English standard. For this we look first at those sentences which the individual students wrote (that is, categories a and b). Table 2 illustrates the extent to which the intermediate students (Group 1) and the advanced students (Group 2) were able to correctly identify their own sentences as grammatical or ungrammatical.

As can be seen from Table 2, the intermediate group correctly identified 74.4% of the grammatical (E) sentences, while they correctly identified 68% of the ungrammatical (E) sentences. The advanced group correctly identified 66.7% of the grammatical (E) and 68.9% of the ungrammatical (E) sentences. The intermediate group, then, is slightly better at identifying the grammatical (E) sentences than at identifying the ungrammatical (E) sentences. In other words, they have a better idea of when they are right than they do of when they are
The advanced learners have about equal abilities in determining their own correctness or incorrectness.

### TABLE 2
Sentences correctly Identified (From the Perspective of an English Standard) as Either Grammatical or Ungrammatical, Based on Students’ Own Sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grammatical (E)</th>
<th>Ungrammatical (E)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 (Intermediate)</td>
<td>35/47 74.4%</td>
<td>34/50 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 (Advanced)</td>
<td>18/27 66.7%</td>
<td>20/29 68.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 3 we see accuracy (again viewed from the perspective of the target language) based on those sentences not written by the students themselves (categories c and d). What is interesting is that in comparing the results of Tables 2 and 3, accuracy is generally less for sentences written by speakers of native languages other than their own than it is for their own sentences. The exception is the advanced group’s ability to judge the ungrammatical (E) sentences written by speakers of native languages other than their own. These results are not surprising, since the sentences of categories c and d are not sentences about which learners have an internalized rule system. Responses to their own sentences (categories a and b) consist of responses to sentences about which they have some knowledge. The other sentences may or may not represent sentences about which they have knowledge.

In the case of the advanced learners, it seems that the ungrammatical (E) sentences are sentences about which they have internalized information (see Schachter et al. 1976 for a discussion of indeterminate sentences).

### TABLE 3
Sentences Correctly Identified (From the Perspective of an English Standard) as Either Grammatical or Ungrammatical, Based on Sentences Written by Learners of Other Native Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grammatical (E)</th>
<th>Ungrammatical (E)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 (Intermediate)</td>
<td>17/26 65%</td>
<td>3/26 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 (Advanced)</td>
<td>8/16 50%</td>
<td>14/16 87.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important aspect of a study of this sort is a consideration of the types of changes learners make on sentences they have judged to be ungrammatical (L). That is, we now focus our attention on those sentences which the learners have marked ungrammatical and which they subsequently changed. To better understand the changes made, the sentences have been divided into two groups: 1) those which are grammatical from an English standard, and 2) those which are
ungrammatical from an English standard. Table 4 shows the types of changes made (these include only the learners’ own sentences).

Particularly interesting is the fact that when sentences are changed, the change only rarely affects the actual grammaticality/ungrammaticality (E) of the sentence. That is, although these sentences are judged ungrammatical (L), the changes made do not affect the grammaticality (E). Grammatical (E) sentences remained grammatical (E), and ungrammatical (E) sentences remained ungrammatical (E). For the intermediate group, 6/8, or 75%, of the grammatical sentences remained grammatical, while 26/33, or 78.8%, of the ungrammatical ones remained ungrammatical. For the advanced group similar results obtained: 8/10, or 80%, remained grammatical while 12/20, or 60%, of the ungrammatical sentences remained ungrammatical. As would be expected, this latter group was better at actual correction. Interesting to note is the decrease in incorrect changes in Group 1 as compared with Group 2 (25% to 20%), and the concomitant increase in corrections (21.2% to 40%). This may be interpreted as a greater ability by the more proficient group to “monitor” their own output (Chaudron, personal communication).

To summarize thus far, we have found:

1. Advanced learners judged fewer of their own sentences grammatical than did the intermediate learners.
2. From the point of view of English, the intermediate group was better able to accurately recognize their own grammatical sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammatical (based on an English standard)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/8 75% grammatical to grammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/8 25% grammatical to ungrammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ungrammatical (based on an English standard)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26/33 78.8% ungrammatical to ungrammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/33 21.2% ungrammatical to grammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammatical (based on an English standard)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/10 80% grammatical to grammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/10 20% grammatical to ungrammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ungrammatical (based on an English standard)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/20 60% ungrammatical to ungrammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/20 40% ungrammatical to grammatical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
than their ungrammatical sentences. The abilities of the advanced group are about equal in this area.

3. When considering only the group of sentences judged ungrammatical (L) and the changes made to those sentences, we found that those sentences which, from an English standard, were grammatical remained grammatical after the change while those sentences which, from an English standard, were ungrammatical remained ungrammatical after the change.

DISCUSSION

Bialystok’s notion (1979, 1981) of two types of linguistic knowledge provides a framework for the discussion and interpretation of these results. She proposed that language proficiency involves a number of disparate skills which can best be investigated by considering the amount of control that a learner has over target language knowledge. Different information is required for different aspects of language use. Language information can be viewed along two dimensions: one is the explicit/implicit dimension, reflecting the learner’s ability to view the language information as an abstract entity; the second is the automatic/analyzed dimension, reflecting the learner’s ability to access the language information fluently and automatically (as opposed to with difficulty and deliberation). Bialystok further stated that simple grammaticality judgment tasks reflect information about implicit knowledge, but that additional tasks, such as correction of errors, reflect explicit analyzed knowledge. Following this line of argumentation, we see that in terms of implicit knowledge, as determined by the ability of these learners to recognize their own correct and incorrect sentences, there is little difference between the two groups (see Table 2). In other words, there is little change in terms of implicit knowledge as a function of proficiency. However, as we shall see, the situation is by no means the same for what might be termed explicit knowledge. To investigate the relationship between explicit knowledge and proficiency, it is useful to consider those sentences which were ungrammatical from an English standard, and which the students also designated ungrammatical, in order to see what sorts of corrections were made.

Sentences were first counted to see how many of the ungrammatical (E) sentences were actually marked ungrammatical (L). These results are presented in Table 5.

The intermediate group recognized as ungrammatical (L) 68% and the advanced group 68.9% of the ungrammatical (E) sentences. The next step involved looking at how many of the corrections made actually resulted in grammatical English sentences. As can be seen, for Group 1, 34 were correctly identified but only 7 of those were correctly changed. For Group 2, 20 were identified as ungrammatical, with 8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1 (Intermediate)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Ungrammatical (E) Sentences</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sentences Recognized as Ungrammatical (L)</td>
<td>34 = 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Those Sentences Recognized as Ungrammatical (L), Total Number Appropriately Corrected</td>
<td>n = 331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Those Inappropriately Corrected, Number of Sentences Which Came Close (i.e., targeted in on the incorrect area)</td>
<td>n=26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One student marked one of his sentences ungrammatical, but failed to make any corrections,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 (Advanced)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Ungrammatical (E) Sentences</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sentences Recognized as Ungrammatical (L)</td>
<td>20 = 68.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Those Sentences Recognized as Ungrammatical (L), Total Number Appropriately Corrected</td>
<td>n=20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Those Inappropriately Corrected, Number of Sentences Which Came Close (i.e., targeted in on the incorrect area)</td>
<td>n=12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of those being correctly changed. Thus, for the intermediate group there were 26 sentences and for the advanced group 12 sentences which had been identified by the learners as being incorrect and which had been “corrected,” or so they believed, but which were still ungrammatical (E). Within this last group of sentences I counted the number of sentences in which the correction, while not resulting in a grammatical sentence, nonetheless came close to the trouble area. The example below will make this last category clearer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Original sentence: *If I dare to choose one person, I would like to be a my teacher in my elementary school.*

Corrected sentence: *If I dare to choose one person, I would like to be the teacher of mine in my elementary school.*

In this particular example, one might speculate that the learner (a Japanese speaker) felt that there was something wrong with the
modifier, even though he did not know what the correct form should be. Within the intermediate proficiency group 7/26 (26.9%) of the ungrammatical sentences which were not appropriately corrected nevertheless had corrections which targeted in on the trouble area, while the more advanced speakers targeted in on 8 out of 12 (66.7%).

What is involved in recognizing an ungrammatical sentence as ungrammatical? Clearly it cannot only be a matter of recognizing the precise error and knowing how to correct it, for if this were the case there would not have been an error in the first place. It seems that learners have a general, what in German might be called Gefühl, “feel” (see Krashen 1976, Bialystok 1979, 1981) for the grammaticality of a sentence as a whole even though they cannot articulate precisely, nor even recognize, where or what the trouble area is.

As Bialystok notes, “sentences sound right for reasons that may be completely obscure and in these cases justifications for the decisions can rarely be found” (1981:37). The results presented here corroborate this finding. Sentences “felt” wrong to the students without their having an accurate idea of why they were wrong. It is suggested here that part of what is involved in becoming more proficient in a second language is the progression from more gestalt-like to analytical analyses. We might further speculate that indeed the analyzed aspect is a necessary precondition for fluency in an L2, more so than for an L1.

We find, then, that there is not as great an increase in the range of Sprachgefühl, “one’s feel for the language,” as a function of proficiency as there is an increase in ability to pinpoint the trouble spot and to specifically recognize what is wrong. Learners’ analyzed knowledge develops much more rapidly as a function of proficiency. A similar phenomenon has been noted for children. With regard to progression in learning, Gleitman, Gleitman, and Shipley (1972) have found that in relation to word order, children first learn to detect grammatical violations and only later to correct them. It seems that initially learners have a general feeling of what is right/wrong without being able to zero in on the precise nature of the error when there is one. We, therefore, suggest that learners are first able to make a gestalt-type analysis of sentence structure before they are able to make detailed analytic judgments (also see Reber and Lewis 1977).

3 The importance of analysis for L2 development has been suggested with regard to language transfer (Gass 1983, Gass and Selinker, in press). In considering the influence of the native language on L2 acquisition, I suggested that there may be two types of influence—one which is automatic and the other which requires more analysis and decision making on the part of the learner. Recent theories of transfer (e.g., Kellerman 1979, in press) suggest that transfer is a psycholinguistic process, based in part on learners’ perceptions of language distance (between the L1 and the L2) and differences in language specificity/language universality. However, before learners are able to deal with perceptions of the type Kellerman has suggested, it may be the case that a certain amount of awareness or capacity for analysis is necessary.

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At this point, we can set up a tentative description of the development of linguistic intuitions of second language learners. The initial stages represent the development of a generalized feeling of what is right or wrong. This continues to be refined so that more accurate assessments can be made. In other words, we note a gradual change from implicit to explicit knowledge, where explicit knowledge reflects a learner's ability to view the language as an abstract entity (but this does not necessarily entail the ability to explicitly state the rule and, in this sense, crucially differs from Krashen's [1976] concept of learning).

Weidner (personal communication) has noted a phenomenon for both native and non-native speakers similar to the one noted above. She has found that when people read their own compositions aloud they stumble or hesitate at points in which there is an error even though, when asked, they often are unable to state what the error is or how to correct it. She uses this as a technique for self-editing.

The findings of this study are corroborated by research on the composing process, research based on native speakers. In dealing with revisions in compositions, Bartlett (1982) found that there are essentially three stages which writers go through in correcting errors. First, they notice that there is something wrong. Second, they identify the kind of problem, and third, they correct the error. She notes that corrections come about only as a result of awareness (at some level) that something is incorrect. Moreover, it is explicit knowledge which is required to carry out the demands that are necessary for revising. These stages parallel the ones found in the development of intuitions in second language learners, where we have suggested that with an increase in proficiency comes a concomitant increase in explicit knowledge.

In a series of studies (Reber 1976, Reber and Lewis 1977, Reber and Allen 1978) subjects were asked to give acceptability judgments about strings of letters (varying from 3 to 8) which had been generated by a finite state grammar. After each trial and before the next, they were given feedback as to whether their responses were correct or not. While they could not articulate the rule system which governed their choices of acceptable/unacceptable strings, their responses did reach a high level of accuracy. This is perhaps akin to, the situation which non-proficient learners face. They have a generalized sense of Sprachgefühl (or, in Bialystok's framework, are using implicit knowledge), but lack the ability to either explicitly or even implicitly recognize the trouble spot.

Let us turn finally to what is perhaps the most interesting question, yet unfortunately the most speculative: what is the function of meta-linguistic awareness for L2 learners? What purpose can we attribute to intuitions about an L2? As mentioned, the development noted in this study is not dissimilar to that which has been found for children.
Sinclair, Jarvella, and Levelt (1978) speculate that for children there may be at least two functions for linguistic awareness. According to them, the functions of metalinguistic abilities are the facilitative role they play in 1) face-to-face communication, and in 2) learning to communicate. In face-to-face communication the ability to think about one’s language is necessary when failures in the communication have occurred. These conscious repairs can keep the conversation from breaking down even further. We may see this even in speaking (whether in an interaction or in a lecture-type situation). If the automatic procedures “break down,” we may begin to think more consciously about our speech to prevent any further deterioration. In other words, we pay closer attention to our speech in order to get us out of the impasse we have gotten ourselves into.

Sinclair, Jarvella, and Levelt (1978) further add that the ability to think about language may have a function in the acquisition proper of communicative skills. The evidence, however, is not conclusive. Read (1978) has shown that there is some deterioration in phonetic judgments as a function of age, but conflicting evidence comes from Zei (1979), who compared five and nine year olds in their abilities to explain the articulatory events used in speaking. Admittedly, the ability to explain articulatory events may be quite different from the ability to explain other aspects of grammatical knowledge. Nonetheless, the evidence is unclear as to what the precise functions of metalinguistic awareness are for children and what role it plays in acquisition.

Assuming, however, that Sinclair, Jarvella, and Levelt (1978) are correct that awareness serves a communicative function, we can hypothesize that it serves a similar function for adults. It allows learners to reflect upon the language and to make hypotheses about the target language and subsequently modify those hypotheses. In addition, it affords an opportunity to make comparisons between target language and native language and other languages the learner may be familiar with, allowing manipulation of the target language so as to avoid unfamiliar or difficult structures or to transfer potentially successful elements of the native language, as has been suggested by Kellerman (1979, and in press).

CONCLUSION

It is tempting to suggest implications from this study for classroom teaching. For example, if it is the case that advanced learners can more frequently identify errors which learners of other native languages have made than can intermediate learners (see Table 3: 87.5% vs. 12%), then the use of peer-editing techniques may be somewhat less appropriate for some proficiency levels than for others. Furthermore, if it is
the case that language learning develops from the whole to the detail, with learners first getting a general notion of structures (perhaps concentrating on meaning) and only later concentrating on discrete syntactic points, then there may be places in the curriculum where explicit grammatical instruction is conductive to learning and others where it is not. But still, specific recommendations concerning teaching are, at this point, premature and await research with a more pedagogical focus.

In conclusion, intuitional data, as a reflection of metalinguistic awareness, are important in second language research both in and of themselves for what they reveal about language learning, and also because they provide us with a crucial aspect of a learner’s knowledge, an aspect without which we cannot hope to gain a complete picture of the second language acquisition process.

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REFERENCES


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SCHOOL SERVICE PROGRAM

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  - Reading Comprehension, including grammar and vocabulary
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Edited by RICHARD SCHMIDT
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English Lessons on PLATO:

Proponents of computer-assisted instruction (CAI) have claimed for some time that CAI is the wave of the future in education. Yet in many schools and language institutes, where the computer has made only minimal inroads, that future may still seem far away. But there is evidence in TESOL that the future is drawing nearer; each year there is an increase in the number of presentations, workshops, and symposia involving CAI at the Annual Conventions, and there is even talk of a CAI Interest Section within TESOL. Nevertheless, resistance, hostility, ignorance, and apathy toward computers in language instruction persist. Reasons have been explored in the literature, but one of the most frequently cited obstacles to including CAI in current instructional curricula is the lack of quality lessons or, as they are called, courseware (Braun 1980, Jorstad 1980, English 1983).

Why, since CAI has existed for over two decades now, has not a wealth of appropriate courseware in a subject as important as ESL emerged? The answer is complex and involves many issues related to current CAI development. In a sense, large scale development of CAI is like an egg that cannot hatch until it is laid; but for it to be laid, there must first be a chicken that is already hatched. For events to be set in motion, there must be an investment of time and resources in CAI. Investment implies profit, but where wholly commercial ventures have attempted to take advantage of the lack of courseware, especially for rapidly proliferating small computers, the result has often been disappointing, dampening commercial interest in all but the most marketable CAI. This has given rise to concern that commercial
gimmickry will tend to dominate CAI development at the expense of pedagogical rigor, lending credence to the undesirable impression that CAI is in some way associated with the video arcade. Thé, addressing the quality of the products of sixty-three purveyors of educational courseware, concludes that “the most fundamental problem is that most educational software is written by programmers who know nothing about pedagogy” (1982:52).

For quality courseware to appear, professional educators must be integrally involved in its production, and they in turn must be supported through their institutions. But administrators are often wary of committing funds and instructors to CAI development because they have not seen results impressive enough to convince them that CAI would be worth their investment and because a commitment to the development of CAI is indeed a huge undertaking. Even if the hardware (computers and peripheral devices) is already available, it can take up to 150 hours to develop a lesson (Otto 1980), and it will take a practicing teacher at least thirty hours to program and test a simple lesson, using an authoring language which must first be learned (Stevens 1980).

Development costs can be circumvented when courseware is available elsewhere. However, relative to the need, very little courseware has been developed for ESL (although Dodge [1980], referring to institutional work in computer-assisted language instruction, notes that “possibly a majority” of such work is in ESL). What has been developed is usually system-specific; so, unless two institutes have the same type of computer, what is developed at one may not be usable at another. Even where system compatibility is not a problem, an institute in the market for courseware will find the selection limited.

These problems can, to some extent, be circumvented through hook-up with time shared computing systems such as CCC (Saracho 1982), Brigham Young University’s TICCIT (Hammond 1972b), and Control Data Corporation’s PLATO (Smith and Sherwood 1976, Hart 1981), which users can access via phone lines from leased terminals located at their respective institutions. In such systems, access to large mainframes provides educators with versatile and powerful tools for lesson creation and CAI curriculum development and management. With PLATO, for example, teachers can select from several thousand hours of CAI programming on a variety of topics, route students through curricula tailored to individual or class needs, keep track of student progress in assigned lessons, and, if so inclined, develop customized lessons using PLATO’s TUTOR authoring language, which incorporates sophisticated graphics, animation, and answer-judging capabilities.

There exists a large body of ESL lessons on PLATO, plus many more lessons for native English speakers which can be used by advanced students of ESL. Specifically for learners of ESL, there is a
battery of 124 lessons developed at the University of Illinois for use with heterogeneous classes of ESL students in the Intensive English Institute (IEI) there. These lessons were written for “low” and “high” level IEI students and are based on Krohn (1976) and Praninskas (1975), respectively. The two streams include lessons in reading, spelling, dictation, culture, and grammar.

This review seeks to evaluate the grammar components of these lessons, which include 23 remedial grammar lessons (those following Krohn) and 16 advanced grammar lessons (following Praninskas). These lessons are “so arranged that they are supplementary to the classroom work in which the students are engaged” (Dixon 1981:100); hence, material in these lessons follows closely that in the two texts. It is important to keep in mind the circumstances behind the creation of these lessons. As Dixon points out, “The PLATO system has been used by DESL [at the University of Illinois] for more than ten years as a medium of supplemental instruction. . . . It has not been a major thrust of materials development, but the lessons have consistently been created, expanded, and edited throughout that time” (102). As such, they are slightly dated products of texts, teaching methods, and technology of the last decade, and they “have consequently made little use of the capabilities of the system which are now available” (106). Yet, at a time when viable courseware remains at a premium, this collection of lessons represents a major contribution to CAI in ESL.

In evaluating these lessons, it must be further understood what criteria constitute adequate CAL. Of prime concern is that courseware emphasize the inherent advantages of the computer over other instructional media. For example, computers can correct without criticizing and can provide immediate feedback, much of which should be “concept-related visual feedback” (Alesandrini 1982). The Remedial Grammar Review incorporates such feedback in making use of PLATO’s sophisticated graphics; for instance, in a lesson on *wh*-questions (Stock and Simkin, *whquestion*), subjects and objects turn into *wh*-words and literally move across the screen, trailing fronting auxiliaries. Other transformations and other concepts are occasionally illustrated in similar fashion throughout these lessons.

Thé discusses several criteria for evaluation of CAI, echoing the point that it “should exploit the unique capabilities of the computer . . . . There is no reason to buy software that isn’t superior to a book” (1982:114). Bork (1981) faults lessons that make computer screens resemble pages of a book for being “imitative of other media.” Following as they do on their respective texts, these IEI lessons have a bookish air about them. However, they are not “page turners,” lessons which present students with screens full of textual explanation. The

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1 In citing lessons on PLATO, we have first given the name(s) of the author(s) /programmer(s) of the lesson, followed by the filename by which the user may call up that lesson.
lessons in the Remedial Grammar Review are formatted deductively, with brief explanations preceding the exercises, but the exercises themselves dominate the lessons. The Advanced Grammar Review is nothing but exercises. In both cases, the emphasis is on interaction. There are ample opportunities for students to type out long sentences, on which they receive immediate feedback, or to make simpler discriminations, occasionally by touching correct answers on the screen. The screen itself is sometimes sectioned off in attractive, yet functional, ways, as in the lesson on plural nouns (Pech and Faye, plural), in which various objects are flashed onto the screen to elicit different plural endings from the learners. Even when the lessons deal with purely linguistic matter, much as an exercise book would, these make excellent use of the fast-interaction capabilities of the computer, so that the integrity of the medium is maintained.

Another of Thé's criteria is that feedback should help the student "not only catch mistakes but analyze them for patterns, which helps the [student] understand how he made the mistake, and not just that he made it" (110). PLATO has a means of analyzing strings of student input, which sometimes works well, but at other times is misleading. When this system is not activated, blanket responses are programmed for unanticipated answers, and these can be ludicrous (for example, telling a student who has failed to include a period in an answer, "That is not the complete relative clause."). A lesson program should also accept a wide range of correct answers so as to avoid telling students they are wrong when they are not. There are many instances in these series where even a native speaker will be told the answers are wrong because a complete range of correct answers has not been keyed in. This occurs particularly where prepositions or modals are involved. Also, in the exercise on the simple perfect (Stock, esl6) in the Advanced Grammar Review, students must avoid the commonly used progressive in sentences like He's worked on his thesis since January, or their answers will be judged wrong.

Yet another consideration in evaluating CAI is to what degree the programming breaks with the tendency toward linear progression that is characteristic of traditional modes of instruction, but not necessarily desirable in CAI (DeBloois 1979, Scollon and Scollon 1982). Properly utilized, the logic, symmetry, and recursiveness inherent in computing can enable students to take control of their own learning and to follow their instincts within loose parameters. But this truly unique quality of CAI has proven to be a mercurial characteristic to try to exploit for focused learning (LOGO being the most widely known embodiment of this quality in less-focused, Piagetian learning, as Papert [1980] has noted).

The wider question is one of choice and control in CAI. Is it best to harness the computer as part of a carefully managed programmed
learning scheme, or do greatest benefits result from allowing students the freedom to explore (or not to explore) the medium as they like? The former idea dominated the first major efforts at CAI in language instruction (e.g., Hammond 1972a). As recently as 1980, Jamieson and Chapelle noted that “it is in the use of mechanical drills to facilitate habit formation that CAI justifies its implementation as an instructional device” (3). On the other hand, misgivings about drill and practice are noted in Howe and DuBoulay (1979) and in Papert (1980). Barger, in an article countering arguments that computers are anti-humanistic, notes several elements of humanism that are enhanced by computers, among which are autonomy (individuals have control over their own potential for development) and individuality (students can pace themselves and ideally exercise “a number of optional approaches to the same material” [1982:95]).

Whereas the guiding principle behind the IEI lessons is obviously an attempt to enlist the computer as what Marty (1981) calls an “ally” to its students, these lessons and the curriculum in which they were meant to be implemented tend to withhold a crucial element of choice. One way, for example, in which to allow choice in courseware is to make it menu driven (that is, users should be able to go directly to lesson segments from a table of contents, or menu). This is not the case with the IEI lessons. Furthermore, as Dixon (1981) points out, a router governs IEI student access to the lessons themselves and “to an extent” prevents students from going beyond those lessons already covered in class, this being consistent with the school of thought that CAI is supplementary to and always follows classwork. Furthermore, the router is deemed necessary because the lessons are so closely related to the course material that students tend to flounder when they push ahead in their curriculum. In evaluating these lessons, this rationale for control must be considered, but one must also be aware that others, for whom control is anathema in CAI, hold a contrary opinion.

There is also no indication at any point in the Remedial Grammar Review, and very little in the Advanced Grammar Review, of how much time remains in a lesson that a student is working on, increasing the probability that someone with prior commitments will have to leave in the middle. This is no problem if one is using a student sign-on (which will return users to their point of departure next time they sign on), but this cannot be taken for granted for users outside the IEI.

These problems are compounded when students in other institutions attempt to use the lessons with no knowledge of the IEI curriculum. There is confusion both with the material itself and with its organization. For example, there is no apparent reason why say and tell, two-word verbs, modals, and indirect quotations should all appear in the same lesson (Stock, es18) in the Advanced Grammar Review, other than the fact that they are so juxtaposed in the Praninskas text. Fewer
problems would stem from this if the lessons were set up so that students could move freely in and out. Then, a student interested in modals could go directly to that section. As it is, students have to work through *say* and *tell* and two units on two-word verbs to get to the lesson they want. Marty (1981) warns that courseware should never be prepared to favor a particular text, and the disadvantages just noted seem to bear out this contention. At present, these problems are a factor only for users outside the IEI, but that institute will find similar difficulties when and if it decides to change texts.

One reason why working through irrelevant sections might be unpalatable to students is that many of the drills in these lessons require a lot of typing. International students often have deficient typing skills, and PLATO is not a word processor. It allows some buffered editing, but having to type ten-word sentences in answer to questions on PLATO, as must be done frequently in these lessons, is still unwieldy. For example, in the lesson on *wh-* questions, there is a drill in which students are required to type all possible *wh-* questions from sentences with multiple objects. In such cases, when a mistake is made, the student must retype the sentence until it is correct. Then the question is returned to the stack so that the student encounters it again before leaving the drill. Since the difficulty of the typing task may have contributed to the error in the first place, lessons programmed to handle errors in this way seem unnecessarily stringent.

A final problem with the lessons is that in some drills communicative aspects of the language are ignored in favor of linguistic form. The lessons on the present progressive (Stock and Simkin, progressive) and the *going to* future (Stock and Simkin, *begoing*) in the *Remedial Grammar Review* have several instances of this; for example, students must write *going to go* repeatedly in the latter lesson in situations where the simpler *going to* seems more natural. On the other hand, some lessons are very well contextualized. The lesson on the use of *one* (Stock and Frye, *one*) utilizes dialogs in shops in which conversant use *one* quite naturally, and *too* and *enough* (Pech and Simkin, *verytoo*) are practiced in a situation where a radio starts out not being loud enough, but becomes too loud for the conversant to understand each other.

Dixon acknowledges this last problem, saying that the present drills “constrain the students rather than open to them the communicative aspects of language development” (1981:106). Plans are under way for new lessons which will “couch the target grammar point in meaningful and creative exercises” (106). Also on the drawing boards are plans to complete the *Remedial* set of lessons to cover all of the Krohn text beyond the seventeenth lesson, which is as far as the present lessons extend. The possibility of allowing students to circumvent some of the lessons depending on pretest scores is also being considered.
In conclusion, this is an impressive set of lessons and a good example of the accumulation of CAI material that can take place when professional teachers are attracted to a teaching tool as versatile as the computer. As we have seen, this battery of lessons is not without its drawbacks. Among the liabilities are its close association with textbooks, the amount of typing required in student input, occasionally inappropriate feedback, some inattention to function as opposed to form, a high degree of control over student progress, and lack of exploitation of potential options for students. However, despite whatever problems there may be in these lessons (and not everyone would agree that the “liabilities” mentioned above are all disadvantages), users of PLATO are fortunate to have access to this set of highly interactive and professionally executed lessons. It is hoped that recognition of the relative success of this educational-commercial partnership can stimulate other efforts along similar lines and contribute to the wider and more productive involvement of teachers of ESL in CAI.

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*Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*

■ For some years now the work of Stephen Krashen has been the most influential in the field of second language acquisition research. Krashen has formulated or helped to formulate a number of related hypotheses about the second language acquisition process (referred to in the book
to be discussed here as the learning/acquisition, natural order, Monitor, input, and Affective Filter hypotheses), has supported them with research findings, and has tied them together into what I would like to call the acquisition theory, or what Krashen has called the “Monitor Theory” (Krashen 1981), a coherent set of hypotheses which seem to account for much of what is known about the second language acquisition process.

Until recently, the acquisition theory was applicable primarily at the research level, guiding research studies and providing a framework for the interpretation of such studies. Applications to language instruction have been indirect or secondary, except for the work of Terrell (1977, 1982). Because one of the central claims of the acquisition theory is that formal instruction (or, more accurately, instruction in the forms of language) plays no direct role in the acquisition of second languages, the implications for second language teaching were heavy but unfulfilled.

With the publication of Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition (PPSLA), Krashen synthesizes the work relating to language acquisition theory and begins to apply it to classroom instruction. As such, it is a logical and welcome next step in the development of an empirically based approach to language teaching, in the sense of “approach” as used by Richards and Rodgers (1982). Although it will certainly generate much controversy, PPSLA is probably the single, most important book to be published in the field of language teaching since Fries (1945), because it is the only approach to language instruction which is both coherent and comprehensive. After several decades of eclecticism and ill-defined or partially defined approaches (cognitive-code, Silent Way), this approach is refreshing.

At least some of the controversy will arise from the fact that Krashen’s acquisition-based approach is in direct opposition to present instructional practice in many language teaching programs, especially programs for sophisticated and mature language learners in colleges and universities. Teachers in more naturalistic teaching environments may find Krashen’s approach somewhat easier to accept. In itself, this is a comment on one of Krashen’s introductory points, that too much of classroom practice is based exclusively on anecdotal experience, the “it works” justification for teaching practice. Teachers of younger children are aware that acquisition is a more fruitful avenue to language use than is formal instruction. Teachers of the more sophisticated may still have to be convinced.

PPSLA consists of six chapters. The introductory chapter briefly reviews the relationship of theory to practice and calls for a greater contribution from theory and research. Chapter II is a review of research in second language acquisition, including the five components of the acquisition theory (the five hypotheses referred to above).
Chapter II also reviews the contributions of instruction, exposure, age, and acculturation to the acquisition process. Chapter III is an examination of the role and nature of linguistic input in second language acquisition. Chapter IV is a consideration of the role of instruction in grammar and of grammatical knowledge in acquisition and learning. Chapter V, the last, evaluates seven “methods” against the criteria established for input and the role of learning in the acquisition process. Chapter V also contains a review of research on comparison of methods, some general recommendations on classroom activity that go beyond particular methods, and some comments on testing and materials. As this summary indicates, PPSLA is a comprehensive book, including in its 202 pages many of the issues that language teachers should be aware of. It also constitutes a thorough and valuable review of the literature.

Krashen’s approach is tightly and carefully argued and it hardly does it justice to summarize it here. But for those who are not familiar with it the most salient elements are as follows: Language acquisition leads to the ability to use a language in communicative settings. Learning leads only to the ability to monitor or check one’s performance for accuracy. Acquisition results when learners are exposed to a message that they can understand. Linguistic rules or regularities are acquired in a more or less natural order, which is common to most learners, but which differs greatly from the order found in instructional syllabuses. Formal instruction does not affect the acquisition process except as it incidentally provides input. Instruction leads only to learning and learning does not lead to the ability to use a language, nor does it facilitate acquisition much, if at all. Acquisition fails when there is not sufficient input or when learners’ affective barriers prevent it from being utilized.

Krashen cites research to support each element of the theory and uses the hypotheses to argue against the formal teaching of grammar. Of the seven methods he evaluates, four (grammar-translation, audio-lingualism, cognitive-code, and the direct method) are faulted because they fail to provide sufficient comprehensible input, because they focus on grammar, or both. The other three (the Natural Approach, Total Physical Response, and Suggestopedia) are evaluated positively because they supply sufficient input and do not focus on grammar. Counseling-Learning and the Silent Way are, unfortunately, omitted; Krashen refers us to Stevick (1980) for a review. Suggestions for practical classroom activities are scattered throughout the book but are found especially in the method-review section and in the section on “Alternatives to Methods” (160-175). Most of these suggestions consist of ways to provide input and ways to increase the meaningfulness of the instructional experience. Reading, conversational techniques, and the coupling of language teaching with subject matter are some of these.
The strengths of the book are many. Krashen writes clearly, concisely, and knowledgeably. His points are clearly stated and well supported. Opposing points of view are often considered and countered, making the book more than just a one-sided presentation of a single perspective; it also offers a consideration of controversial issues, even addressing whether intensive academic preparation ESL is justified at all. Krashen cites relevant personal experience and refers to his own personal intellectual development and accompanying changes of mind. All of this makes the book very readable. I have already referred to the comprehensiveness of the issues considered and the answers provided. Very welcome is the stated secondary goal of the book, “to reintroduce teachers to theory and hopefully to gain their confidence again” (7-8). I hope the adverb does not put teachers off, because the goal is an admirable one and, in my opinion, is admirably met.

Many readers will, I am sure, perceive weaknesses in Krashen’s arguments and evidence. Some of these have already been published (McLaughlin 1978, Rivers 1979, Stevick 1980, 1982) and countered. To this reviewer, however, the five hypotheses grouped together as the acquisition approach are the strongest existing candidates for research and theoretical bases for teaching practice. They are contradicted mainly by anecdotal and intuitional evidence. Until opposing hypotheses are developed, Krashen’s approach remains our strongest theoretical base. The weaknesses of the book, therefore, are more in what it fails to do than in what it does.

One weakness is Krashen’s failure to address more adequately some of the objections often stated by teachers who may understand and even accept his principles but who do not think they apply to their students, students who are characteristically academically oriented learners. These learners, it is sometimes argued, can utilize formal instruction and need it. Acquisition, this argument claims, takes too long and is not accepted by learners. Although Krashen addresses this issue briefly (especially pages 171-175), teachers who have this point of view are some of the most active and outspoken in the profession and, in my experience, the hardest to convince. Krashen needs to speak to the needs of this type of learner more directly to make his point more effectively.

A second weakness is that Krashen remains vague on the subject of the structuring of acquisition-fostering experiences. Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, and the Natural Approach are definitely valuable methodologies, but their scope is limited. Many other published collections of classroom activities address the quantitative aspect of acquisition, that of providing a sufficient amount of input, but not the qualitative aspect, that of providing a sufficient variety of discourse types and a lowering of affective resistance to acquisition-fostering activities. Language use results from more than the acquisition of grammatical competence. It also requires the acquisition (or
learning) of pragmatics, register, stylistic variants, interfactional strategies, rhetorical structures, and so on. Much of this can probably be acquired (although there is very little research evidence for this other than extrapolations from the grammatical studies), but a much more rigorous consideration of the nature of the instructional process is called for than Krashen provides with the input hypothesis. Much work needs to be done on the structuring and content of acquisition-fostering activities. It is the dearth of material in this area that makes it so difficult for practice-based teachers to adopt an acquisition approach. It is hoped that Krashen and Terrell’s new book (in press) will address these questions more explicitly and fully. In the meantime, and in addition, two volumes from a very different time and perspective may provide a complementary perspective, the two works of Moffett (1968a, 1968b), which the second language teaching profession would benefit from almost as much as from this one.

For teachers who want to know more about current research and how it applies to language teaching, for teachers who want to begin to base their instruction on a coherent theory of language and language acquisition, and for teachers who want to develop and, I hope, publish materials that implement an acquisition approach, PPSLA is an invaluable and readable resource.

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The question “Are we teaching or testing?” has long plagued professionals in ES/FL. It is, perhaps, time to investigate whether this rigid distinction is worth maintaining or whether it might not be more useful to examine the pedagogical value of using testing techniques for teaching purposes. Theoretically, learning should result from a testing experience. Furthermore, students as well as instructors should be involved in that experience. For the purposes of taking a test, students must consciously synthesize information and make a choice. Instructors, for their part, must analyze answers and either plan for what still needs to be taught or evaluate their own effectiveness.

An informal case study approach has shown that using testing techniques, specifically a multiple choice format where conscious decisions about language use and meaning are forced, can be effective with high level students. The population involved in this study was a class of ten Asian adults who were themselves teachers of English as a foreign language in their respective countries. Although these students were at a high level of English proficiency, there were still gaps in their understanding of the fine points of English, particularly in areas such as presupposition and speaker intent. When given a classroom exercise in test format where rigor and precision were mandated by that format, hidden problems and alternative interpretations which might not normally have appeared were highlighted. This provided insight for both students and instructors.

For example, the students were given the following activity in test format:

Read the utterances below and decide whether or not the action occurred. If it occurred, mark a on your answer sheet. If it did not occur, mark b on your answer sheet.

1. Tom didn’t kill Mary.
2. He didn’t kill John for the money.
3. Etc.

The test was designed with the expectation that the students would respond...
with b for item one (indicating that they did not believe that the action had occurred) and a for item two (indicating that they believed that it had). However, several of the students found the first sentence to be ambiguous and interpreted it in a way different from what had been anticipated. In the class discussion following the test, they explained that they had inferred that Mary was dead—killed by someone, but not by Tom. That is, by placing contrastive stress on Tom in their reading, rather than reading it as unmarked, they identified an interpretation that had not been previously considered.

As this example illustrates, there are advantages to be found in using testing techniques for instructional purposes. Requiring students to make conscious choices, as they had to in this testing format, made it possible to discover and identify problems, ambiguities, and alternative interpretations which might otherwise have gone undetected.

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Foreign Teaching Assistants at U.S. Universities: Problems in Interaction and Communication

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Picture a college freshman, a liberal arts major, rushing to the first chemistry lab session of his college career. He gets lost in the maze of unfamiliar hallways and arrives at the classroom late. The teaching assistant (TA) has already begun explaining the chemistry experiment as the student takes a seat at the back of the room. The freshman listens for a moment and then realizes that the TA’s English is somewhat broken and accented. The student gathers his books, leaves the room, and goes to the undergraduate counselor’s office to rearrange his schedule.

This scene has been enacted many times in the university classes of non-native English-speaking teaching assistants (NNS TAs). Recent research (Bailey 1982) suggests that the typical TA in this drama is a male graduate student working toward a doctoral degree (e.g., in math, engineering, or the “hard” sciences). It is likely that he has studied English for seven years or more and that he feels his spoken English can be characterized as “good” to “fluent.” He would probably describe his teaching as “good” or “very good.” There is about a one-in-three chance that he is Asian. Such TAs, and the students whose lives they influence, provided the focus for a recent dissertation which investigated the communicative competence of non-native English-speaking TAs and the reactions of their students to their spoken English. The results of the study may be helpful to TESOL professionals, who are being called upon, apparently in increasing numbers, to help science faculties and university administrators deal with this unhappy situation.

The subjects in this study were graduate students at the University of California, Los Angeles, employed by the university as teaching assistants. They worked as part-time instructors, test graders, discussion leaders, and labora-
tory session supervisors. The students of these TAs were all enrolled in regularly scheduled university courses. The relationship between these two groups is complicated because, while the non-native English-speaking TAs are assumed to be competent in their disciplines, they have, to varying degrees, less than perfect control of English, the medium of instruction. Consequently, the interaction between NNS teaching assistants and their students is sometimes problematic. The communication difficulties engendered by this situation have been collectively labeled the “foreign TA problem.”

In one sense, this study was prompted by students’ (and parents’) complaints about the oral English proficiency of non-native English-speaking TAs in university classes. During the past five years, a groundswell of such complaints has led university administrators at several colleges to address the “foreign TA problem.” The question arises as to how the university can ensure that foreign TAs speak English well enough to convey the course material to their students. But what does it mean “to speak English well enough”? What sorts of communication problems occur in the NNS TAs’ classrooms? These questions were addressed in this study, which used both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Part of the research was a survey of 392 UCLA students enrolled in the classes of NNS TAs. The students reported that their understanding of the subject matter was negatively influenced by the English of those TAs who had been rated 1+ or lower on the Interagency Language Roundtable Oral Interview (formerly the FSI Oral Interview), a widely used test of spoken language proficiency. There were statistically significant differences in the students’ ratings of these TAs as compared with their ratings of TAs who scored 2 or better on the interview scale. In addition, students who were not majoring in the same discipline as their TAs were significantly more critical of the non-native English-speakers’ public productive uses of English than were the students who shared a common academic major with their TAs.

In the ethnographic portion of the study, an observation sample of twelve non-native English-speaking TAs was matched with twelve NSs for course and level taught. Compared to the foreign TAs in this group, the native speakers were rated significantly higher on two student evaluation of teaching variables: overall effectiveness and outside helpfulness. The observational fieldnote data were also analyzed, using a simple coding system. In native speakers’ classes, there was a moderate correlation between the students’ evaluations and the frequency of 1) the TAs’ moves to elicit input from the students (an index of how interactive their classes were), and 2) the TAs’ manifestations of friendliness, humor, and concern for their students. However, for NNS TAs, the frequency with which they simply provided subject-matter information (without also being entertaining or interactive) correlated negatively with the students’ evaluations.

Many different universities have implemented special ESL-based TA training programs for foreign graduate students who work as teaching assistants. Such programs have been described at several TESOL convention and NAFSA conferences in recent years, and the author maintains a computerized mailing list of people concerned with “the foreign TA problem.” (That list and a bibliography of materials dealing with non-native English-speaking TAs may be obtained from the author for the cost of photocopying and mailing.)
One wonders, however, if solutions to the “foreign TA problem” might not also include student training—that is, programs designed to help underclassmen deal with the diversity of people to be encountered in higher education. Research is needed on students’ attitudes toward such linguistic and communicative differentness.

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English Language Tests, School Language Use, and Achievement in Spanish-Speaking High School Students

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This study investigated the relationship between two types of oral English language tests and various measures of language use and school performance. The tests assessed linguistic competence (LC), defined as the control of simple grammatical structures, and communicative competence (CC), defined as the ability to convey information. The subjects were thirty-five Spanish-speaking high school students in grades 10 through 12.

Three main research questions were posed. The first dealt with the relationship between LC and CC. Initial correlational analysis indicated that LC predicted CC. However, scatterplots showed great variation in CC at all levels of LC; furthermore, the LC test and the CC test were moderately correlated (Pearson r = .456). To better distinguish these two types of second language skills, additional analysis using a Principal Components procedure (Harman 1976, Anderson 1958) was done. This proved useful in expressing differences in student language skills and in the patterns of self-report data on language use.

The second major research question dealt with the relationships between the LC and CC test scores and six measures of performance in English discussion groups. Two variables, total informative statements and range of informative categories, measured the quantity of English used. Both of these were strongly related to the LC test and to the overall degree of second language skill represented in the common component.

Results for the four criterion measures of quality of English used in discussion were more varied. T-unit measures (Hunt 1964) were employed to assess quality of language, and results depended on the aspect of oral language examined. Mean length of T-unit was significantly related to CC; mean length of error-free T-unit and the ratio of error-free to all T-units were strongly related to LC; and ratio of complex to all T-units was related to neither the language tests nor the principal components.

The third research question dealt with the relationships among the LC and
CC tests, the principal components, and school achievement as reflected in the number of graduation competency tests passed. This measure was related to the LC test and to a combination of overall second language skill and specific linguistic skill.

The findings of this study show that linguistic and communicative competence can be distinguished. This suggests the need to assess the relationship between these two types of language skill in the native as well as in the second language and in learners at various stages of proficiency. Because the language tests used had, at best, moderate predictive relationships with the measures of actual language use, this study shows that language tests alone are not adequate for student placement in school programs. The strong relationship between English grammatical skill and school achievement measured in English implies that control of language structure is involved in many school tasks in addition to oral language tests. This result underscores the need for more research on the relationship between language use and school achievement in students of different ages and different native and second language backgrounds. (Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1982)

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Bilingualism During Initial Language Acquisition

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Bilingualism is often misunderstood because it is measured against an unrealistic conception of monolingualism. Exaggerated ideological notions of “the mother tongue” have long obscured the fact that monolingualism is a complex condition which does not provide immunity from developmental or educational difficulties. It is argued here that Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), two German authors who were influential in shaping widely held assumptions about “the mother tongue,” did not intend to idealize monolingualism. Humboldt’s letters are quoted to show that he observed the bilingual development of his own children with open-minded interest and that he evidently did not fear any impairment of the children’s cognitive development due to the simultaneous acquisition of two languages. Such fears did not arise until much later and have since been shown to be unfounded.

The present research includes a case study of a child exposed to both German and English. Since German was the language of the mother and of

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the wider environment, it was dominant from the start. For a time the syntactically important function words were almost exclusively of German origin. An analysis of the semantic relations involved in the child’s two-morpheme utterances showed that the more complex relations were generally expressed in German. Imitation of English words still occurred frequently at this stage, whereas German words more often were used spontaneously. The identification of each language with particular persons began much earlier than the development of separate syntactic systems. (Dr. phil. Dissertation, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1982)

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A Reliability Analysis of the Professed Difference in Attitude Questionnaire (PDAQ) for a Sample of ESL Students at the University of Illinois

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The Professed Difference in Attitude Questionnaire (Acton 1979) was originally developed as a tool for teaching culture to ESL students. It has subsequently been used in a number of contexts as a measure of social distance (Acton 1979, Sherwood and Clarke 1980). Since the reliability of an instrument should be tested each time it is used, it was felt that it would be useful to analyze the reliability of the PDAQ from the raw data of an attitudes study at the University of Illinois. In this study we were concerned with the consistency of responses (Gronlund 1976), rather than the extent to which items serve the specific use under consideration.

The PDAQ utilizes the semantic differential model originally described by Osgood et al. (1957), but deviates considerably from the original form: only two pairs of adjectives are used rather than Osgood’s original twenty pairs. Measures of social distance are made in the following way: with self as the focus, distance is measured to countrymen, and then, from self to Americans. The higher the score, the more social distance; the lower the score, the less social distance. Scores were obtained in the present study using the procedure used by Acton (1979).

Using 19 of the original 20 concepts (virtually all subjects did not know the meaning of the concept censorship), the data were computerized and totals for each of the three scales were calculated. The reliability analysis was performed using the SPSS reliability program. By comparing the alpha coefficient (had that item been deleted) with the Cronbach alpha level of that scale, conservative estimates were made to determine which items contributed the least to the reliabilities obtained. Using this procedure the following items were deleted from all scales: American women—tender/tough; the Olympic Games—political/non-political; the United Nations—weak/strong; Americans—emotional/logical; my country—developed/developed and powerless/powerful; and poor people—sad/happy and permanent/temporary. It
was interesting that both adjective pairs for two concepts were not reliable. Overall alpha levels before deletion of these eight items were as follows: self = .63, countrymen = .60, Americans = .67. These findings may be surprising in that Acton’s pilot studies revealed that these items were culturally loaded. This characteristic does not seem to contribute to the reliability of the PDAQ.

The reliabilities of the three scales were increased some with the deletion of the eight items noted. New alpha coefficients were .72 for self, .69 for countrymen, and .71 for Americans. One could interpret these findings to suggest that the shortened PDAQ, with deletion of those eight items, is measuring a construct of attitude toward self, countrymen, and Americans in a somewhat consistent way on this administration of the test. Other tests have measured attitude as consistently, no doubt, but these findings are rarely reported.

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The Development of Syntax in the Writing of University ESL Students

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Teachers preparing students of English as a second language (ESL) for university-level work have for some time felt the need for a direct measure of their students’ ability to produce syntactically mature prose. An instrument which could directly measure second language learners’ ability to control syntactic structures while attempting to produce mature writing would be of practical value to ESL teachers interested in facilitating the language development of their students.

The purpose of this study was to discover what might be learned about the development of syntax in the writing of 120 university ESL students by utilizing the following seven indices of syntactic complexity;

1. mean words per clause (W/C)
2. mean clauses per T-unit (C/T)
3. mean words per T-unit (W/T)
4. mean T-units per sentence (T/S)
The relationship of the free writing and rewriting output of the subjects was examined using the above syntactic indices. Two different categories of ESL subjects, representing three levels of English language proficiency, were examined for their free writing and rewriting abilities.

The analysis revealed that the trends shown for the seven syntactic indices of complexity in rewriting were similar to those shown in free writing. However, the data obtained for free writing were very much more revealing than those obtained for rewriting, particularly in helping to discriminate between levels of English language proficiency among the subjects. The more proficient subjects were more expressive, writing more words per T-unit and more words per error-free T-unit in both free writing and rewriting. There were positive linear trends toward longer T-units and longer error-free T-units as the subjects exhibited higher proficiency in the English language. Of the seven indices of syntactic complexity used in the present study, mean error-free T-units per sentence (EFT/S) was the best indicator of language development in the writing of university ESL students. The second best index was mean words per error-free T-unit (W/EFT), and the third best index was mean words per T-unit (W/T). (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1982)

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Meanwhile, Back in the Real world . . . : Accuracy and Fluency in Second Language Teaching

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In these remarks I hope to draw together a number of loosely related ideas that have contributed to a kind of revolution in the way that most of us in the “ivory towers” have come to look at language teaching and then to relate this newer point of view to what is actually going on in the real world where real teachers and real students get together in real classrooms. In other words, I want to compare current theory with current practice.

There is a natural human tendency to look for simple solutions to complicated problems, and second language teaching is no exception. Our field has always suffered from a kind of pendulum effect, a melodramatic swinging back and forth between two extreme positions which Rivers has conveniently labelled “formalist” and “activist” (1981:25). Formalists, as the name suggests, have been mainly concerned with the forms of language—such as phonemes, morphemes, nouns, and verbs—and with the rules for combining them correctly. For them, learning a language means learning these forms and rules. Activists, on the other hand, have been concerned with language as activity, not as something people know but as something people do. For them, learning a language means learning how to use a language.

To borrow a second useful distinction from Widdowson (1981), the major unit of language for formalists has been the sentence, which is the same formal unit that most schools of linguistics have been concerned with describing. On the other hand, the activists might consider the major unit of language to be the utterance (not a unit of grammar but one of meaningful discourse), which is the subject of the newer, less well-developed field of discourse analysis. This distinction is important for second language teachers because the kinds of
problems associated with these two kinds of units are radically different. Sentences are either correctly formed or they aren’t; utterances either do the job or they don’t. Thus, if the major goal that teachers set for their students is the production of well-formed sentences, the course will be very different from one in which the goal is the production of effective utterances in discourse.

It seems to me that during the past twenty years or so we have experienced a swinging of the pendulum away from a fundamentally formalist position toward a fundamentally activist position in second language teaching. The early shapers of the audiolingual approach thought of themselves as reacting against the kind of formal analysis employed in the grammar-translation approach, in which the target language was rarely heard in the classroom. But from the vantage point of what is coming to be called the communicative approach to second language teaching, it is easy to see that audiolingual methodology did not really generate the kind of meaningful language activity that activists in the field believe in today. A pattern practice drill, for example, does not produce discourse, real or simulated; it simply produces well-formed sentences and thus, from an activist point of view, does not result in any genuine use of language. Since, in the real world, language is mostly used for the communication of feeling or thought, supporters of the communicative approach do not regard the mere parroting, or construction, of token sentences as speaking or writing a language at all.

The magic word in all this is, of course, communication, and for second language teaching the magic concept has become “communicative competence” (see, for example, Hymes 1972, Savignon 1972), which combines Chomsky’s (1965) notion of grammatical competence (a kind of knowledge roughly analogous to the forms and rules of the formalists) with the activist notion of communicative function (a kind of knowing how to do that can only be demonstrated by using language appropriately for real communicative purposes).

Coming down a little way from these abstractions to work that has actually been done in the field, I would like to suggest that this near total change in orientation is most clearly reflected in current work on syllabus, or curriculum, design. There is as yet no very clearly defined communicative methodology, but there is a good deal of work in print on the notional-functional syllabus (see, for example, Wilkins 1976). This syllabus contrasts with such audiolingual courses as the famous University of Michigan series (Lado, Fries et al. 1943-1964) in one important way: whereas audiolingual courses like the Michigan one are organized around an inventory of structures to be memorized and then manipulated in accordance with the rules of English sentence formation (as determined by linguists), notional-functional courses are based on inventories of notions that students must learn to express in the
language (such as existence or location in space or time), and inventories of functions that they must learn to perform in the language (such as requesting information, apologizing, or complaining). The older kind of syllabus is now frequently called, for obvious reasons, the grammatical syllabus. It is clearly a product of formalist concerns and, like most audiolingual courses, has as its goal the development of grammatical competence (in practice, the production of well-formed sentences). The notional-functional syllabus, by contrast, is activist in its orientation and presupposes the rapid development of at least some degree of communicative competence (in practice, the production of appropriate discourse). The notional-functional syllabus now forms an integral part of the emerging communicative approach to language teaching. Wilkins, the father of this kind of syllabus, makes the following comparison between the two types, as well as mentioning a third type, the situational syllabus:

The advantage of the notional syllabus is that it takes the communicative facts of language into account from the beginning without losing sight of grammatical and situational factors. It is potentially superior to the grammatical syllabus because it will produce a communicative competence and because its evident concern with the use of language will sustain the motivation of the learners. It is superior to the situational syllabus because it can insure that the most important grammatical forms are included and because it can cover all kinds of language functions, not only those that typically occur in certain situations (1976:19).

Wilkins goes on to indicate how his syllabus deals with the problem of relating function to form:

The process of deciding what to teach is based on consideration of what the learners should most usefully be able to communicate in the foreign language. When this is established, we can decide what are the most appropriate forms for each type of communication (1976:19).

This way of approaching the problem has, I think, largely carried the day. In the ivory towers at least, the pendulum has swung toward the activist pole. There has clearly been a major shift in emphasis from the teaching of language as a closed set of forms (phonological, syntactic, and lexical) to the teaching of language as an open-ended series of communicative functions. In the classroom this has led to a shift in emphasis from developing formal accuracy to developing functional fluency.

This brings me to my last and most useful set of terms, Brumfit’s (1979) practical distinction between speaking or writing a language accurately and speaking or writing it fluently, which I hope will help to bridge the gap between the language of the ivory tower and the language of the classroom. Brumfit believes that any teacher can relate to the notions of accuracy and fluency since, unlike most theoretical
terms, they are actual descriptions of classroom behavior. Students get their meanings across or they don’t, and when they do find the words, they either pronounce them and/or put them together correctly or they don’t. Some students rarely make structural errors but seem to have trouble expressing themselves. Some can go on and on but express themselves poorly.

As I have noted, however, the pendulum has swung away from a concern with accuracy toward a newer concern with fluency in use. Many ESL teachers are now mainly concerned with helping their students to develop a real ability to communicate in English for authentic purposes, with whatever formal resources the students may have managed to acquire in the language. In principle, this means encouraging students to make the best sense they can of what they hear/read as well as to find a way within the limits of their speaking/writing skills to communicate their ideas and feelings to others. In principle, this approach has much to recommend it.

Meanwhile, back in the real world, however, students attempting a composition in English are writing sentences like this (from a native speaker of Spanish): Is necessary that all youngs in my country to know very well other’s cultures. Or like this (from a speaker of Arabic): I believe or agree that if you work on something that don’t like you won’t produce like the person who like his field. Or this (from a speaker of Chinese): They decide to submit me a one year fellowship to support me to the U.S. to learning more technique about systems management. That is, students are, in fact, producing language which communicates well enough but falls considerably short of any reasonable standard of accuracy. And in attempting to determine what our students need most, one look at a set of real student papers, like the ones from which these examples were taken, is, I believe, worth a year’s study of research reports advocating one general approach or another. This is what our students are really doing.

It could, of course, be argued that I have chosen my examples from a kind of language task, formal written composition, in which the accuracy demands are notoriously high. Different tasks do require different levels of accuracy. But I could just as easily have chosen my examples from videotapes of foreign teaching assistants, in which the accuracy problems, though undoubtedly different, are equally apparent. For Thai children learning English in a rural Thai village or for American students struggling with Spanish I to fulfill a requirement, it might be hard to establish a reasonable standard of accuracy, but it might also be hard to establish any very compelling reasons for doing this kind of teaching at all. It seems to me that the really interesting cases are students with a serious need for a language (e.g., foreign students pursuing higher learning, businesspersons, diplomats, and most immigrants). The higher the stakes, the more likely that accuracy
will be important. As those of us who work with advanced students know, acquiring a minimum communicative competence is not the be-all and end-all of second language learning. That’s only the beginning of many of our problems.

For me, the point of my real-world examples is this: fluency in a language is no guarantee of formal accuracy. To put it more grandly, the achievement of some level of communicative competence does not automatically entail the achievement of an equal grammatical competence. Functioning with some degree of success in a language may or may not involve producing the proper forms of that language to some desired degree of accuracy. Knowing English, for example, ought to mean more than being good at finding ways to get things done in the language. If I point to my mouth and shout “Whiskey! Whiskey!” urgently enough, I may succeed in the function of ordering a drink, but this hardly qualifies as a successful demonstration of what we normally mean by having learned to speak English. As theoreticians, we can focus on whatever aspects of the language learning process seem important to us for whatever reasons. As language teachers, however, we must be equally concerned with both the fluency and the accuracy of our students’ use of language. And I am therefore concerned that, in the field as a whole, the pendulum is once again swinging too far—this time in the direction of fluency. We used to believe that if students learned the forms, communication would somehow take care of itself. Now we seem to believe that if students somehow learn to communicate, mastery of the forms will take care of itself.

Proponents of the communicative approach will immediately object that this approach does allow for the development of formal accuracy, and this is true, in principle. In practice, however, I don’t see it happening. I strongly favor this approach myself and do believe that students learn the forms of language best in performing realistic communicative functions; but I am much less impressed with attempts to implement it. Neither the recent literature in the field nor the teaching materials I have seen so far deals with accuracy in any serious way. It is now, for example, a truism to say that making mistakes is a normal, and even necessary, part of the language learning process. Research on learner interlanguage (Selinker 1973, Corder 1978) has to some extent described the occurrence of such errors. But there is also hard research on fossilization (Vigil and Oller 1976), the process whereby some of these learner errors become a permanent part of the learner’s competence. Such fossilized errors may be caused by well-meaning native speakers who provide such learners with positive affective and cognitive feedback for language which is not correctly formed but still communicates enough of the message to make sense. In other words, rewarding a learner’s fluency may, in some cases, actually impede his or her achievement of accuracy.

THE FORUM
Similarly, most of the textbooks advertised as good means of acquiring communicative competence do not deal adequately with accuracy. Pittsburgh’s Interaction Activities (Kettering 1975) and Role-plays in English (Paulston et al. 1975), two early but excellent examples of such texts, plunge students into complex linguistic situations with no more formal guidance than a handful of useful words and expressions. Roleplays does begin by asserting that such work is only meant to supplement “the classroom text,” but separating the teaching of the forms of a language from the teaching of how to put these forms to use in communicative contexts leaves the problem of relating the two to the student. I am tempted to compare asking students to engage in these kinds of exercises with simply giving them a topic and asking them to write with no help or intervention from the teacher.

I suspect that one source of this apparent reluctance to deal with the problem of accuracy is a feeling that this problem will take care of itself. There seems to be a growing, if unspoken, assumption that the appropriate forms of a language can somehow be derived from a clear understanding of what the discourse requires. These remarks from a study by Hatch are now, for example, often quoted with approval by language-teaching specialists:

In second language learning, the basic assumption has been . . . that one first learns how to manipulate structures, that one gradually builds up a repertoire of structures and then, somehow, learns how to put the structures to use in discourse. We would like to consider the possibility that just the reverse happens. One learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed (1978: 404).

But it seems to me that this is easy to misread. As a description of what happens during normal language learning, it is, I think, roughly accurate, but syntactic structures do not simply fall out (the word develop is somewhat ambiguous here) of the different kinds of structures of which discourse is composed. The rules of discourse account for utterances; the rules of grammar account for sentences; and we have yet to figure out a way to derive one from the other. It may be true that these two systems can best be learned in conjunction, but they are two different systems and both must be learned. And, most important of all, in second language situations the learning of one does not always entail the learning of the other, as it normally does in first language learning. Teachers must be prepared to deal with students who know rules but can’t speak the language fluently, but they must also be prepared, as I have tried to show, to deal with students who are fluent but not accurate.

For dealing with the fluent but inaccurate student, I do not, of course, advocate a return to pattern practice or to any other method.
for teaching language forms in isolation from meaning or from communicative purpose. The weaknesses of these methods have been well documented, but I would hasten to add that it does not follow from the failings of such methods that the forms of a language cannot be taught. There may be better ways. For the production of planned written discourse, for example, a few specialists, such as Widdowson (1979) and Rutherford (1982), have made suggestions for classroom activities which attempt, in fairly imaginative ways, to relate the problem of grammatical choice to the kinds of rhetorical or discourse constraints which actually determine such choices in the real world. But ESL course designers and materials writers have largely chosen to ignore this line of endeavor, preferring instead the much easier practice of devising purely communicative tasks (sometimes supplemented by grammar exercises of the older type) without much regard for the problem of relating communicative task to grammatical form. I would therefore like to suggest that it is time to begin developing new materials and techniques for dealing with this problem (perhaps the major problem in learning a new language for serious use) more explicitly. We must find ways of teaching form and use together.

Even in the teaching of the spoken language, much more could be done to relate use to form. If, for example, we want to teach our students to perform a particular communicative act, such as the act of making an apology, we might achieve a higher level of accuracy by paying closer attention to the formal dimension of the students’ performance. Even in an example as simple as this one (the basic task would be simply expressing regret, for which we have a number of set formulas), the learner might need some variety of forms. *Excuse me,* for example, is an appropriate form for realizing the function of apologizing for stepping on someone’s toe. But this form works less well in some other kinds of contexts. *Excuse me for totalling your* *Mercedes,* for example, doesn’t work well at all. We might, to begin with, introduce these forms directly with illustrative examples, then create a likely context, such as a roleplay, and have the students practice making use of the forms in situations where an apology is called for. The trick is to demand both accuracy and fluency, that is, to repeat the exercise until students can easily negotiate the function in language which embodies, in grammatical form, the appropriate notions for performing the task.

I have argued that we need better techniques and materials for relating communicative function to form, but even without them a better balance of function and form could be achieved by observing three basic principles:

1. The forms for expressing basic notions in the language must be introduced systematically.
2. These forms must be introduced in communicative contexts.
3. Students must be expected to produce both appropriate discourse and well-formed sentences.

We cannot go on accepting inaccurate language simply because it communicates something that a clever native speaker can somehow understand. In practice, this almost certainly means exercising more control than is now popular. Some of what individual students will need may only emerge as they wrestle with genuine communicative problems. But whatever is needed must be supplied; if there is one law of teaching, that’s it. We cannot simply assume that our students will acquire everything that they need to acquire “naturally,” although, of course, we know that a few of them will.

We have all learned to say that we facilitate learning; we don’t dominate our classes the way prescriptive teachers do. We all worry about the affective domain; we don’t threaten our students, but rather interact with them interculturally. And we all take a more enlightened view of student error; we don’t suppress it as the audiolingual drill sergeants did. But we are still in the business of giving students what they need, which includes the ability to produce correct forms as well as the ability to communicate meaning. Even in this age of facilitating learning, humanistic interacting, and coexisting with error, giving students what they need is still what good teaching is all about.

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Department of ESL
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822

**Brief Reports and Summaries.** The *TESOL Quarterly* also invites short descriptions of completed work or work in progress. These may focus on any theoretical or practical aspect of our profession. Reports and summaries may be descriptions or discussions relating to materials, curricula, methodology, teaching, testing, professional preparation, research, or administration. The issues discussed should be supported by some type of experimentation, either of a formal or informal nature, and need not be presented in a strict abstract format. In general, reports and summaries should be a maximum of 2 double-spaced pages. *Longer articles do not appear in this section and should be submitted to the Editor of the TESOL Quarterly for review.* Send two copies of reports and summaries to the Editor, Brief Reports and Summaries:

Ann Fathman
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Stanford, CA 94305

**The Forum.** The *TESOL Quarterly* welcomes comments and reactions from readers regarding specific aspects or practices of our profession. Responses to published articles and reviews are also welcome. Contributions to The Forum should generally be no longer than 5 double-spaced pages. Submit two copies to the Editor of the *TESOL Quarterly* at the above address.

2. All submissions to the Quarterly should conform to the requirements detailed in the Guidelines for the Preparation of Manuscripts, which follows in this issue. In the future the Guidelines will be published only in December issues of the *TESOL Quarterly.*

3. All submissions to the *TESOL Quarterly* should be accompanied by a cover letter which includes a full mailing address and both a daytime and an evening telephone number.

4. Authors of full-length articles should include two copies of a very brief biographical statement (in sentence form, maximum 50 words), plus any special notations or acknowledgments which they would like to have included. Double spacing should be used throughout.

5. The *TESOL Quarterly* provides 25 free reprints of published full-length articles, and 10 reprints of published reviews.

6. Manuscripts submitted to the *TESOL Quarterly* cannot be returned to authors. Authors should be sure to keep a copy for themselves.

7. It is understood that manuscripts submitted to the *TESOL Quarterly* have not been previously published and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

8. The Editor of the *TESOL Quarterly* reserves the right to make editorial changes in any manuscript accepted for publication to enhance clarity or style. The author will be consulted only if the editing has been substantial.
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

GENERAL FORMAT

1.1 All manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced throughout (this applies to everything in the manuscript and everything accompanying the manuscript) on 8½ x 11" (21.5 by 27.5 cms.) standard white bond (not special "erasable" paper or onionskin) with margins of about 1½" (3 cms.) on all four sides. (If 8½ x 11" paper is not available, paper of a slightly different size will be acceptable as long as the typed copy does not cover an area exceeding 6 x 9".) Only one side of the paper should be used. Any corrections should be made unobtrusively, and the manuscript pages should not be pieced together or corrected with tape. The overall appearance of the manuscript should be neat and fit for the typesetter to read. Photocopies are acceptable, but authors should avoid duplicating processes that use a glazed paper.

1.2 Manuscripts of full-length articles should usually be no longer than 20 pages (including references), shorter length preferred. Reviews should generally be no longer than 5 pages, although comparative reviews or review articles may be somewhat longer. Contributions to The Forum should be a maximum of 5 pages. Submissions to Brief Reports and Summaries should be a maximum of 2 pages. Number the pages in the upper right-hand corner.

1.3 Manuscripts of full-length articles should be accompanied by an informative abstract, summarizing the content of the article. The abstract should not be merely a repetition of the introductory remarks of the article itself. It should have a maximum length of about 200 words.

1.4 On the front page of full-length articles, the title, author, and professional affiliation appear first, centered at the top of the page and double-spaced, followed by the abstract, which should be indented and also double-spaced. The body of the article follows. Biographical information, acknowledgments, and special notations should be indicated on a separate sheet of paper, as discussed in General Information for Authors, Section 4. Names and affiliations should be typed in the preferred form for publication. Authors who do not have institutional affiliations should list their city.

Reviews should start with the title of the material being reviewed, the subtitle given following a colon; the edition, if it is not the first; the number of volumes or the individual volume number; the author(s) or editor(s) of that material, surname last; the place, publisher, and year of publication; and the number of pages, roman and arabic. The title and subtitle of the reviewed material should be underscored. Use the following format:


The name(s) of the reviewer(s) and professional affiliation, in the preferred

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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form for publication, should be listed at the end of the review. Double spacing should be used throughout.

Contributions to Brief Reports and Summaries and submissions to The Forum should start with a title, followed by the author(s) and professional affiliation. Double spacing should be used throughout.

1.5 Tables, graphs, and figures should be placed on separate pages, numbered serially. Double spacing should be used throughout.

GENDER USAGE

Because the TESOL Quarterly is committed to both science and the fair treatment of individuals and groups, authors of manuscripts are expected to avoid writing in a manner that reinforces questionable attitudes and assumptions about people and sex roles.

The following examples of inappropriate usage with suggested non-sexist revisions are intended to help authors recognize and change instances where word choice may be inaccurate, misleading, or discriminatory:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INAPPROPRIATE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED</th>
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<tr>
<td>A speaker must monitor his listener . . .</td>
<td>A speaker must monitor the listener . . .</td>
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<td>Very often a writer does not monitor his arguments well.</td>
<td>Very often writers do not monitor their arguments well.</td>
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<td>A student who finds that she is placed . . .</td>
<td>Students who find that they are placed . . .</td>
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<td>• It is inappropriate to select either masculine or feminine pronouns to refer to antecedent nouns of unspecified gender.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A student is often the best judge of the value of his counseling.</td>
<td>A student is often the best judge of the value of counseling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who finds himself failing in a grammar class . . .</td>
<td>A person who is failing in a grammar class . . .</td>
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<td>When a student requires special help, it can be effective to give him individual attention.</td>
<td>When a student requires special help, individual attention can be effective.</td>
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<td>The chairman should establish general guidelines.</td>
<td>The chair should establish general guidelines.</td>
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<td>In this study, the sons and daughters of professionals . . .</td>
<td>In this study, the daughters and sons of professionals . . .</td>
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<td>• vary male-first order</td>
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<td>As both Cheever (1968) and M. Cheever (1972) have noted . . .</td>
<td>As both J. Cheever (1968) and M. Cheever (1972) have noted . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two individuals with the same last name should be differentiated by inclusion of initials for both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Stevick (1980) and Bodman (1979) have pointed out . . .</td>
<td>As Stevick (1980) and Bodman (1979) have pointed out . . .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PUNCTUATING CONVENTIONS

3.1 A single straight underscore indicates italic type. Contributors are asked to use underscoring in manuscripts for the following purposes and no others:
   a. Use underscoring for titles of books and journals mentioned by name in the text or in the title of a review.
   b. Use underscoring for a letter, word, phrase, sentence, or longer passage cited as a linguistic example or subject of discussion.
   c. Use underscoring to mark technical words and expressions, but only at their first occurrence.
   d. Use underscoring sparingly, and only where it seems essential, to give prominence or emphasis to a word, phrase, or sentence in the text.
   e. Do not use underscoring to mark foreign words or abbreviations which are part of an English sentence, such as ad hoc, a priori, e.g., i.e., or et al. Nor should underscoring be used to mark forms in phonetic or phonemic transcription; these should be placed within square brackets or slanted lines.

3.2 Double quotation marks are used for quotations in the text of less than four typewritten lines. Longer quotations are set off in an indented block without quotation marks (but still double-spaced). Use single quotation marks within double quotation marks to set off quotations within quotations.

Quotation marks may be used to highlight a technical term, but only if the originator of that term is cited in the text adjacent to that term.

Quotation marks may be used to "qualify" a term or word (i.e., to indicate that it is not to be interpreted in its literal sense).

Quotation marks should not be used to enclose a word or phrase cited as a linguistic example.

3.3 Ellipsis is indicated by three periods, close-set, with a blank space before and after, like ... this. Four periods are never used, even when the ellipsis follows the end of a sentence.

MANUSCRIPT TITLES AND HEADINGS

4.1 Contributors should use no underscoring of any kind for their title or for headings of divisions and sub-divisions. The choice of typeface should be left to the editor. (An exception is the title of a book in the heading for a review, which should be underscored. Please see Sections 3.1.a. and 6.3.a.)

4.2 Capitalize only the major words in the title of the manuscript and in all headings and sub-headings. Conjunctions, articles, and short prepositions are not considered major words.

4.3 Section headings and sub-headings in the body of the manuscript begin at the left margin of the paragraph and should not be centered on the page.

FOOTNOTES

5.1 Footnotes should be numbered serially throughout the manuscript.
5.2 The footnote reference number is a raised numeral following the word or passage to which it applies. It is not enclosed in parentheses and is not followed by a parenthesis or period. Footnote reference numbers should be typed to come after any other marks of punctuation.

5.3 Use footnotes for substantive information only and type each footnote (double-spaced) in the manuscript directly below the line to which it refers. Set it off from the text with a horizontal line above and a horizontal line below.

5.4 Each footnote is typed as a separate paragraph, with the first line indented. It begins with its reference number, raised above the line of type, but not enclosed in parentheses and not followed by a parenthesis or a period.

5.5 Footnotes should be avoided in contributions to Reviews, Brief Reports and Summaries, and The Forum.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

6.1 References cited in the text must appear in the reference list, and every entry in the reference list must be cited in the text. The author should be certain that references appear in both places and are in agreement. When directly quoted material is cited, a page number must be provided. Citations in the text may be given in either of two ways:

As Smith has observed, "..." (1979:3).

"The Chinese learners produced an average of 4 existentials in every 5 compositions" (Smith 1979:3).

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6.2 The reference list should be double-spaced, beginning on a separate page of the manuscript with the centered heading: REFERENCES. Arrange the entries alphabetically by surnames of authors. Multiple works by one author should be listed chronologically, with a suffixed letter to distinguish several items published in the same year (e.g., 1974a, 1974b).

6.3 The sample list of references below illustrates format for bibliographic entries. Please note the following conventions:

a. Underscoring is used only for book titles and the names of journals. Journal articles, book reviews, articles in collections, conference presentations, and unpublished manuscripts are not underscored or placed in quotation marks. Book titles, when they are included in the title of a review, should be underscored.

b. In titles of books, articles, reviews, conference presentations, and unpublished manuscripts, capitalization is used only for the first word and for any words which are normally capitalized (e.g., proper names). In journal titles, all major words are capitalized.
REFERENCES


TABLES

7.1 Plan each table so that it will fit the printed page without crowding; no table should exceed the size of a manuscript page. Leave ample white space between columns and double-space all entries.

7.2 Column heads should be short, so as to stand clearly above the several columns. If you need longer headings, represent them by numbers or capital letters and explain these in the text preceding the table or in a note below the table. Any abbreviations included in the table should also be explained in a note below the table.

7.3 If two or more tables appear in one article, number them and refer to them by number (e.g., Table 1, Table 2). Do not speak of the “preceding” or the “following table.” The printer may not be able to preserve its original position.

7.4 Each table should have a legend above it, containing the table number and concise title. Tables from other sources should be credited below the table itself.

FIGURES, GRAPHS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Because the design and preparation of such materials can be expensive, use these aids judiciously; the simplest level of presentation is best. Any drawing of professional quality is acceptable, whether done by a professional or a person skilled in the use of press-on letters or other graphic aids. In any case, material must be in finished form ready for reproduction. The criteria established in Section 7 for tables applies to figures, graphs, and illustrations.
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REFERENCE GUIDES


Graduate Theses and Dissertation in English as a Second Language, 1973-76.

Stephen Cooper (editor and compiler). Published jointly with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics. 1977. 27 pp. Paper. $1.00.


OTHER TESOL PUBLICATIONS

On TESOL '82: Pacific Perspectives on Language Learning and Teaching. Mark A. Clarke and Jean Handscombe, eds. Selected papers from the 16th Annual TESOL Convention in Honolulu. TESOL, 1983. 340 pp. $10.00 to TESOL members, $11.50 to nonmembers.

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On TESOL '78: EFL Policies, Programs, Practices. Charles Blatchford and Jacquelyn Schachter, eds. Selected papers from the Twelfth Annual TESOL Convention in Mexico City. TESOL, 1978. 264 pp. Paper. $7.00 to TESOL members, $8.00 to nonmembers.


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