### CONTENTS

#### ARTICLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Conceptual Framework for the Integration of Language and Content in Second/Foreign Language Instruction</td>
<td>201 (10-26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Teachers’ Views of Western Language Teaching: Context Informs Paradigms</td>
<td>219 (28-47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language-Learning Situation of Deaf Students</td>
<td>239 (48-66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Nonstandard Approach to Standard English</td>
<td>259 (68-91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to Form or Meaning? Error Treatment in the Bangalore Project</td>
<td>283 (92-112)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Required in Graduate Courses in Business Administration</td>
<td>305 (114-125)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### REVIEW

Linguistic and Cultural Influences on Learning Mathematics 317 (Rodney R. Cocking and Jose P. Mestre (Eds.) Reviewed by Carolyn Kessler)

#### BOOK NOTICES 321

#### BRIEF REPORTS AND SUMMARIES

Educating for Employment in Programs for Southeast Asian Refugees: A Review of Research 337 (James W. Tollefson)

What Novice Teachers Focus On: The Practicum in TESL 343 (Donna Brinton and Christine Holten)
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TESOL QUARTERLY
Editor’s Note

The Executive Board of TESOL has appointed Sandra Silberstein, Associate Professor of English at the University of Washington, to a 3-year term, beginning June 1, 1989, as Editor of the TESOL Quarterly. The December 1989 issue of the Quarterly will be the first issue prepared under Sandra’s editorship.

Sandra is coauthor of Reader’s Choice (University of Michigan Press) and author of the forthcoming Techniques in Teaching Reading (Oxford University Press). A teacher trainer, researcher, and materials developer, she has published and lectured widely in the areas of TESOL theory, research, and pedagogy; narrative and critical theory; ethnicity and gender; and life in the classroom. She is committed to continuing the Quarterly’s mission of service to multiple audiences: addressing the broad range of concerns of teachers, researchers, and teacher trainers around the globe.

I know that readers of the Quarterly join me in wishing Sandra well in the work that lies ahead. TESOL is fortunate that Sandra has agreed to undertake the very important work of guiding its professional journal.

Effective immediately, all article-length manuscripts and manuscripts for the Reviews section should be sent directly to Sandra Silberstein at the following address:

Sandra Silberstein
Department of English, GN-30
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195 U.S.A.

I am also pleased to announce that Gail Weinstein-Shr of Temple University has accepted Sandra Silberstein’s invitation to serve as Brief Reports and Summaries Editor. Effective immediately, all manuscripts for this section should be submitted to Gail Weinstein-Shr at the address listed in the Information for Contributors section.

In the March 1989 issue, the first part of Liz Hamp-Lyons’s survey review of recent publications on statistics, language testing, and quantitative research methods appeared. The final part of this survey review was scheduled to appear in this issue. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons,
none of the books that she planned to review (all of which were originally slated for publication in 1988) has been published yet. It has therefore been necessary to postpone the appearance of the second part of Liz Hamp-Lyons’s survey review until a future issue.

In This Issue

The articles in this issue of the TESOL Quarterly reflect the diversity of settings and circumstances in which English is learned. Among the issues discussed are content-based language instruction, the reconciliation of different educational traditions, English for deaf students, standard English as a second dialect, error treatment in communicatively oriented teaching, and the characteristics of writing assignments in graduate courses in business administration. Together, the articles underscore the breadth of second/foreign language education and the need for informed and sensitive responses to the needs of different learner populations.

• Marguerite Snow, Myriam Met, and Fred Genesee argue that to be effective, content-based language instruction “must be carefully considered and planned.” To that end, they propose a conceptual framework for integrating language and content instruction. The authors’ model is designed so that language and content teachers “maintain their respective priorities”; at the same time, however, teachers work together to develop a program that encompasses both content-obligatory and content-compatible language objectives. Four different settings—the mainstream class, the ESL class, the immersion class, and the FLES class—are used to illustrate the application of the framework. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of integrating language and content instruction.

• Barbara Burnaby and Yilin Sun explore the implementation of communicatively oriented teaching methods in China from the perspective of two groups of experienced Chinese teachers of English at the tertiary level. In general, the respondents viewed communicative language teaching favorably but “felt that its applications were limited in light of the needs and purposes of most Chinese students and that there were systematic constraints on its implementation in the Chinese education system.” The authors conclude that Western language-teaching specialists should consider carefully the comparability of conditions in their own and in the Chinese setting and should “look at what works in foreign language teaching at home as a possible model for export to China.”
• M. Virginia Swisher notes that deaf students attending universities and community colleges are increasingly placed in remedial English classes with ESL students. She argues, however, that the challenges faced by deaf students learning English are very different from those of ESL students, since deaf learners have “language-learning histories that are very different from those of ESL students.” A description of these differences, which the author views as the foundation for an understanding of deaf students’ difficulties in acquiring English, is followed by a discussion of the variety of language backgrounds that deaf students may bring to the classroom and of factors affecting their attitudes toward English.

• Charlene Sato’s call for a nonstandard approach to standard English argues for the adoption of a pluralist position, “one that views the teaching of standard English as a second dialect . . . as ‘additive bidialectalism’ rather than remediation.” The author’s review of research on differences in varieties of English and on participant structures and interfunctional patterns in the classroom leads to the conclusion that both policy making and pedagogy must be informed by a “greater familiarity with differences in varieties and the classroom experiences of minority students.” In contrast to an assimilationist ideology, additive bidialectalism fosters the academic and linguistic development of minority students “without repression of their prior language socialization.”

• Alan Beretta reports the findings of an evaluation study of the Bangalore/Madras Communicational Teaching Project (CTP). In light of the CTP’s guiding principle that “form could be best learned when the learner’s attention was focused on meaning,” the author investigated whether treatment of errors by teachers in the CTP focused on meaning or on form and whether “such a distinction [is] observable in classroom practice.” An analysis of 21 lessons revealed “a significantly greater incidence of treatment of content than linguistic error”; however, the author also found what “appears to have been an unacknowledged move to eliminate the possibility of a focus on form” by phasing out tasks calling for production and by stressing receptive tasks.

• Grace Canseco and Patricia Byrd report the findings of their analysis of syllabuses from graduate courses in business administration at Georgia State University. The central focus of the survey was “to find what writing assignments were listed and what requirements were given for the final written products.” The authors identified seven categories of writing assignments; in addition, they found evidence to support the view that “much of the writing required . . . is highly structured and instructor controlled.” The article concludes with a discussion of implications for ESL instruction, including the observation that
graduate students might “benefit from instruction that focuses on interpreting and responding to topics provided by instructors.”

Also in this issue:


- Book Notices: Nontraditional materials for adult ESL instruction are the focus of this issue’s Book Notices section, for which Elsa Auerbach has been the guest editor.

- Brief Reports and Summaries: James Tollefson offers a critical review of evaluations of ESL programs for southeast Asian refugees; and Donna Brinton and Christine Holten report findings of their study of the concerns of novice teachers enrolled in a practicum.

- The Forum: Morton Benson argues that TESOL programs must devote more attention to differences between the standard varieties of American and British English; Margaret Sokolik’s commentary on Bernard Spolsky’s recent *TESOL Quarterly* article, “Bridging the Gap: A General Theory of Second Language Learning,” is followed by a response by the author; and Elizabeth Gatbonton and Norman Segalowitz respond to comments by Julian Bamford on their recent *TESOL Quarterly* article, “Creative Automatization: Principles for Promoting Fluency Within a Communicative Framework.”

  Stephen J. Gaies
This article proposes a conceptual framework for the integration of language and content teaching in second and foreign language classrooms. In this model, language and content teachers work collaboratively to determine language-teaching objectives. These objectives derive from two considerations: (a) content-obligatory language (language essential to an understanding of content material) and (b) content-compatible language (language that can be taught naturally within the context of a particular subject matter and that students require additional practice with). The conceptual framework is illustrated in four instructional settings—the mainstream class, the ESL class, the foreign language immersion class, and the FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) class. General implications for the integration of language and content teaching are also discussed.

There is growing interest in a model of language education that integrates language and content instruction in the second/foreign language classroom. This approach contrasts with many existing methods, in which language skills are taught in isolation from substantive content. Several theoretical rationales underlie this shift in perspective.

For young children, cognitive development and language development go hand in hand; language is a tool through which the child comes to understand the world. In first language acquisition, these processes are paired naturally. For children who are L2...
learners, however, traditional methods for teaching second/foreign languages often dissociate language learning from cognitive or academic development. In contrast, an integrated approach brings these domains together in instruction.

A second rationale behind integrating language and content teaching is that language is learned most effectively for communication in meaningful, purposeful social and academic contexts. In real life, people use language to talk about what they know and what they want to know more about, not to talk about language itself. What school children know and need to know more about is the subject matter of school. In the typical school setting, however, language learning and content learning are often treated as independent processes. Mohan (1986) notes: “In subject matter learning we overlook the role of language as a medium of learning. In language learning we overlook the fact that content is being communicated” (p. 1). Cantoni-Harvey (1987) further underscores this point: “When the learners’ second language is both the object and medium of instruction, the content of each lesson must be taught simultaneously with the linguistic skills necessary for understanding it” (p. 22).

Another underlying rationale is that the integration of content with language instruction provides a substantive basis for language teaching and learning. Content can provide both a motivational and a cognitive basis for language learning. Content provides a primary motivational incentive for language learning insofar as it is interesting and of some value to the learner and therefore worth learning. Language then will be learned because it provides access to content, and language learning may even become incidental to learning about the content (e.g., in immersion classes).

Content also provides a cognitive basis for language learning in that it provides real meaning that is an inherent feature of naturalistic language learning. Meaning provides conceptual or cognitive hangers on which language functions and structures can be hung. In the absence of real meaning, language structures and functions are likely to be learned as abstractions devoid of conceptual or communicative value. If these motivational and cognitive bases are to be realized, then content must be chosen that is important and interesting to the learner. In the case of language learning in school, the focus of our concern here, this is achieved by selecting content that is part of the mainstream curriculum.

A fourth rationale concerns the intrinsic characteristics of language variation. It is increasingly recognized that language use in school differs in some important general ways from language use outside of school and, moreover, that different subject areas are
characterized by specific genres or registers (see Heath, 1983; Wells, 1981). Thus, learning the school register or specific subject-area registers may be a prerequisite to mastery of specific content or to academic development in general. This is of particular concern to teachers of limited English proficient (LEP) students.

What is called for in the model proposed here is a recognition of the importance of language structures, skills, or functions that are characteristic of different content areas. These skills can be identified by (a) informed speculation about what kinds of language skills or functions are called for in specific content areas, (b) informal observation of the language requirements of specific content areas, or (c) systematic analysis of students’ actual language needs in content classes. In contrast to mainstream content classes, where the teacher assumes students have the requisite language skills, an integrated content class does not make such assumptions. The primary objective of such classes remains content mastery, but it is recognized that content classes have great language-teaching potential as well.

There are several other reasons for the shift from teaching language alone to content-based approaches. The success of immersion as a model of foreign language education has provided strong evidence for the effectiveness of language learning through subject-matter learning. Extensive research has revealed that immersion students learn the academic content specified in the school curriculum and at the same time develop significant levels of foreign language proficiency (Genesee, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Furthermore, concern for the education of language minority students in the United States has prompted a reexamination of the methodologies appropriate for teaching English to LEP students in the public schools.

Cummins’s (1980, 1981) work provided theoretical impetus for considering the integration of language and content instruction. He posited a paradigm in which language tasks may be characterized as context reduced or context embedded and in which the tasks addressed through language may be cognitively demanding or undemanding. In context-embedded language tasks, support for meaning is readily available through the immediate communicative situation, whether through background knowledge or through visual or other contextual cues. In contrast, context-reduced tasks offer little available contextual support for the learner to derive meaning from the immediate communicative setting.

However, as language teachers try to make language meaningful by providing contextual cues and supports, too often their attempts bring the learner into cognitively undemanding situations. Thus,
although it is easy for children to learn to label colors and shapes, for example, activities in the language class rarely require students to use this new language knowledge in the application of higher order thinking.

In contrast, when language and content are integrated, it is possible to practice language (e.g., colors and shapes) by applying such labels to more sophisticated tasks, such as sorting geometric shapes by those that differ from one another by one attribute (color or shape only) or by two attributes (color and shape). More recently, Chamot and O’Malley (1987) have developed the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), which provides academic language development in English through content-area instruction in science, mathematics, and social studies. CALLA attempts to ease the LEP student’s transition from ESL classes to mainstream classes.

For these reasons, then, content-based language instruction is receiving increasing attention in second/foreign language teaching circles. Yet, if such an orientation is to be effective, language teaching must be carefully considered and planned. It is unlikely that desired levels of second/foreign language proficiency will emerge simply from the teaching of content through a second or foreign language. The specification of language-learning objectives must be undertaken with deliberate, systematic planning and coordination of the language and content curricula.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Consider the following two scenarios. Scenario 1: The French FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) teacher dashes into Mr. Porter’s fifth-grade class to teach a 20-minute lesson on weather terms—a lesson completely devoid of any connection to what the class is doing that day or week in its other subjects. Scenario 2: The chemistry teacher at Hoover High School asks her students to write up the steps in the laboratory experiment just conducted, without ever considering that LEP students may not know the vocabulary or rhetorical mode for describing a process. In these scenarios, both teachers have their respective priorities and perceived responsibilities: The content teacher is responsible for subject matter; the language teacher is responsible for the language curriculum. In the traditional model, the teachers’ responsibilities do not overlap.

In this article, we propose an alternative model that calls for a reconceptualization of the roles of teachers working in schools where second/foreign language education is a primary goal. In this
According to the model, language-learning objectives in a content-based program are derived from three sources: (a) the second/foreign language curriculum, (b) the content-area curriculum, and (c) assessment of the learners' academic and communicative needs and ongoing evaluation of their developing language skills. From these sources, two types of language objectives can be specified: content-obligatory language objectives and content-compatible language objectives. This conceptual framework is displayed graphically in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1**
The Conceptual Framework for Integrating Language and Content Instruction

Content-obligatory language objectives specify the language required for students to develop, master, and communicate about a
given content material. For every topic or concept, certain language is essential or obligatory for understanding and talking about the material. Content-obligatory language objectives are both structural (i.e., specification of verbs, nouns, rhetorical devices, etc.) and functional (e.g., study skills such as note taking; language functions such as requesting/giving information, narrating, persuading, etc.). For instance, a lesson on gravity in a fourth-grade science class would require that students know the vocabulary to rise, to pull, and force; similarly, a math lesson on measurement would require students to know the vocabulary for systems of measurement, whether inches and feet, or metric terms.

These examples may seem rather obvious, but needs assessment to determine the essential vocabulary, structures, and so on is typically not part of the curriculum-planning process in the public schools. By working as a team, the content and language teachers can pool their respective expertise: The content teacher knows the key concepts to be imparted, and the language teacher knows how to teach the pertinent language skills.

For content-compatible language objectives, the content teacher and the language teacher ask, What other language skills are compatible with the concept or information to be taught? Content-compatible language objectives can be taught within the context of a given content but are not required for successful content mastery. Whereas content-obligatory objectives derive directly from the linguistic needs for communicating the information in the content area, content-compatible language objectives derive from the second/foreign language curriculum and ongoing assessment of learner needs and progress.

Traditionally, second/foreign language curricula have been fairly standard both in content and sequencing. Learners acquire vocabulary related to classroom procedures, the weather, parts of the body, colors, and numbers, to name some typical topics taught early on in the language-learning sequence. The present tense is taught before the past; agreement of number and gender precedes indirect object pronouns. These topics and structures may or may not have any relationship to the language skills students need in their content classes. They exist as autonomous objectives within the second/foreign language curricula.

In an integrated approach, on the other hand, the language curriculum is altered so that language objectives and content objectives compatible with each other are taught concurrently. For example, the skills to describe weather may best be taught when students pursue a unit on meteorology in their science class. In this way, students learn not only appropriate language, but also how to
apply this language to useful skills such as charting rainfall and temperatures in cities where the target language is spoken. A natural outcome of such activity is cultural learning as well: Students learn the geographic and climatic diversity of the places where the target language is spoken.

Ongoing evaluation of students’ difficulties with the second/foreign language also provides a rich source of information for specifying content-compatible objectives. Research on the oral proficiency of immersion graduates, for example, indicates that despite achieving very high levels, these students do not approximate native-speaker norms in the productive skills of speaking and writing (see Genesee, 1987, and Swain & Lapkin, 1982, for reviews of studies). One result of such findings has been an overemphasis on incorporating traditional forms of grammar instruction into the immersion language arts curriculum. An alternative is to use analysis of students’ language or communication difficulties to determine appropriate content-compatible language objectives. These objectives could then be used by teachers to provide for increased input of correct structures and for extended output through student practice.

A fifth-grade social studies lesson can be used to illustrate the role of content-compatible language. In discussing the route taken by a famous explorer, Cabrillo, for instance, the teacher can incorporate review or reinforcement of the past tense forms into the activities of the lesson. Although accurate production of the past tense is not essential for understanding the chronology of Cabrillo’s travels, such a lesson presents an ideal opportunity for contextualized focus on a troublesome verb tense.

Similarly, science experiments provide a natural context for discussing cause/effect relationships. Cause and effect may be expressed simply by using because or more elaborately through if-then clauses. Either of these cause/effect language structures may be emphasized as content-compatible language objectives, depending on the proficiency level of the learners and their communicative needs.

Once persistent errors are identified, instructional activities can be designed that are either integrated into the subject-matter lesson or taught directly in the second/foreign language class. If, for example, evaluation reveals student weaknesses in the use of the conditional, teachers may design content activities requiring its use. In a fifth-grade unit on explorers of the New World, teachers may ask students to complete the sentence, “If Columbus had been from France . . . .” Such an exercise not only has the advantage of providing meaningful and contextualized grammar practice, it also
requires students to use critical thinking skills in applying known facts (the impact of Spanish discovery of the New World) to a hypothetical situation. On an ongoing basis, language and content teachers provide feedback to each other and to students. Thus, students’ errors provide indicators of areas in which additional instruction or practice is needed.

The next section illustrates the conceptual framework just described in four different instructional settings. The first two are second language programs designed for LEP students learning English as a second language. The third and fourth settings are foreign language programs for language majority, English-speaking students. All apply the principles of the model discussed above in different ways, depending upon the instructional context and the division of instructional responsibilities.

APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Setting 1: The Mainstream Class

The first application is to the mainstream classroom, in which LEP students generally spend a good part of their day. Typically, this class is taught by a teacher whose primary focus is to develop students’ skills in the objectives stated in the standard school curriculum.

In our conceptual framework, the mainstream teacher works closely with the ESL teacher. First, the team identifies which content areas are to be taught in the coming weeks. The content teacher identifies those language skills that will be new for all students and those that will be new only for the LEP students.

For example, in a science demonstration on the evaporation/condensation cycle, it is likely that the terms evaporate, condense, and cycle will be new for all students. Perhaps some students will know moisture; most will not. Typically, the English-speaking students will have the functional skills to ask for/give information, to describe, to generate hypotheses. More than likely, the LEP students will need assistance with some or all of these functions, particularly as they relate to this topic. Furthermore, the English-speaking students will experience few difficulties in reading the procedural discourse required to follow directions for an experiment or in writing expository prose to report the results. In contrast, the LEP students will need considerable assistance with the reading/writing tasks related to the content demands.

Working cooperatively, the mainstream teacher and language teacher thus pinpoint the linguistic needs of the learner and plan jointly to meet them. Some preparatory activities in the ESL
classroom will facilitate the task of the content teacher. At the same time, the content teacher takes on the responsibility of ensuring that language skills are taught as part of the content lesson.

Planning carefully to ensure that language is acquired through experience, the mainstream teacher uses concrete materials, realia, manipulatives, and a variety of activities to provide opportunities for students to match language to its referents. Definitions, paraphrasing, and additional oral examples of the science concepts can be used to reinforce the acquisition of both the language functions and vocabulary associated with key concepts. Written materials are designed that facilitate comprehension of the content text. The mainstream teacher uses prereading strategies so that students will have the necessary background knowledge of both concepts and language with which to make sense of the text. Written assignments are structured so that not only are students’ limited language skills taken into account, but language growth is planned as an outcome as well.

In this model, the content determines the language objectives. The content teacher shares in the planning in two major ways: (a) by ensuring that content is accessible to students, despite their limited language skills, through the identification of content-obligatory language objectives and (b) by planning for and implementing strategies that will address demonstrated language needs through content-compatible language study in the mainstream class.

Setting 2: The ESL Class

The second application of the conceptual framework is to the ESL pullout setting. In this type of instructional program, LEP students, usually from heterogeneous language backgrounds, are “pulled out” of mainstream classrooms for special instruction in English. An actual classroom example from Hawkins (1988) illustrates the principles of the framework. In her study, Hawkins was interested in documenting cases of “scaffolding,” or assisted instruction, in which the teacher and learner engage in a series of interactions that ultimately lead to instances of actual learning. She looked at the classroom language use of fourth-grade LEP children in Rosemead, CA. What is relevant for our discussion here is the context in which these successful interactions were produced.

In this pullout program, the ESL teacher integrated language instruction with the content of the students’ social studies lessons in a very interesting way. She knew that the students were just starting a unit on the California mission system but did not know the
specifics of the content to be covered. Each day in the ESL class, she asked the students to tell her about what they had learned in social studies. Different students volunteered answers. At times, there was confusion about certain facts, but usually this was resolved with the teacher and students arriving at a common understanding of the facts or events.

After the question/answer session, the students practiced working with the information in different ways, such as writing short summaries or describing the chronology of events to their partners. Occasionally, however, the class could not reach an agreement about the details or events described in the social studies lesson. In these cases, the ESL class collectively developed a list of questions, wrote the questions down in their notebooks, and sought clarification of the information during the next social studies class. The following day, the ESL students used the notes they had taken in the social studies class and discussed the information in question.

This example illustrates the principles of the conceptual framework for integrating language and content instruction in a setting where language is typically taught in isolation from the subject matter of LEP students’ regular classes. The content of the mission unit provided a meaningful context to practice a variety of language and academic skills. The ESL teacher reinforced certain content-obligatory language and concepts (e.g., vocabulary such as mission, priest, to explore, and the cause/effect concept of bringing a new way of life to the Indians).

Content-compatible language was also introduced and reinforced in a variety of ways. Students practiced asking and answering questions, taking notes, and summarizing information in written form. In addition, the students used a variety of language types, such as logical connectors of seriation, and language functions, such as agreeing and disagreeing, guessing, and arriving at a group consensus. Furthermore, the ESL teacher could diagnose both language and content deficiencies in a very direct way and incorporate this information into on-the-spot activities or reserve them for future lessons.

The ESL students were motivated to learn the material because it was important in their mainstream class. They were not talking about language per se in the ESL class but were using language to make sense of information they had learned in their social studies class. Moreover, the information gap that existed between the students and ESL teacher provided an authentic, natural context for interaction. The students became the possessors of knowledge, knowledge that the ESL teacher wanted, thereby creating a real purpose for communication.
Setting 3: The Immersion Class

Our third example comes from immersion education and considers what the proposed framework implies for the instruction of language majority children in the foreign language setting. Look at Figure 1 again. In the typical instructional setting, the language teacher and the content teacher are different people. As stated, there is rarely an existing network set up in the elementary or secondary school for these people to talk to each other. In immersion, however, there is obviously an entirely different configuration—the content teacher and the language teacher are one and the same. In this sense, immersion education is unique.

The immersion teacher simultaneously plays the roles of the content teacher teaching subject matter and the language teacher seeking out opportunities to maximize language development. Yet, probably few immersion teachers would consciously define their roles in this way. The framework therefore offers immersion teachers a method for systematic integration of language and content instruction. All planning, from curriculum development to actual delivery of instruction, must be guided by consideration of content-obligatory and content-compatible language needs. (For more detailed discussion of immersion teaching methodology, see Lorenz & Met, 1988; Snow, 1988.)

All effective immersion teachers already incorporate content-obligatory language incidentally into their content lessons; if this were not the case, immersion students could not possibly understand subject matter presented in the foreign language. However, immersion teachers often overlook the opportunity to develop content-compatible language objectives. In this model, the immersion teacher asks, What other features of language are compatible with the concept or information contained in this lesson?

So, for example, in a mathematics lesson focusing on the symbols for greater than, less than, and equals, the immersion teacher plans for language development by incorporating the language of comparison: comparing quantities, comparing attributes, stating equalities. Since the target language may be very different from English with regard to how such relationships are expressed linguistically, the mathematics lesson provides an excellent vehicle for developing content-compatible language functions and structures that might not readily transfer from the students’ first language.

As diagnosticians of students’ language needs, immersion teachers note aspects of language development that require clarification or extended practice. Thus, for instance, the first-grade Spanish
immersion teacher notices students making frequent errors in noun-adjective agreement. In a unit on describing the colors of autumn leaves, the students practice writing sentences on the board such as *Las hojas de los robles son rojas*. Next, they work with a partner, taking turns describing the colors of different leaves. Thus, in the context of a science lesson on autumn, students have meaningful written and oral practice with a significant Spanish structure.

Similarly, in an upper grade classroom, the immersion teacher addresses, through a history lesson requiring students to develop a time line, persistent student errors in the selection of the appropriate past tense. Students have extensive opportunities to apply this grammatical structure in a meaningful activity as they discuss the events in the time line. Teachers can contrast the continuous past and the discrete past through the visual representations on the time line, highlighting for the students the contrast in meaning between the two past tenses.

In sum, this model requires the immersion teacher to take on a dual role. In the immersion class, language skills and structures can be taught and reinforced in natural contexts both within subject-matter lessons and within the language arts period, thereby providing greater opportunities to integrate the teaching of language and content. Moreover, the approach ensures that the language arts curriculum will be relevant to the immersion students’ academic and communicative needs.

**Setting 4: The FLES Class**

The FLES classroom provides the setting for the fourth example to be discussed. In most FLES classes, the “traveling” foreign language teacher sees students for up to 40 minutes three to five times per week. Traditionally, these classes have operated independently from classes in the other curricular areas. In this conceptual framework, foreign language objectives derive from the content-compatible language of the standard school curriculum. The FLES teacher lays the language curriculum alongside the mainstream curriculum, looking for points of coincidence.

Perhaps the most fertile ground for integrating foreign language (and culture) with the elementary school curriculum is social studies. Numerous social studies objectives are compatible with foreign language objectives. Students in the early elementary grades study their own community and communities around the world.

In the FLES class, students can be taught the vocabulary related to places in the community (e.g., the bank, the post office, the names of different types of stores, etc.). They may be asked to
distinguish aspects of their community that are not found in other communities (e.g., rural versus urban versus suburban); they can contrast their community with one in a country where the target language is spoken; they can categorize places in the community by whether they provide goods or services; they can make maps of their community; they can make dioramas or other visual representations of their community and those of the target culture; they can contrast goods and services available in their community with those of the target culture. In sum, many of the activities appropriate to the social studies curriculum may be conducted entirely in the foreign language in the FLES class.

Foreign language objectives for weather are compatible with a science unit on meteorology; objectives for colors and shapes are similarly consistent with the kindergarten/first-grade mathematics curriculum. Clearly, these types of activities go well beyond simply labeling. They challenge students in the foreign language class to use their language skills as a vehicle for acquiring concepts and information, as a tool for thinking. Furthermore, the FLES teacher does not have to search for material because the foreign language objectives derive naturally from the content curriculum.

These four examples are intended to illustrate practical applications of our conceptual framework. We believe that the model is equally applicable to other instructional settings where second/foreign language learning is one of the goals of instruction. The common ground of the four instructional situations described is re-conceptualizing the role of teachers—both language teachers and content teachers—to recognize the value of integrating language and content. Such an integration will assist language minority students in mastering English and achieving in school and will help language majority students to develop higher levels of proficiency in the foreign language.

**IMPLICATIONS OF AN INTEGRATED APPROACH**

Clearly, the integration of language and content teaching carries with it a number of broad implications, the first of which is that ESL/foreign language teachers and content teachers must collaborate. Such collaboration requires a reciprocal relationship between instructors. Thus, the language instructor may consult with the classroom teacher about what is being taught, with particular attention given to content that has specific or special language requirements. The language instructor is then able to incorporate into language instruction meaningful and important content that has evident language-related value in the rest of the curriculum.
Likewise, the classroom teacher can consult with the language teacher regarding what can be done in the content areas to promote the learning of language skills requisite to particular content areas. Since content teachers may be ill-prepared to “teach” language or even to recognize students’ language-learning needs because of lack of training in language-teaching pedagogy, language teachers become pedagogical resources for mainstream teachers who are willing to assume some responsibility for treating students’ language needs.

The artificial and rigid distinctions between the roles of the language teacher and the content teacher are broken down in this model. For sheltered English and immersion teachers, these roles are fused, requiring them to plan consciously for language growth as an integral part of content instruction.

A corollary implication of this perspective concerns the formal integration and coordination of the language arts and academic curricula. Accordingly, the content areas of the school program are cross-referenced with language-learning objectives, and the second/foreign language curriculum is cross-referenced with subject areas that provide particularly suitable vehicles for teaching language objectives. This language-across-the-curriculum perspective has been advocated for some time for native speakers of English (see Anderson, Eisenberg, Holland, Weiner, & Rivers-Kron, 1983; Department of Education and Science, 1975). Such an integrated approach ensures that language skills learned in the second/foreign language class will be useful and usable in content classes, since it effectively obviates the need for transfer. This is particularly important for students in bilingual programs or for LEP students who are pulled out for ESL instruction.

Full integration of language and content instruction also implies integration of instruction across grade levels so as to achieve a coherent developmental program. There is some evidence from evaluations of immersion programs that language development may reach a plateau in the middle or late elementary grades (Genesee, 1987). It appears that students are able to make do with a relatively limited set of language skills beyond the primary grades, despite the fact that the content itself is more demanding. In immersion, it is assumed that students’ language develops as a function of unsystematic and unknown changes in the communicative requirements of academic instruction. If the curriculum is not developmental from a language-learning point of view and/or if language use by the teacher for academic instruction is not developmental in that it does not make increasingly greater
demands on the students, then students’ language skills will not continue to develop.

Concerted measures are called for in this model in order to promote continuous language growth across grade levels. This may be achieved by consciously and systematically incorporating increasingly advanced levels of language into the content areas at successively higher grades. Similarly, integrated foreign language classes (e.g., FLES) that are tied to content need to take into account the developmental aspects of language learning when selecting content for language instruction. Otherwise, there is the risk of repetition and redundancy in instruction and of stagnation in learning across grades.

It follows that the integration of content and language instruction may also entail integration of differentially difficult language structures, skills, or functions that are required for effective communication about the content in question. For example, students may need to learn conditionals as well as present tense verb forms early on in order to comprehend or participate in discussions about science or history. Or written language may need to be taught along with spoken language. Whereas the second/foreign language curriculum has traditionally been organized around a hierarchy of syntactic structures from the simple to the complex, an integrated approach eschews distinctions that are artificial from a communication point of view. The communicative needs of the learner and/or the communicative requirements of particular content inform the teachers as to what and when particular language elements are to be taught.

Furthermore, the integration of content and language instruction implies the integration of higher order thinking skills into the language classroom. As discussed in the preceding point, this is particularly likely in cases in which the content is based on the academic curriculum. Use of higher order thinking is desirable because it can stimulate learners’ interest in the content and therefore in language, precisely because it is somewhat beyond their level of competence. In contrast, nonintegrated language instruction may be of little interest to learners, since the limited concepts and content embodied in such instruction may be simplified to match the more limited language objectives of these approaches. Use of higher order thinking skills is also desirable as a means of promoting higher order language skills or, as discussed above, as a means of promoting advanced levels of language proficiency. This will obtain to the extent that higher order thinking skills require more complex or elaborate language skills in more cognitively demanding tasks.
A final implication of the integration of content and language instruction concerns the relationship between learning and teaching. Ellis (1984) has argued that language use, or “doing discourse,” and language learning are the same thing. That is to say, “the procedures that the learner employs in using L2 knowledge are also the means by which new L2 knowledge is internalised” (p. 52). Few researchers or educators would disagree that frequent opportunities to use language can facilitate language learning. Thus, an integrated approach to content and language instruction aims to engage students fully with teaching activities and pedagogical materials. Teaching serves to provide opportunities for students to engage themselves in learning about content through language.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the conceptual framework proposed here offers language and content teachers a systematic approach to the identification and instruction of language aims within content teaching. Although four settings were selected to illustrate the practical application of the framework, we believe the framework also applies to other types of second and foreign language teaching settings. Finally, we believe that the implications of integrating language and content teaching must be considered seriously if content-based instruction is to be implemented effectively.

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This article reports the views of 24 Chinese (People’s Republic of China) teachers of English on the appropriateness and effectiveness of “Western” language-teaching methods (here defined according to Canale & Swain, 1980) for use in Chinese situations. The Chinese teachers believed that the communicative approach was mainly applicable in China only for those students who planned to go to an English-speaking country, and, as nonnative speakers, they noted their limitations with respect to the sociolinguistic and strategic competence in English that is required for using this approach effectively. The teachers also cited various constraints on implementing Western language-teaching methods, including the context of the wider curriculum, traditional teaching methods, class sizes and schedules, resources and equipment, and the low status of teachers who teach communicative rather than analytic skills. An examination of these views in light of the context and theory of Western language teaching demonstrates that the Chinese teachers’ concerns have considerable justification. Various suggestions are made as possible means of adapting Western language-teaching methods to the situation in China.

A considerable amount of ink has been spilled on the subject of the appropriateness and effectiveness of importing “Western” methods for the teaching of English as a second or foreign language to the teaching of English in the People’s Republic of China (hereafter referred to as China). In this debate, some have emphasized the importance of Chinese current/traditional ways of teaching and learning (Harvey, 1985; Sampson, 1984; Ting, 1987; Wang, 1986), Others have noted the value of adopting Western approaches in China (Li, 1984; Maley, 1984, 1986; Spencer, 1966). Most of these authors and others have focused on the need to adapt Western practices to the demands and conditions for language learning and teaching in China (Scovel, 1983).
The purpose of this article is to explore dimensions of this debate from the point of view of experienced Chinese teachers who have to or might have to respond to pressures/opportunities to use Western methods in their own teaching—the front line troops without whose skills and compliance any teaching program will fail. We report on two sets of data collected from Chinese teachers of English. These data consist of the teachers’ views about using Western methods of teaching English as a second or foreign language in their own pedagogical contexts. This approach permitted the teachers to identify in their own terms whatever aspects of their working context (cultural, economic, political, administrative, and so on) they considered to be supportive or constraining.

The context described by the Chinese teachers is compared with Western contexts, particularly language-teaching contexts of Canada, a country that has participated in the development of modern Western language-teaching approaches, and is examined with reference to some of Canale and Swain’s (1980) principles for a communicative approach. We believe that there are lessons to be learned on both the Chinese and Western sides through viewing language teaching from this sort of perspective.

The article is structured as follows: (a) background on underlying conditions and traditions concerning (second/foreign language) education in China and Canada; (b) a description of data sources and analysis; (c) a discussion of the Chinese teachers’ views on Western teaching methods; and (d) an analysis of Chinese teachers’ views in light of the contexts of current language-teaching methods in China and anglophone Canada as well as the basic principles of the communicative approach.

BACKGROUND
Western Conditions, Particularly Those of Canada

In this article we are defining Western methods as those designed to develop communicative competence, as defined by Canale and Swain (1980), in a second/foreign language. Thus, these methods combine to promote grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence (involving sociocultural and discourse rules for communication), and strategic competence. They imply a learner-centered approach to curriculum and teaching, testing that is linked to such a curriculum, student access to teachers or others with native-speaker competence in the target language, and the availability of authentic learning materials. Moreover, they focus on
students’ need for communication in the target language, including the need for sociolinguistic and general cultural knowledge of the population that speaks the target language. For various reasons alluded to in this article, such methods do not have a uniform impact on all kinds of second/foreign language teaching in Western countries such as Canada.

To simplify this discussion of Western conditions, we focus on anglophone Canada almost exclusively, although the role of French as Canada’s second official language is taken into consideration. First of all, Canada is affluent enough to allow access to higher education without the necessity for rigid gatekeeping systems of examinations (compared with those of China) to screen candidates for such opportunities. This affluence is also reflected in the facilities and supports available to language teachers. Second, because Canada’s two official languages, English and French, are among the most viable as lingua francas in the world of diplomacy, trade, and so on, Canadians are not greatly pressed to learn foreign languages. Canada’s current economic and political stability means that Canadians are not under any special pressure to increase economic, diplomatic, or academic relations with any other country.

For the Canadian population, four major factors influence demand for second/foreign language training: (a) Canada has a high level of immigration, much of which is from non-English/French-speaking countries; (b) native speakers of either one of the official languages are encouraged to develop proficiency in the other official language; (c) many Canadian Native people grow up speaking a Native language other than English or French; and (d) some Canadians are interested in learning foreign languages for various purposes. Because of high levels of immigration from non-English/French-speaking countries and the attractiveness of Canadian employment conditions for language teachers, it is not difficult to find native or at least proficient speakers to teach second/foreign languages in most situations in Canada.

Chinese Conditions

In China, foreign language is seen as an essential tool in developing and changing the core of the country’s economic system, and second/foreign language teaching is shaped by this perception. In terms of language education, this means emphasis on a rapidly growing need to train technology specialists to read foreign (mainly English) texts and documents. In addition, large numbers of specialists are being encouraged to take advantage of
rapidly expanding offers from foreign countries to study abroad (Huang, 1987). Those planning to go to English-speaking countries normally are required by the host institution to pass a stringent test of English, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The need for diplomats, bureaucrats, trade officials, and in-country tourist guides to deal face-to-face with speakers of foreign languages, particularly English, has drastically increased. In order to take advantage of prospects for increased contact with foreign powers, the Chinese expect to have to deal with foreigners in their own language rather than expecting important foreigners to deal with them in Chinese.

The Chinese approach to dealing with these needs has been to draw on China’s scholarly traditions in teaching English and other foreign languages. These have focused on academic study of grammar, literature, and in-depth analysis of literary texts, following traditional Chinese scholarly practice and American and Soviet influences on the structure and content of Chinese education (Henze, 1984; Price, 1987, p. 169; Ting, 1987). According to English and Een (1985), various traditional Chinese educational strategies, which were inclined toward memorization, discussion, and grammar-translation, have combined with Western influences on Chinese education in this century, such as missionary use of total immersion in the foreign language, American focus on the study of literature, phonetic study of English pronunciation, the Direct Method, Soviet traditions of intensive and extensive reading (from French origins), and the audiolingual method. The results of these influences have tended toward grammar-translation, intensive reading, and respect for the study of literature. Teacher training in China emphasizes study in the content area to be taught (in this case English language) much more than it emphasizes teaching methods or educational foundations (Lo, 1984).

The central administration has decided to emphasize elitist rather than egalitarian approaches to education, for the time being, in order to advance the country’s interests. Performance in compulsory foreign (now mainly English) language study from early secondary school on and scores on national examinations, including compulsory English, continue to be critical factors for entrance into scarce postsecondary education positions (Henze, 1984). By nature, such examinations focus on more easily judged aspects of language, such as grammatical accuracy and vocabulary knowledge, rather than on less easily assessed points, such as usage and interpretation, in order to discriminate between students who will advance and those who will not. Curriculum and textbooks are normally prescribed or at least recommended by the central government.
With respect to the professional status and rewards of teachers, traditional structures are maintained in that teaching English at the tertiary level (grammar, literature, and linguistic analysis) carries greater prestige than teaching students to speak the language for real communicative purposes. The same is true for Western countries. The point here is that the competition not only for access to higher education levels but also for preferred jobs and professional mobility is greater in countries like China than it is in most Western countries. Thus, Chinese teachers are under more pressure than are Western teachers in competing for high-status jobs because of the elitist education policies of the power structure. Moreover, Chinese teachers are sensitive about the status of their profession, given the negative attitudes to teachers developed during the Cultural Revolution (Lo, 1984).

Foreign experts have been increasingly made available, either at the request of the Chinese government or through foreign initiatives, to help in the language training of Chinese technology specialists or Chinese foreign language teachers at the tertiary level (Huang, 1987). Such personnel are virtually never made permanent members of a Chinese teaching institution in the way that foreign professors are hired at Western institutions. The Chinese have shown a distinct preference for admitting foreign language specialists who are qualified in literature or linguistics rather than those qualified in applied linguistics/second language education. Some think this is to the detriment of the advancement of foreign language learning by the Chinese as a whole (Harvey, 1985).

The growing presence of foreign experts is making a considerable impact at the tertiary level in terms of communicative-teaching approaches and in terms of student contact with native speakers. However, by far the bulk of the foreign language teaching in the country is conducted by Chinese teachers, the majority of whom, particularly those teaching below the tertiary level, have probably never talked to a foreigner and/or been outside of China.

Aside from the materials that foreign experts bring with them, materials used for the teaching of English at lower levels of study are generally produced in China or consist of classical (Chaucer to Dickens) literary texts. Some use of EFL textbooks produced in English-speaking countries is made at the higher levels. Very few opportunities are available for learners to read or hear contemporary foreign language materials created by native speakers, much less to interact with native speakers.

If we compare foreign language teaching in Canada and China, we find that in Canada less pressure is placed on learners to become proficient speakers and on the education system to produce
proficient speakers, that curriculum and methods of assessment are more flexible, and that students have more access to native speakers as teachers. If we compare EFL in China with ESL in Canada, it is clear that pressures on learners to become proficient speakers and on the system to produce proficient speakers are great in both Canada and China, but the purposes and language environments of the learners are considerably different. Another major difference is that native speakers of English are readily available as language teachers in Canada but not in China. (Unfortunately, we did not have the resources in preparing this article to study the ways in which the various Chinese dialects and minority languages of China are taught as second languages to Chinese citizens or visitors to China; see Huang, 1987, p. 67.) Given such differences in the contexts for language teaching, how do Chinese teachers of English view Western language-teaching methods?

DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

Data for this study were obtained from two sources: (a) an evaluation of a Canadian/Chinese cooperative program in English and French language training and cultural orientation and (b) an informal study done by Sun on the views on Western teaching methods of Chinese teachers at the tertiary level. We recognize that only the tertiary level of the Chinese education system is represented in the data, but that level is the only one to date that has felt the major impact of Western methods.

The cooperative Canadian/Chinese program was initiated in 1983 by the Canadian International Development Agency and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade. The program, which was evaluated in 1985-1986 (Burnaby & Cumming, 1986; Burnaby, Cumming, & Belfiore, 1986), prepares Chinese trainees through language (English and French) and cultural orientation for academic or work/study attachments in Canada. As part of the program, trainees in China were tested (with a test specifically devised for the purpose) for English/French language. Those who tested high enough to be accepted but not high enough to be sent to Canada right away were given preparatory training in language and Canadian culture at the China/Canada Language Training Centre (CCLTC), housed at the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) in Beijing. (The program has since been moved to Beijing Normal University; the curriculum and tests have been transferred along with the program but have been modified to meet new conditions.)

The data reported here are from questionnaires completed by (a)
UIBE teachers who were team teaching with Canadians in the CCLTC and/or (b) UIBE teachers who had gone to Canada for training related to language teaching. There was considerable overlap between the two groups. Data used here were from 14 respondents' (all of the teachers from both categories).

The CCLTC staff questionnaire included 29 open-ended, multiple-choice, and scalar questions on respondents’ satisfactions/dissatisfactions with the program; planning, research, or development for the program; communications and coordination; and cooperative staffing (team teaching and joint Chinese-Canadian administration). The questionnaire for UIBE teachers who had studied in Canada included 14 questions on details of their study in Canada, arrangements made for study in Canada, and the results of that study for their work at UIBE. The questionnaires were in English, French, and Chinese. All respondents answered in English, although they were encouraged to use Chinese if they preferred. There was a 100% rate of return of questionnaires distributed.

A secondary analysis was conducted on those responses to open-ended questions that related in any way to the respondents’ personal experiences with or general views on Western teaching methods. (Their views on the specifics of the administration of the program and other matters were excluded.) About 80 responses were used; all the original respondents were represented in this set of data.

To broaden our base of information on Chinese teachers’ views of Western ESL/EFL methods, we decided to conduct an informal survey of English teachers in a few Chinese universities. In the summer of 1987, Sun interviewed 10 university teachers of English in China ranging in position from chairpersons of English departments to young language teachers (assistant professors). The sample was not controlled but simply represents those whom Sun was able to interview during that period. Six of the respondents had been to an English-speaking country for a period ranging from 6 months to 2 years for nondegree study; 5 of them had some experience working in foreign-run language-training centers like the CCLTC.

To put the views expressed by these teachers into context, we must explain that all the Chinese teachers contacted (including the UIBE teachers) made a distinction between teaching (a) university students majoring in English, (b) university students majoring in other subjects who also took English as a course in their program, (c) students who were learning English specifically to prepare for an imminent trip abroad (as in the CCLTC), and (d) all other students learning English (mostly secondary students). In addition, a distinction was made between those universities that specialize in
foreign languages or education and those that focus on other topics of study, even though the latter (like UIBE) may have large foreign-language-teaching departments.

Of the teachers interviewed in the informal survey, 2 taught English to non-English major students (science, engineering, or social sciences), 1 of these in an industrial university and 1 in a teacher-training (normal) university. The other 8 taught English to English majors in normal universities. These teachers were asked, in Chinese, for their positive and negative reactions to the idea of applying Western ESL/EFL methods to the teaching of English at their universities in China. Those who had been abroad to study English-teaching methods were also asked to assess that experience in light of their current English-teaching responsibilities in China. Their responses were recorded in Chinese in field notes and were later translated into English.

Both sets of data were analyzed together, using the constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Seven categories, as discussed below, emerged. From our experience with qualitative data analysis, there was a remarkable consistency in the views of these respondents. Although there were differences in emphasis between respondents according to their experience and current teaching responsibilities, no data items were incongruent with the categories developed.

In the following discussion of the categories, direct quotes are mainly from UIBE teachers, since we had their written text to work from. We have attempted, as far as possible, to use the words of the respondents (or careful translations) in the discussion rather than trying to interpret underlying intentions. In other words, our aim has been to let the Chinese teachers speak for themselves. The seven categories are presented in order of salience based on the number of mentions in the data or other indications of priority for the category.

RESULTS THE CHINESE TEACHERS’ VIEWS
Chinese Students Who Would Benefit From Communicative Language Teaching

The respondents felt strongly that communicative methods were good for teaching Chinese people who were about to go to English-speaking countries to live and study, but not for other Chinese students of English, particularly not English majors. UIBE teachers, commenting on their experience in learning English-teaching methods in Canada, said, "I doubt that the methodology could be used to teach UIBE [English major] students who study English for
more than three years,” although they found the Canadian methods were useful “because I am teaching students who will definitely go to Canada.” Chinese teachers repeatedly emphasized that the purposes and learning contexts of most Chinese students of English are very different from those of people learning English in an English-speaking country. As one teacher observed, “The people we are teaching [at UIBE] are entirely different from those the Canadian teachers were teaching [in Canada] and the conditions were different.”

Through current Chinese teaching methods, the teachers believe, Chinese students learn the analytical skills and knowledge of English grammar that they will need to use English in the kinds of work that they will do in China—from reading technical articles to translations of documents. A number of teachers specifically noted that English-major graduates of the Chinese system experience little difficulty in adding to their necessary sociolinguistic and cultural knowledge if they go to an English-speaking country. In contrast, communicative language teaching was seen as useful in assisting people trained in other disciplines who would soon be living in an English-speaking environment.

In sum, the Chinese teachers appear to see communicative methods as suitable for the contexts and purposes of learning English as a second language (i.e., for use in English-speaking countries) and Chinese methods as suitable for the purposes and context of learning English as a foreign language (e.g., English language use in China). They also believe that their methods for training English majors prepare graduates almost completely for living in an English-speaking country. In other words, the Chinese use their own methods not just because contextual constraints make it difficult for them to use communicative methods but also because it suits their students’ purposes.

Several of the CCLTC teachers explicitly applied their belief in Chinese methods to their own learning. Although they were working in an English-speaking unit with a number of English native speakers, several noted that their own language development was suffering because they did not have time for intensive reading: “As the levels of our students are generally low, you don’t have time to do a lot of reading, and thus you have less chance to improve your own English proficiency as a nonnative speaker.”

Notwithstanding the major thrust of the responses, several of the teachers noted that it would be valuable to have more authentic materials in English and communicative reading exercises to help in the teaching of non-English majors. These students, who study English for the purpose of reading technical material in their
discipline, have little access to authentic material in English. Chinese use of English texts for teaching purposes mainly involves analyzing language structure, not content. The teachers look to foreign experts for help in this regard.

Nonnative Speakers as Communicative Language Teachers

As nonnative speakers of English, the Chinese teachers found it difficult to work with a curriculum in which the lesson content and exercises were not provided. They found this kind of work to be time consuming, since they had to develop content for each lesson on the basis of their students’ interests and needs and to develop or find suitable exercises. It took them longer than native speakers to do this because (a) they were not familiar with a large number of authentic texts and/or had limited access to such texts; (b) they had difficulty knowing appropriate cultural contexts for points; and (c) they could not rely on their intuition in the construction of language exercises. A number of the CCLTC teachers asked for additional class sets of textbooks on which to base their classes so that they would not have to develop each lesson individually.

Moreover, because of the dynamic nature of the lessons, the teachers were concerned about not being able to answer spontaneous questions on target language, sociolinguistics, or culture as they arose from interactions in the classroom. As one teacher observed, “I can only teach English to some extent. If I am asked to give more explanations on the language and cultural differences, it’s impossible for me.” They also mentioned that it was difficult to create an English-speaking atmosphere in the classroom or school without the presence of native speakers. One teacher of English majors felt strongly that an English-speaking atmosphere would greatly improve the teaching program but was pessimistic about getting cooperation from colleagues.

The Context of the Wider Curriculum

Those who were teaching in regular university programs noted that they were expected to cover the curriculum developed by the government. Although the examinations are locally set, there are strong expectations on the part of the students and the university administration that the content and form will be similar to that of traditional national examinations. Students put pressure on teachers to teach to discrete-point, structurally based examinations. In addition, some teachers commented that they risked criticism from their colleagues or superiors if they used materials other than those approved by the government.
Another important contextual factor is that any student who hopes to go to an English-speaking country to study expects to have to pass a test of English language as an entrance requirement of the host university. By far the best known test is the TOEFL, which has a large multiple-choice component focusing on discrete-point grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. Students and university administrations alike put pressure on teachers to tailor their courses to help students pass the TOEFL.

Traditional Teaching Methods

Several of the teachers noted the strength of the traditional relationship in China between teachers and students, as well as the behaviors and teaching methods implied in this relationship. These strongly favor teacher-centered methods and structured curricula (see Ting, 1987). A few teachers expressed concerns, on their own part or those of their colleagues, about being influenced by fads in teaching methods. They mentioned that many of the activities common in communicative language teaching seemed like games rather than serious learning. Thus, some Chinese teachers feel that they are not really teaching when they use such activities, and they expect the students to complain about them.

Several of the teachers commented favorably on the dynamic, creative, and individualized approaches embodied in Western philosophies of education but noted that these approaches are difficult to apply in other cultural contexts: “Culture gap. Chinese don’t think in the way most Westerners think.”

Class Size and Schedule

Many Chinese university classes in English, particularly those for non-English majors, have from 50 to 70 students and meet for only about 3 hours a week. The Chinese teachers involved with such classes indicated that using communicative methods with large groups was difficult, especially given the pressures to cover the curriculum effectively in the time allowed. These teachers, however, did want more authentic materials for their students to study.

Resources and Equipment

A number of the teachers mentioned that Chinese educational institutions do not have the audiovisual equipment, photocopiers, or resources (such as a wide range of authentic print materials) to...
support the dynamic teaching required for communicative methods. Those teachers who had worked in situations where such resources were available, for example, those in the CCLTC, greatly appreciated them, but some were shocked at how wastefully foreign teachers used equipment such as photocopiers.

**Teachers' Professional Status**

Most of the Chinese teachers commented on communicative language teaching in regard to their own status and professional development. Teaching communication skills in English to non-English majors does not have the status or associated perquisites that teaching courses to English majors does. Therefore, some of the teachers were not entirely happy about being assigned to teach English communication skills—using Western or other methods—to students who were about to go abroad. Several of those teachers were concerned that the kinds of work they had to do to prepare and give lessons to learners with relatively low levels of English proficiency were not valuable to them professionally. Thus, they believed that their own level of academic knowledge was not being enhanced in the way it would have been if they were preparing lessons for English majors. As one teacher noted, “As a teacher trained here in China, there’s always a limitation to improving my English. If I continue to teach here [in the CCLTC], my English will go down if I don’t have time to further my study.”

It is critical to note that the CCLTC teachers, who were working closely with native speakers of English, placed less value on developing their own communication skills in English than on gaining academic skills and knowledge in the regular university English department. This is not to say that they did not learn from their contacts with English-speaking colleagues or value that learning, but they seemed to feel that this learning would not help them to improve their professional standing.

Furthermore, Chinese teachers who had studied in an English-speaking country seemed to have gained as much from their personal experience as from their formal learning. They pointed out that for the purposes of teaching students who were about to go to an English-speaking country, their own experience abroad was useful to them: “With my own experiences in Canada—what I saw in Canada—what I said [in class in the CCLTC] carried more weight.” Their formal learning abroad was useful in terms of prestige if they received a foreign degree or if they developed their expertise in some theoretical area, such as linguistics, that they could teach in the regular university program.
Overall, both groups of Chinese teachers had favorable views on communicative language teaching but felt that its applications were limited in light of the needs and purposes of most Chinese students and that there were systematic constraints on its implementation in the Chinese education system. They looked forward to assistance from English-speaking countries in working to remove some of the constraints through the presence of foreign experts, teacher training, curriculum and materials development (particularly for non-English majors), improved testing methods, and the like.

DISCUSSION: CHINESE TEACHERS’ VIEWS IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT AND THEORY OF WESTERN LANGUAGE TEACHING

English-speaking countries value communicative language teaching so highly that they not only use it widely domestically but also strongly encourage countries like China to adopt it as well. But can communicative language-teaching methods be exported from English-speaking countries to China (see Holliday & Cook, 1982)? We explore this issue by examining the context of language teaching in China and anglophone Canada in light of the Chinese teachers’ points described above. Some of the five principles that Canale and Swain (1980) enunciate as “guiding principles for a communicative approach” (pp. 27-28) are cited as reference points on the basic character of the communicative approach.

Learners’ Communicative Needs

The Chinese teachers believed that the communicative approach was applicable in China for those who were about to go to an English-speaking country and possibly for non-English majors, but not for other types of language learners. These two groups of learners in China have distinct needs for interacting with native speakers of English. Canale and Swain (1980) say that “a communicative approach must be based on and respond to the learner’s communication needs” (p. 27). Clearly, different learners have individual perceptions of their needs, based on external pressures to use the language and personal motivations. Classroom practices can respond to real, personal need and can create artificial needs in the classroom or through testing practices if necessary.

In anglophone Canada, real, immediate needs for communication in a second language exist for immigrant learners of English; some foreseeable needs exist for some learners of French. The learning of French has been encouraged by the creation of artificial
communication needs through immersion programs. Since English is a powerful international language, anglophone Canadians can expect to accomplish what they want in most foreign situations through English. Skills in French or other languages are rarely a criterion for entrance into an educational program.

Is it a coincidence that communicative language teaching in Canada began in the teaching of English as a second language to immigrants, that it spread to the teaching of French to anglophones once legislation made the ability to speak French an economic asset to many people, and that it has not affected the teaching of foreign languages much, particularly at the tertiary levels (Knelman, 1988)? Does this relationship between need and language-teaching approach indicate anything about the suitability of different approaches in foreign and second language-learning circumstances, or does it merely reflect the priorities that Canadians have placed on developments in language education?

Canale and Swain (1980) say that a communicative approach must provide learners with the opportunity “to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situations” (p. 27). In our view, the reason that foreign language teaching in both Canada and China has not readily adopted communicative methods is the difficulty of creating “realistic second language situations” for learners who have no real-life communicative needs in the target language. Teachers must work hard to get suitable authentic materials and base on them activities that engage learners in interaction. As the Chinese teachers noted, authentic materials and teaching aids are scarce in Chinese educational institutions. In addition, the traditional relationship between Chinese teachers and students makes it difficult for them to suspend their disbelief and take part in simulated interactions (Ting, 1987). Large classes and the economic necessity for rigid examinations also contribute to the difficulty.

Although Canada is a much wealthier country than China, it is clear that even the application of more resources (teaching aids, small classes, availability of materials from other countries, professional development for teachers, a lenient system for evaluating learners, and so on) is not enough to overcome entirely the inherent difficulty of creating an atmosphere of genuine communication in the target language for learners who have no real-life need for communication in that language. Just because ESL in Canada and EFL in China share the same target language, well-meaning Canadians should not ignore the second/foreign language distinction in their enthusiasm for communicative approaches to teaching.
A further point concerns the specificity of China’s engagement with English-speaking countries. In Canale and Swain’s (1980) overview of communicative competence parameters (p. 31), the word *sociocultural* suggests a concentration on a particular target culture in second language teaching. However, two factors militate against such a concentration in China: (a) China’s concern for the preservation of its own cultural integrity in spite of its interests in communicating with the West and (b) the position of English as an international language of communication without necessary cultural ties to any one nation. Both of these factors discourage the intensive teaching in China of the sociocultural systems of any particular English-speaking country and encourage the teaching of English as having only the most general of international cultural rules (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984; Balhorn & Schneider, 1987; Bowers, 1986; Kachru, 1977). These factors also serve to differentiate EFL in China from ESL in Canada, where learners have a clear idea of their target and may have integrative goals as well.

The Role of Competent Speakers as Teachers of English

This discussion leads to a consideration of the Chinese teachers’ concerns about their role as nonnative speakers in the communicative classroom. Canale and Swain’s (1980) third principle states:

> The second language learner must have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language, i.e. to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situations. This principle is a challenging one to teachers and program designers, but is motivated strongly by the theoretical distinction between communicative competence and communicative performance. It is significant not only with respect to classroom activities but to testing as well. (p. 27)

Obviously, the first point here is that most Chinese learners of English will not have the opportunity for interactions with highly competent speakers of the language if by that we mean people who have a good deal of sociolinguistic and strategic competence in English as well as grammatical competence.

The strongest measures, if one wanted Chinese teaching of English to be more communicatively based, are either to provide Chinese teachers of English with a great deal of training and experience in English or to bring in many native speakers. Both of these responses are being addressed to some extent by various cooperative efforts between English-speaking countries and China.
Such solutions are based on the premise that teachers need experience in second/foreign language situations in order to develop the needed competence and that they can provide realistic communicative experiences for their learners in the classroom based on what they know of how the language operates. Even the latter, whatever the teachers’ competence, Canale and Swain acknowledge as a challenge.

Another possibility, however, is to investigate the degree to which sociolinguistic rules of English language and communicative strategies can be taught cognitively rather than experientially, that is, in much the same way that English grammar is approached cognitively by Chinese teachers. Canale and Swain (1980) report that relatively little is known about the content of sociolinguistic or strategic competence. It follows from their prescription that effective teaching of sociolinguistic and strategic competence must involve teachers who are native speakers or who have had enough experience in the target culture to have developed near native-speaker intuitions through experience.

The question is, To what extent can highly competent (i.e., experienced) speakers of a language be effectively replaced by curricula and materials that reflect a cognitively based analysis of sociolinguistic and strategic structures for dealing with the target language? Would it be feasible to write pedagogical grammars of sociocultural rules of use, rules of discourse, and communicative strategies for second language learners—rules and strategies that could be taught in China as grammar rules are now taught? We know that academic work is being conducted on relevant aspects of English sociolinguistics, but how can we make that learning accessible to Chinese teachers? Also, in line with the requirement for purposeful interaction in communicative language teaching, would it be possible to have Chinese learners analyze appropriately illustrative English texts on these topics rather than just read texts selected for good grammar and vocabulary?

Brosnahan, Coe, and Johns (1987) present an example of a project in which advanced Chinese learners of English (English language teachers) conducted discourse analysis of English text under the direction of native speakers of English. One wonders whether such activities would work at lower levels of the Chinese education system (e.g., undergraduate, much less secondary level) and how well nonnative-speaking teachers could facilitate them.

The onus is on native speakers of English to specify the rules and produce suitable example texts for practice. As long as sociolinguistic and language-specific strategic competence remains entirely in the intuitive knowledge base of native speakers, teachers of second
or foreign languages who have little experience with real communication in the target language have no way of developing communicative-teaching techniques. There is no reason why this strategy could not be used with the teaching of any foreign language in any country in which native-speaking teachers are not available. Such a strategy would also help to reinforce the introspective ability of native-speaking teachers.

The other knotty problem, as Canale and Swain (1980) acknowledge and as the Chinese teachers have pointed out, is how to test the outcomes of communicative-learning situations. If sociolinguistic rules of use and rules of discourse could be specified to the degree that grammatical rules can (and we know that even these are slippery), then presumably mastery of them could be tested as grammar and vocabulary are tested now. But if this were not feasible or until this is done, testing of language competence other than grammatical competence will require holistic evaluation by people with native-speaker or near native-speaker competence.

The kinds of tests that are based on learners’ performance on any aspects of communicative competence are known to be long and to require specialized personnel to administer and assess. Such tests do not make fine or authoritative discriminations among candidates, and learners who do not have access to authentic communicative situations find these tests difficult to study for. Given China’s need to have examinations that clearly discriminate less able from more able candidates and given the needs of universities in English-speaking countries to screen foreign applicants—to say nothing of problems regarding costs of testing—the possibility of testing sociolinguistic and strategic skills and knowledge cognitively is well worth pursuing.

The Chinese Teachers’ Other Points

Although we do not dismiss the other points made by the Chinese teachers, we see them as factors constraining the implementation of communicative approaches to language teaching in China rather than as factors reflecting on the central core of conditions that make communicative approaches to language teaching possible. In brief, we see the context of the wider curriculum as a factor based on political decisions that might be amenable to change if conditions for testing communicative ability were improved. Every country has traditional teaching methods, and these change when the proponents of a new method can demonstrate to educational administrators and teachers that change is warranted. The Chinese
are studying communicative approaches carefully and can be expected to make a wise decision.

Class size, schedules, and teaching resources are dictated by the resources generally available to support education. Affluent countries can contribute to the resource base in various ways, but the Chinese hold the right to establish priorities for resource distribution in the country as a whole. Finally, with respect to teacher status, we note that in Western countries as well as in China, more prestige and perquisites are accorded to people who teach literature and cultural aspects of a language than to people who teach language skills. In less populous and more affluent countries, the competition for high-prestige jobs is more masked than in China.

CONCLUSION

In sum, English-speaking countries anxious to promote communicative approaches to language teaching in China should carefully consider the comparability of conditions in the two settings. The fact that these methods are effective in the teaching of ESL at home does not necessarily mean that they are exportable. Perhaps it would be more fruitful to look at what works in foreign language teaching at home as a possible model for export to China. Indeed, English-speaking countries might look to the Chinese foreign-language-teaching model, which is undoubtedly successful in its own terms, for ideas to use domestically.

Moreover, in light of the enormous challenge of developing the English sociolinguistic and strategic competence of Chinese teachers of English to the point that they can use current communicative approaches, English language scholars might study and describe the essence of sociolinguistic competence in English and rules for strategies to prevent communication breakdown. This information could be used to develop cognitively based resources and activities to support communicative English language learning and testing (especially for international tests of English proficiency). Finally, Western countries should do what they can to enhance educational resources in China, but at the same time they must respect and appreciate the Chinese authority to set priorities.
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Deaf children often have major difficulty learning the language of their parents, who in the majority of cases are hearing. The principal reason for these problems is limitation of linguistic input reaching the children: The hearing loss itself acts as a drastic filter on the linguistic data, and information obtained from aided residual hearing, as well as from visual sources such as lipreading and signed representations of spoken language, is typically fragmentary. In addition to the limitations of input, the very difficulty of the task of learning an auditory language with severely restricted information is likely to lead to loss of motivation. Another complicating factor is language attitudes and the fact that the deaf community uses a visual-spatial language, American Sign Language (ASL), which deaf people acquire without effort and which provides a focus for cultural solidarity. Attitudes toward ASL are complicated by its identity as a minority language in a majority culture, whose standard language influences it to some extent. Attitudes toward English are complicated by the fact that the learning of English is imposed by an educational establishment run by hearing people and that ASL is not used as a language of instruction.

The main educational hurdle faced by deaf students is acquisition of the language of the community into which they are born—acquisition not only of speech production but of the linguistic system itself. For many students the language of the community becomes neither their first language, in the sense that they may never achieve native-like grammatical competence in the language, nor, in traditional terms, a second language, in the sense that they may not be exposed in early life to any other language they can readily acquire.

Most deaf children are born into hearing families who do not know or use a natural sign language. Some will be exposed to a natural sign language, such as American Sign Language (ASL),
when they enter a residential school for the deaf; others who are “mainstreamed in schools with hearing children may not have contact with the language until (and unless) they become involved in the deaf community after graduation. In any case, communicative competence in a signed language, unlike in spoken languages, is readily acquired by deaf students, even though some differences in morphosyntax may be observed in late learners (Newport, 1988). The signed language, then, may function as a late-acquired first language.

As the foregoing description implies, the backgrounds of deaf students vary, and this variability is increasing with changes in educational patterns in recent years. Whereas in the 1950s the majority of students were educated in residential schools, the trend since the mid-1970s (specifically, since the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) has been for deaf students to be educated in public schools alongside hearing children. It is also becoming increasingly common for deaf students to attend post-secondary programs in universities and community colleges, where they may be placed in remedial English classes with ESL students, with or without an interpreter.

Such placement is appropriate, given similar levels of performance, since deaf students can profit from ESL teaching techniques (Goldberg & Bordman, 1974). Moreover, many errors of deaf students learning English are similar to those of foreign learners of English as a second language, and written compositions of deaf and ESL students at the same level of proficiency look similar over all (Langston & Maxwell, 1988; Swisher, Butler-Wall, & Stavans, 1988). Deaf students have problems acquiring functors such as articles, prepositions, the copula, and markers for verb tense and aspect, as well as difficulty mastering complex structures such as complements and relative clauses. That such similarities exist is interesting, given that deaf students, unlike other learners of English, do not have access to spoken input.

Despite the similarities of written production, deaf students have language-learning histories that are very different from those of ESL students. The purpose of this article is to lay out some of those differences, to provide an understanding of the basis for deaf students’ difficulties with the acquisition of English, as well as an awareness of the potential variety of language backgrounds they may bring to the classroom, and of factors affecting their attitudes toward English.

It should be noted at this point that the choice of any term to describe a group of people is likely to offend at leastsomeone, particularly as norms are likely to change over time. At any rate,
deaf people tend to prefer the term deaf to a label such as hearing impaired, and for them deaf is invested with positive value. Consequently, that term is used here. It may be that the norm will shift eventually to persons who are deaf or persons with a hearing loss, but at this point many deaf people are irritated by such circumlocutions. Following the convention established in recent years, Deaf is used to specify deaf people who are “culturally deaf,” that is, those who identify themselves with the deaf community.

**LANGUAGE LEARNING IN DEAF STUDENTS: THE PROBLEM OF ACCESS TO INPUT**

Even the strongest nativists assume that access to input is required for language learning (Chomsky, 1965). Essentially, the problem for a deaf student trying to learn an auditorily based language system is that the major channel for language learning, namely hearing, is substantially blocked, leading to reduction in both quantity and quality of available input.

The prognosis for auditory language learning in a deaf child depends on several factors, of which the most important are (a) the severity of the child’s hearing loss (with more severe losses having in general more negative effects, though even moderate hearing losses can seriously affect acquisition); (b) the quality of the residual hearing, reflected in the child’s speech discrimination when using a hearing aid; and (c) the age at which the loss occurs, that is, whether or not the child has already acquired the language to any degree.

The extent of the family’s involvement in the child’s education also appears to be very important (Bodner-Johnson, 1986), along with intelligence, socioeconomic status, and other factors that affect the educational progress of all children.

In the most intractable case, the child will be profoundly deaf from birth, born into a hearing family, and, because of the sensorineural damage to the inner ear, will receive little or no benefit from a hearing aid. To realize how restricted the input can potentially be, we will consider here the sources of linguistic information remaining to such a child. As we will see, both the auditory and the visual channels provide reduced, fragmented input.

**Input via the Auditory Channel**

What are the sources of linguistic information about a spoken language that are available through communication in real time, if one is deaf? One source is amplification of sound by means of a
hearing aid. The purpose of an aid is to boost speech sounds to a level of intensity above the threshold of the person's residual hearing. Even in cases in which this is possible, amplification may provide fragmentary auditory information, since hearing aids cannot compensate for damaged hearing in the sense that glasses can correct vision to a level of normal acuity. Hearing sensitivity may remain for some frequencies but not for others (often only for low-frequency information), and the neural structures remaining may be damaged. Both the restriction of range and the damage to the inner ear may provide only a distorted signal to the person.

Thus, even when amplification is used, the information coming through is likely to be fragmented. This is partly because of damage to the auditory system and partly because not all speech sounds are equally intense and it is difficult to boost fragile high-frequency consonant sounds like /f/, /th/, and so forth so they will not be drowned out by the more intense vowels. In addition, information is likely to be missing because English is a stress-timed language in which the heaviest stress and longest duration are given to content words, with functors being spoken casually, rapidly, and with less intensity. The latter may not be boosted sufficiently by amplification to reach threshold.

For some profoundly deaf people, the only information that gets through is the low-frequency vowels and consonants, and some prosodic information. In the case of a prepositional phrase like to the store produced casually in running speech, only the vowel sound for store may remain; the preposition and article that complete the syntactic constituent are likely to vanish. Inflectional morphemes are also unstressed and difficult to perceive. This makes the acquisition of morphology and syntax very problematic. It is somewhat as if a foreign learner were only able to gain access to input transmitted through a very damaged radio.

**Input via Lipreading**

A second source of information, whether the student is being educated orally or with signing used in addition, is lipreading. The information provided by lipreading is limited in two major ways: First, whereas hearing operates to take in information through 360 degrees, vision is much more restricted, particularly where fine detail must be discriminated. In order to read someone's lips, the deaf person must be looking at the person's face. Conversation behind the deaf person's back is not available as input, nor is any speech that the deaf person is not directly focusing on. Trying to follow a multiparty conversation by lipreading is particularly taxing.
The second limitation is even more serious: The linguistic information available on the lips is far from complete. Many of the sounds that are visible on the lips look identical, so that without sound, one can detect no difference between, for example, /b/, /p/, and /m/, or between /t/, /d/, and /n/, and many vowels are confusable as well. Worse, sounds occurring farther back in the mouth are not visible at all. In casual as opposed to painstaking speech, approximately 40% of the phonemes are visible.

Another type of problem is that lipreading skill is correlated with language level and with the level of the hearing loss (better lipreading skill being related to better hearing and higher language levels). If the person knows the language already, there is at least a fighting chance for being able to lipread, though skill is by no means assured. (If it were, old-age hearing loss would not be a serious problem, and we would be able to watch television equally well with the sound turned down.) However, if a child is congenitally, profoundly deaf and is trying to learn language through lipreading, how is he or she to crack the code? In this case, it is as if a foreign learner were constrained to learn English through interactive video, with the sound turned off.

**Input via a Signed Code for English**

A third potential source of input is the representation of spoken language through a signed code. (The distinction between signed codes, devised by educators to represent spoken languages, and natural sign languages, which are not related to spoken languages, is discussed in greater detail below.) Here again, since vision is directional, the amount of signed information reaching the person is limited by the fact that one needs to be looking in the direction of the signer, restricting the overall quantity of the available input.

Second, since the hearing families of deaf children do not always learn to sign (and roughly 95% of deaf children are born to hearing parents), the child may not receive any signed English input at home. When signing is used in the home, it is often only the mother who learns to sign with any degree of fluency, and she may sign only messages intended for the child, but not those directed to other family members. Signed input produced by mothers also tends to be reduced, vis-à-vis the spoken message (Swisher, 1984).

It is in fact not easy in practice to achieve a complete mapping of English sentences into signs: Part of the difficulty lies in attaining the rate of delivery natural to a spoken language, when using larger, slower articulators such as the hands and arms. Although codes have
been devised so that the grammatical morphemes of English might be faithfully represented in the visual mode, coordinating sign and speech to make representation complete is a far from trivial task.

Because the speech rhythms of English allocate more time to content words than to functors, as mentioned above, and because signing inflectional morphemes requires fitting a second sign in whether or not there is a separate spoken syllable to which one can match it (e.g., the one-syllable word *cows* requires two signs, COW + S), there is a strong tendency to omit the very grammatical morphemes that the signed codes were designed to represent. Acquiring English morphology may also be difficult for deaf students because nothing in the rhythm of the signed message tells the child that the inflectional morpheme is “attached to the content sign and subordinate to it: The content signs and the endings tend to be equally stressed, in practice.

In short, there are some potential conceptual problems related to learning an auditory language through a visual means such as signs, in addition to the fact that the input provided to children is often not complete in practice. Considerable variability in how much of the spoken message is signed has been reported, with drastic reduction of the message being found in some cases (Marmor & Petitto, 1979).

Given severely reduced input from a variety of sources, which in most cases is characterized by differential neglect of grammatical functors as compared with content words, one might predict that deaf students would have problems acquiring the syntax and morphology of a spoken language. Content words are favored in the sense that they are stressed vocally, more apt to be signed because they are perceived as more essential to the message, and in general are easier to learn since they are higher in information. At the extreme, one might imagine, given such input, that language output would consist only of unmarked content words juxtaposed without regard for form class.

**Input via Print**

Theoretically, one source of complete grammatical input is the printed page, and many people, stimulated to think about language learning and deafness for the first time, think that the logical way to provide linguistic input must be through reading. The fact that this assumption is in error is revealed in the findings of study upon large-scale study, showing that the average adolescent deaf student at the completion of secondary school has no better than a third- or fourth-grade reading level (Conrad, 1977; DiFrancesca, 1972; Wrightstone, Aronow, & Moskowitz, 1963). Since intelligence is
distributed normally in the deaf population, as in the hearing one, these statistics show us that there is something fundamentally wrong with the notion that it should be easy to learn a first language through print alone.

Logical analysis can reveal some of the problems. First of all, a child’s first language is typically acquired in the course of communicative interaction that has several important characteristics: Conversation tends to be focused on the here and now, with comprehension being given support through shared context and gestures accompanying speech; in optimal situations the topic of conversation between mother and child tends to be determined either by what the child indicates an interest in nonverbally or by what the child says. (According to Snow, 1984, one of the most robust findings in the child language acquisition literature is that “semantically contingent speech” from the mother is associated with more accelerated acquisition; see also Cross, 1977.) Furthermore, in the course of communicative interaction, the mother can adjust her language (by simplifying, repeating constituents, rephrasing), depending upon feedback from the child.

None of this contextual support or on-line adjustment is available from printed text, where, on the contrary, meaning must generally be derived from words alone, in conjunction with syntactic and semantic prediction and schemata for reading developed from previous successful experiences with texts, which the majority of deaf students do not have. Another reason why learning language from print is likely to be more difficult is that written language does not have the information provided by intonation and stress patterns that may help the child to perform syntactic analysis, by signaling where constituent boundaries occur.

**Hearing Loss as a Filter of Input**

Gass (1988), in her framework for describing the mechanisms of second language learning, outlines five levels in the progression from data potentially available to learners (which she calls “ambient speech”) to their linguistic output. These levels Gass calls apperceived input, comprehended input, intake, integration, and output.

Apperceived input, the first level, consists of language data that “pass through to the learner” (Gass, 1988, p. 201), are noticed, and are seen as related to prior knowledge. Gass mentions several possible factors serving as “ambient speech filters,” which determine whether language data are noticed, hence made available to learners for processing. These factors are frequency (at
both extremes, including frequent forms as well as infrequent and therefore salient ones); affective factors including social distance, status, motivation, and attitude; prior knowledge, including knowledge of the world and existing linguistic knowledge; and attention, which allows learners to become aware of a disparity between their production and that of native speakers.

Contemplation of this model tells us that in effect a hearing loss acts as a massive initial filter on reception of ambient speech, preventing language data from reaching deaf children, at least in an undistorted form. For a child with a profound hearing loss, the great majority of linguistic data cannot get through the filter to be “apperceived” and hence cannot be comprehended, taken in, integrated into the child’s grammar, and used to support output.

The hearing loss, as mentioned above, serves to filter out the unstressed functors, ensuring that highly frequent forms such as articles do not have a chance to reach the child’s attention. Even content words must be very frequent indeed and must often be emphasized to the child in explicit teaching in order to “pass through,” in Gass’s (1988) words. Infrequent forms, on the other hand, may not be noticed at all. In effect, the child cannot attend to what he or she cannot perceive. In addition, the filter acts on the child’s perception of his or her own output, making it difficult to compare output against the production of native speakers and to perceive a mismatch.

As if this larger filter on the available data were not enough, the data that do get through will be additionally affected by other ambient speech filters (Gass, 1988), as they would be for any language learner. For example, one factor is likely to be damage to motivation caused by constant frustration in learning. Long histories of grappling with the very difficult task of acquiring an auditory language on the basis of reduced input, coupled with the prestige of English in the dominant society, are likely to produce conflict in students. In addition, since the language in which they are typically the most fluent, ASL, is a minority language, this too is likely to complicate students’ attitudes toward language learning.

NATURAL SIGN LANGUAGES, CODES FOR ENGLISH, AND VARIATION IN INPUT AND OUTPUT

Before talking further about language attitudes, let us examine in more detail the different types of sign language, a term that tends to be used globally for any linguistic communication using the hands. What this term obscures is the difference between a natural sign language versus a signed code devised to represent a spoken language.
A natural sign language is an entity unto itself, with its own grammatical rules, which are adapted to transmission in the visual medium and which are in some cases quite different from those of a spoken language, if analogous at a higher order level (Swisher, 1988). A natural sign language has a linguistic community of deaf adults and serves the range of needs of its users in the same sense that a spoken language serves the needs of a hearing speech community.

Signed codes for spoken languages, on the other hand, have been termed “secondary” sign languages (Kendon, 1984), and they are by definition parasitic on spoken languages to a greater or lesser extent, though they too may be influenced somewhat by the fact that they use the visual medium. Secondary sign languages range from the sign systems used by hearing people who for one reason or another are constrained to be silent—for example, Cistercian monks (Barakat, 1975) or aboriginal women in Australia during periods of mourning (Kendon, 1980)—to the signed codes devised by educators of the deaf to represent English (and, in other countries, other spoken languages). The signed codes used in education of the deaf, having been devised explicitly to map the spoken language visually, are the most ambitious in terms of how much of the morphology and lexical distinctions of the spoken language they attempt to represent. The codes are not used by deaf adults, and in fact the full-fledged systems probably have no community of users for whom they are a first language.

A natural sign language, such as ASL, is, as noted above, the communication system of the adult deaf community (which constitutes a cultural group defined to a great extent by the use of that language). The lines of transmission of a natural sign language are complex. Sign languages have at times been described as the only languages that are transmitted from child to child because in the past, when the majority of deaf children were educated in residential schools for the deaf, deaf children of hearing parents first encountered ASL when they met deaf children of deaf parents at school. (The learning of any form of sign language was for a long period viewed as a contagious menace by many educators, who saw how effortlessly it was acquired, and believed—with no basis in research—that it was a hindrance to the acquisition of speech skills.) Deaf children thus learned ASL in the dormitories and on the playground at the same time teachers in the classroom worked hard to teach English, whether through oral means alone or through use of a signed code produced simultaneously with speech. Transmission of ASL from deaf child to deaf child still occurs, though it may
now be less common, as more and more deaf children are mainstreamed in regular classes or placed in self-contained classes for deaf children in hearing schools.

Children who attend day programs, where deaf children of deaf parents and deaf adult language models are less likely to be present and where there is less opportunity for the children to interact freely, of course have more difficulty in gaining access to and acquiring the standard form of ASL. Historically, for children who were brought up in oral day programs where signing was forbidden, acquisition of ASL occurred only in adulthood, when they left school and entered the deaf community. This still happens, though a smaller proportion of children (approximately one third) currently attend oral programs. Now the situation is more complex in the sense that deaf children are more often exposed to a signed code for English (in about two thirds of the classes for the deaf in the United States; see Jordan, Gustason, & Rosen, 1976) and must sort out the relationship between that form of signing and standard ASL. Whether the use of signed English by deaf students will ultimately cause changes in ASL is a matter of debate, and anxiety, for some members of the deaf community.

Three further factors serve to introduce variation in both input to and output from deaf students: One is the existence of a contact vernacular used by deaf people and hearing people communicating with one another, called Pidgin Sign English. This is really a range of varieties lying between ASL and educational codes for English, which may partake to a greater or lesser extent of features of the two languages depending on the proficiencies of the interlocutors in those languages, as well as on features of the communicative situation that normally affect language choice (formality, topic, presence of other deaf or hearing people, etc.; see Lucas & Valli, 1988). One characteristic common to all varieties is that English word order is followed, or at least the order of the major constituents (since all constituents of English are not signed).

A second factor affecting language variation is that ASL, as a minority language used by people living within a larger majority culture, is itself influenced to some extent by English in its lexicon and (at least historically) in its syntax (Fischer, 1975; Swisher & McKee, in press). Since deaf children are instructed in English (whether successfully or not) from the time they are very young, they may associate signs in a one-to-one way with English words and, lacking instruction in differences between ASL and English, may have very little understanding of the fact that they may spontaneously be using different linguistic systems in different
contexts. This may lead to confusion when they are called upon to write English. (There have been some attempts in isolated experimental programs to approach instruction in ASL and English contrastively, to heighten students’ awareness of the differences between the languages; see Akamatsu & Armour, 1987; Schneiderman, 1986; Strong, 1988.)

The third factor in variation in children’s output is the most interesting in the light it sheds on acquisition: There is evidence that children who are exposed only to a signed form of English and who are given very little opportunity to interact with one another still tend to develop features of ASL that are not present in the input, such as the movement of verbs in space to indicate subject-object relations (Gee & Goodhart, 1988; Livingston, 1983; Supalla, in press; Suty & Friel-Patti, 1982). (Although this may sound like a constraint on variation, the children studied by Supalla were in fact all developing somewhat different grammatical systems and thus were not converging on standard ASL independently. Exposure to fluent models is still needed.)

The fact that children are developing a language that is used for communication in the visual-spatial mode may complicate the acquisition of the auditory language being represented, in addition to the fact that the signed input provided by hearing adults is not always complete. Supalla (1988) argues that the fact that signed codes for auditory languages are not suited to the visual modality may mean that English will have to be a second language for deaf children. In addition, the effect of the visual-spatial modality, along with the social solidarity of the minority group, may help to prevent ASL from “decreolizing” in the direction of English.

**ASL, DEAF CULTURE, AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES**

Above all, the fact of sharing a language fosters the deaf culture. As Rutherford (1988) observes, “An environment created solely by a sensory deprivation does not make a culture” (p. 132). Blind people have similar experiences that create a strong group bond, she notes, but this is different from a culture. By contrast, “what does form a culture for Deaf people is the fact that the adaptation to a visual world has by human necessity included a visual language” (Rutherford, p. 132). It is the use of this language that, as noted earlier, defines the deaf community.

The community, then, does not include all those who are deaf in audiological terms, but it includes deaf people who choose to use ASL and, by that token, to align themselves with the world of deaf people in a positive way. It is also, of course, a means of sharing
experiences effortlessly, of achieving intimacy in communication without the struggle that using English and/or speech often entails. Many of the experiences that deaf people share on the negative side have to do with the difficulties of dealing with hearing people, with speech, and with English, whereas those on the positive side have to do with solidarity with other deaf people and the experience of living in a visual world, including the beauty and expressiveness of their language (which is not shared by the signed codes for English).

This is a situation ripe indeed for a language to become the focus for solidarity of a minority group, and it would be logical if the threat of having that language suppressed by the hearing world created feelings even stronger than those in otherwise comparable situations (such as the suppression of minority languages in the Soviet Union). In other words, not only is the language central to ethnicity for deaf people, but for many in the population it is in effect their only alternative for real communication.

Despite this situation disposing deaf people toward powerful attachment to their language, they, like other minority groups, do not value their language unequivocally. This might be predicted solely from the fact that the deaf are a minority group within a majority culture that places a very high value on its own standard language and that does not particularly prize linguistic diversity. In addition, hearing people have historically controlled the education of deaf children, and the field has heavily emphasized the importance of instruction in English for the purposes of education (especially for reading), as well as for the goal of integration of deaf children into the hearing world.

Another reason contributing to ambivalence about ASL is that until comparatively recently the hearing world was linguistically naive (not to say ignorant) about the nature of signed languages and thought that “the sign language” (of which it was quite wrongly assumed that there was only a single, universal one) was only a crude approximation of English, or broken English, suited only for the rudiments of communication. This view held by the majority culture was instilled in deaf people, much as speakers of languages such as West Indian Creole “have been indoctrinated through the educational system into believing that the way they speak is ‘bad talk’” (Ladd & Edwards, 1982, p. 102). As Padden and Humphries (1988) observe,

Even though [Deaf people] talk of ASL as something highly valued, almost in the same breath they may reason that if ASL does not qualify as a language, it follows that, for their own good, deaf children should give it up in favor of a “real” language, specifically a spoken one, or at least a form of signing “based” on a spoken language. (p. 9)
Padden, herself a Deaf scholar/researcher into the linguistic structure of ASL, notes elsewhere (1987) that deaf people’s attitudes toward ASL vary between “intense pride” and “a great deal of confusion and shame” (p. 44).

Historically, skill in English has been valued in the deaf community, with “higher status and intelligence . . . attributed to those individuals who used a variety of signing more like English, and low status to those who did not” (Padden, 1987, p. 44). On the other hand, with the recent, and ongoing, research into the grammatical structure of signed languages, much of which has been carried out by deaf researchers, there is more unalloyed pride in ASL, at least among the educated elite, and ASL is now used to great effect (political, social, and aesthetic) in addresses at conferences on sign language linguistics, among others.

Given the poles of opinion about both ASL and English, we can expect that students coming into developmental English classes may hold a variety of views and in fact that opinions may conflict even within individuals. For example, strong support for ASL may coexist with a feeling that it is not as sophisticated a language as English and with an insecurity about one’s own English skills. Students coming directly from oral programs or from situations in which they have been mainstreamed with hearing students may have not yet come into contact with deaf adults, or they may not have been influenced in the direction of identifying with deaf people rather than with the hearing majority. Their attitudes toward English are then most likely to stem from their hearing families and/or from teachers of the deaf who are likely to have inculcated in them a strong belief in the value of English skills (which are undeniably important for employment, whether or not the person wishes to integrate with the hearing world socially).

In short, one cannot assume that deaf students have been exposed to ASL or predict with any certainty what their language attitudes will be. One can predict, however, that English is likely to have been an issue for them for most of their lives. The amount of frustration they will have suffered will depend primarily on the level of their skill with the language, which will relate most directly to the severity of their hearing loss and the age at which it occurred. It should be noted that a small percentage of deaf people do achieve native competence in English, against all odds, a fact that remains essentially mysterious under the circumstances, though certainly to be wished, since it allows them to move freely between the hearing and deaf cultures.
INTERFERENCE FROM ASL?

What are the effects of ASL on the acquisition of English? Many people new to deafness assume that deaf students’ difficulties with English stem from interference from ASL, or they think, upon hearing “word for sign” translations from ASL (which leave out the information carried by grammatical signals on the face, as well as by the manner of moving signs in space, etc.), that it is a kind of “short form” of English. It is not surprising, however, given the drastic filtering of input exerted by the hearing loss alone, that the massive problems of acquiring English caused by deafness are present in students who have never been exposed to ASL or who have never developed any form of sign language on their own.

Although students may occasionally translate directly from ASL expressions, this influence is trivial in comparison with their overall difficulties in the acquisition of syntax. Swisher et al. (1988), in a pilot study investigating similarities and differences in written errors of deaf and ESL students, found in 15 compositions by deaf students only three errors, among countless others, that were considered possibly attributable to ASL.

It may be of interest to examine the three errors that Swisher et al. (1988) felt might have been due to ASL interference. One of them was the literal translation of the ASL expression FINISH TOUCH, which is used to express the perfective notion to have been to (a place). The second was the use of the word cooker to mean a cook, which could be interpreted as a translation from ASL. In ASL the concept of a cook is conveyed with the sign COOK plus the sign PERSON, which indicates the concept of agent expressed in the English suffix -er. (Of course, an alternative explanation is that the student overgeneralized from the patterns of English alone—just as any foreign learner could overgeneralize from examples such as farmer, painter, gardener, etc."

The third error that could have been the result of ASL interference was the use of gas as a verb (“I must gas my car”). This might reflect the fact that the signs GAS and PUT-GAS-INTO are the same in hand shape and in the place where the sign occurs, though with differences in the type of movement used. In addition, the type of movement clearly incorporates the concept into, making a separate preposition unnecessary and redundant.

As noted earlier, students’ tendency to label signs with English words and to not know the boundaries of ASL and English may create confusion for them. Schneiderman (1986) has used the technique of showing students how much more information they are transmitting in an ASL sentence than a word for sign translation conveys. For example, grammatical facial signals and movement of
the signs to show temporal aspect change what might seem to be an “abbreviated” sentence, MAN FISH, to “The man was fishing with relaxation and enjoyment” (Liddell, 1980, p. 42). Theresa Smith (cited in Oakley, 1987), a leading interpreter and teacher of ASL, has observed that because so much information is carried on the verb in ASL, “deaf students’ [English] vocabularies are often missing many adjectives and adverbs. . . . Nouns are often their vocabulary strength” (p. 5).

Although the above examples illustrate some of the interesting differences in the grammatical mechanisms of spoken and signed languages, there is no reason to infer from them that there should be any more interference between a signed and a spoken language than between two spoken languages. Evidence that the majority of the problems that deaf students have in learning English do not result from ASL can be adduced from a variety of sources. First, as noted earlier, students who have never been exposed to ASL and who have never developed a sign system themselves make errors comparable to those of the rest of the deaf population.

Second, errors unique to deaf students, such as the “copying” of pronoun referents in relative clauses (“John saw the boy who the boy kicked the ball”: Quigley & King, 1982, p. 442), are emphatically not translations from ASL, which would order the information in that attempted sentence entirely differently.

Third, research has shown consistently that the small percentage of deaf students with deaf parents, those most likely to have been exposed to ASL at an early age, outperform the rest of the population in academic achievement, including English skills (Geers & Schick, 1988), though the differences are not enormous.

Fourth, in a recent study, 30 judges (professionals in audiology, speech pathology, deaf education, and language teaching) who were asked to distinguish holistically between the compositions of deaf signers, deaf nonsigners, and ESL students were unable to make the judgments correctly (Langston & Maxwell, 1988).

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In sum, as we have seen, the difficulties that deaf students face in learning English are many and thorny. In addition to the drastic limitations on input that often confound the development of grammatical competence, students are likely to have a history of frustrations in learning the language. Depending on personality variables such as the ability to maintain motivation in the face of
continued obstacles, such frustrations may or may not prevent them from persevering at this difficult task as they get older.

The sociolinguistic situation of deaf students is also very complex and, depending on their histories of educational placement, may change substantially during a student’s lifetime, if and when they learn ASL and come to identify with the deaf culture. Students entering postsecondary programs and English classes with hearing students may vary in their English skills because of differences in the levels of their hearing losses and in when the hearing loss occurred. They may vary in their attitudes toward the language as well, depending on their skills and educational history, their level of sophistication about the differences between ASL and English, and whether or not they have affiliated themselves with the deaf community. Whatever their attitudes, however, deaf students are likely to believe that skill in English is important, and those students entering programs at the postsecondary level are perhaps more likely to be making the choice for reasons of employment, which provides a strong, reality-based motivation.

Knowing ASL is probably not a significant impediment in itself to the acquisition of English; it is apparently also not a particular help, any more than knowledge of another spoken language would be, except in the sense that having some first language is important. The real issue is that deaf students are more adept at learning languages in the visual-spatial mode than those in the auditory-vocal mode, as evidenced by their generating grammatical structures suited to communication in visual space even when these structures are not present in the input. The fact that “immersion” in English does not seem to be practicable for various reasons is an argument for using ASL as the language of instruction, as a tool for demonstrating the differences between ASL and “English in the air,” in short, to use it to teach English as a second language.

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Recent attempts to establish English-only public policy and legislation reflect declining support for sociolinguistic diversity in the United States. This trend has important consequences in education, not only for speakers of languages other than English, but also for speakers of minority varieties of English. In this article, assimilationist ideology is rejected as a way of legitimizing the educational experience of language minority groups. Instead, a pluralist position is adopted, one that views the teaching of standard English as a second dialect (SESD) as “additive bidialectalism” rather than remediation. The terms dialect, creole, and standard are discussed with reference to the harmful effects of linguistic prescriptivism. Research in two areas is then reviewed: (a) studies examining differences in varieties and their influence on communication and (b) sociolinguistic work on classroom participation structures involving language minority students. It is concluded that differences in varieties are not trivial and that culturally appropriate modifications to classroom discourse patterns, such as those implemented in a program for Hawaii Creole English-speaking children, are useful models for other SESD settings.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF STANDARD ENGLISH AS A SECOND DIALECT

It has become increasingly difficult in the 1980s for language professionals to ignore ill-informed public discussions of language and education. In the United States, the U.S. English movement (Donohue, 1985) and the proposed English Language Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, in particular, pose a serious challenge to the progressive philosophy of TESOL (see Judd, 1984, 1987, and Marshall, 1986, for excellent discussions), which must address both ideological and empirical issues involved in language policy formulation and implementation.
These issues go beyond the important, long-standing debate over bilingualism and various forms of bilingual education to problems surrounding schooling in and through standard (British, American, Canadian, Australian, etc.) English as a second dialect (SESD) for speakers of minority varieties of English. Alongside minority languages—Spanish, Vietnamese, Ilokano, Inuktitut, Navajo, Punjabi, and so on—there are minority varieties to consider: Black English Vernacular (BEV), Appalachian English, British West Indian English, Louisiana Creole English, (South Carolinian and Sea Islands) Gullah, Chicano English, and Hawaii Creole English, to name but a few.

Recognizing these varieties as valid systems of communication, this article adopts a “nonstandard” approach to SESD and rejects an assimilationist ideology as the basis for understanding the experience of linguistic minorities in the United States. It argues instead for a pluralist position in which the acquisition of standard English (SE) is seen as additive bidialectalism rather than as remediation.

Such a stance is familiar to those who witnessed the furor over BEV during the 1960s and 1970s (see, e.g., Kochman, 1969). It is less familiar, however, to the generation of teachers that has appeared in U.S. public schools since the period of the Civil Rights Movement, many of whom have little or no historical understanding of their current “problems” in teaching SESD students (Giroux, 1983; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Labov, 1982; Whiteman, 1980).

The facts are indisputable: As groups, African Americans, Hawaiian Americans, and other second dialect speakers consistently underachieve academically, and children in states with a large proportion of second dialect speakers regularly do poorly on national standardized examinations, for example, the Scholastic Aptitude Test, especially on the verbal sections of such tests. In contrast, a few immigrant groups learning English as a second language excel in many areas of the curriculum. The disparity is striking, although not unpredictable. The latter groups’ success probably owes much to socioeconomic status, parents’ educational levels, and positive attitudes toward mainstream schooling, whereas the SESD groups’ experiences are no doubt tied to generations of socioeconomic and ethnic stratification in American society (Ogbu, 1978).

1 The term *African American* is adopted in preference to *black*, partly to maintain consistency with terms used to refer to other ethnic groups but also to acknowledge the inappropriateness of using skin color labels to denote ethnic heritage. We do not refer to Japanese Americans, for example, as *yellows* or to Mexican Americans as *brown*. Although *black* is widely used in everyday life and in the research literature currently, it may meet the same fate as has the term *Negro*. 

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260 TESOL QUARTERLY
This article reviews two areas of research that provide some insight into the academic difficulties encountered by SESD students. The first involves studies of differences across varieties in face-to-face interaction; the second consists of primarily ethnographic work in communities and classrooms, which documents a mismatch between home and school sociolinguistic patterns for different minority groups. Let us begin by examining nonprescriptive characterizations of the so-called nonstandard varieties of language known as dialects and creoles.

VARIETIES OF LANGUAGE
Dialects, Creoles, and Standards

A dialect is “the variety you speak because you ‘belong to’ (come from or have chosen to move into) a particular region, social class, caste, generation, age group, sex group, or other relevant grouping within the community” (Halliday, 1985, p. 44). Dialects are identified on the basis of the systematic co-occurrence of particular linguistic (and discoursal) features among groups of people. In some cases, these features serve to identify an ethnic group; in others, a social class; and in still other cases, the geographical origin of speakers. Note that, by this definition, “the relative status of a dialect with respect to other dialects of the language . . . is irrelevant. The term used this way is completely neutral—there is no evaluation implied, either positive or negative” (Wolfram & Christian, 1979, p. 1).

The term creole is reserved for a variety of language newly created by children in a multilingual context, typically where a pidginized variety already exists for purposes of rudimentary intergroup communication among adults who have different native languages, for example, on sugar plantations in the early 1900s in Hawaii (DeCamp, 1971; Holm, 1988; Mühlhäusler, 1986; Reinecke, 1935/1969; Romaine, 1988). Whereas a pidgin is functionally and structurally reduced, a creole’s vocabulary and syntax are, “like those of any native language [italics added], large enough to meet all the communicative needs of its speakers” (DeCamp, 1971, p. 16).

Because a creole is just as rule-governed as any other “normal” language is, one can make grammatical errors in it. For example, in Hawaii Creole English (HCE) the verb bought in the sentence My brother bought a car is rendered as wen bai (Mai brada wen bai wan ka) not as gon bai (Mai brada gon bai wan ka), since wen is the correct preverbal past time marker, whereas gon is a preverbal future time marker. Similarly, the HCE sentence Ai gon st ekuk da...
fish (I’ll go ahead and cook the fish) is correct, but Ai ste gon kuk da fish is not because the preverbal auxiliary gon is misplaced.

Although a creole may be closely related to a language such as English in its lexicon, it often diverges from that language substantially in all linguistic domains, that is, semantics, phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax (Holm, 1988; Mühlhäusler, 1986; Romaine, 1988). This is due to many of the rules of creole grammar having been created anew by its speakers. Even lexical items apparently “shared” by English and a related creole can have different meanings and syntactic distributions. To give another HCE example, the word neva appears to have come from the English adverb never, but neva functions as a preverbal auxiliary meaning didn’t.

HCE: Mai nyuspepa neva kam dis mawning.
SE: My newspaper didn’t come this morning.

The dividing line between dialects and creoles can be a difficult one to draw. North American BEV, for example, which is commonly considered a dialect, is known to have had creole origins (Holm, 1984; Rickford, 1977; Stewart, 1967). HCE is sometimes referred to as a dialect when it is treated within the larger context of American English. The best cover term we have for both dialects and creoles (and any other way of speaking shared by a social group) is variety, which may be defined simply but adequately as “a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution” (Hudson, 1980, p. 24).

What is important to note about the varieties discussed above is that neither dialects nor creoles are defined on the basis of social evaluation of particular ways of speaking. This is not to deny the existence of such evaluation, but simply to recognize that it is separable from the scientific description of linguistic variation and the identification of different varieties of English.

We can now turn to standard languages or varieties, which “are the result of a direct and deliberate intervention by society, in that they are selected for special functions, extensively codified and institutionalized, and (hence) imbued by a society with greater prestige” (Hudson, 1980, p. 32). SE, in particular, is seen by some as the variety “normally employed in writing and normally spoken by ‘educated’ speakers of the language” (Trudgill & Hannah, 1982, p. 1). It is considered to be

a particular dialect of English, being the only non-localized dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriate educational target in teaching English, which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accent. (Strevens, 1985, p. 88)
There appears to be a consensus, then, that (a) SE is not tied to a particular accent and that (b) SE is generally associated with written language. This knowledge alone has important consequences in the classroom, since it indicates that “correction” of accent and the imposition of written norms onto the spoken forms that students use are inappropriate. Put another way, different types of spoken and written discourse (e.g., “show and tell,” prepared oral reports, class discussions, expository essays, science reports) have distinguishing features that should be considered in evaluating student performance, particularly because what is viewed as SE varies among native speakers.

In a study by Schmidt and McCreary (1977), middle-class U.S. college students (including students in a MA in ESL program) used and judged as correct a number of instances of subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent number and gender agreement, and pronoun choice in conjoined noun phrases, which would be considered incorrect according to prescriptive grammar rules. Schmidt and McCreary were led to distinguish between the (technically ungrammatical) SE used by educated, middle-class native speakers (some of them English teachers) and “super-standard” English, which is “either not followed by speakers or restricted to only the most formal level of style” (p. 415).

There is some disagreement in the literature about whether SE is associated with a particular social group. Strevens (1985) claims that SE is “not ‘upper class English’ ” (p. 87); that is, it is not a class dialect. However, primarily data-based sociolinguists (e.g., J. Milroy & L. Milroy, 1985; Wolfram & Christian, 1979) take the position that SE is indeed associated with educated, middle- and upper-class segments of English-speaking populations:

“Standard English is a rather loose and pre-scientific label. What Standard English actually is thought to be depends on acceptance (mainly by the most influential people [italics added]) of a common core of linguistic conventions, and a good deal of fuzziness remains around the edges. (J. Milroy & L. Milroy, 1985, p. 23)

Strevens (1985) has also claimed that SE is “not imposed upon those who use it” (p. 87) in the sense that there is no institution such as the Academie Française that regulates the “proper” use of SE. However, it is painfully obvious that in the United States, SE has been systematically imposed on speakers of minority varieties of English for several generations through every institutional channel in existence (see Heath, 1980, and Judd, 1987, for historical discussion; see Sato, 1985, for an account of the Hawaiian case).
Although SE has undoubtedly become a symbol (for some) of U.S. ethos (Heath, 1980), teachers would be wise not to confuse the rhetoric of patriotism with sound pedagogical principles, and they should be wary of falling into the role of “guardians of the language.” In this role, they are particularly vulnerable to a “superstandard” (Schmidt & McCreary, 1977), elitist view of what “good” English is, that is, a prescriptivist attitude that fails to recognize sociolinguistic diversity.

Prescriptivism and Resistance

With respect to minority varieties of English in the United States, prescriptivism has consistently engendered resistance, although usually to the detriment of the resisters. Research on language attitudes and minority varieties of English (see Ryan & Giles, 1982, for an extensive bibliography) suggests that it is the negative attitude toward minority varieties that must change, since the varieties themselves will not be relinquished by their speakers. Although these speakers may recognize the institutionalized prestige of SE, they are fiercely loyal to their own varieties. In the face of massive long-term negative pressure, minority varieties of English persist (L. Milroy, 1980; Ryan, 1979) and even elaborate (Labov, 1980) for a simple but powerful reason: They function as markers of social, often ethnic, identity (Baugh, 1983; LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Rickford, 1985; Rickford & Traugott, 1985; Sato, 1985, in press).

Perhaps more important to the prospect of long-term educational change is the maintenance of minority varieties as a form of resistance to political and economic exploitation. Wolfram and Christian (1979) have pointedly argued that until social inequality on the basis of race and class is eliminated, it is futile to expect significant language shift to occur among African Americans and other U.S. minorities. Fully a decade earlier, Kochman (1969) had criticized elitist models of the teaching of SESD in a similar analysis of the sociopolitical factors constraining educational change. These arguments have yet to be refuted.

It must be recognized, then, that speakers of minority varieties of English still have good reason to resist the status quo in U.S. classrooms and that minority variety maintenance is often one manifestation of that resistance. The task for educators is to promote additive bidialectalism, whereby the academic and linguistic development of minority students is fostered without repression of their prior language socialization. At the very least, such an objective requires attention to the nature and role of sociolinguistic
diversity in schooling, issues that have been addressed in research on differences in varieties and on student-teacher classroom interaction.

TWO RELEVANT AREAS OF RESEARCH

The Significance of Differences in Varieties

A common misapprehension about minority varieties of a language is that differences between them and the standard variety are trivial. One reason for this belief, even among educators, is that their surface similarity often obscures underlying semantic differences. For example, in the Hawaii Creole English sentence *Get pleni turis in Maui* (*There are lots of tourists in Maui*), *get* is not a verb meaning *to obtain* or *to fetch*, but an existential marker. That such differences in form-function relationships are substantial enough to cause comprehension problems in interactions between speakers of different varieties is the point of a number of studies.

Trudgill (1982) provides evidence that the passive competence of British SE speakers vis-à-vis other varieties of British English (e.g., Scots, Liverpudlian, and East Anglian English) is rather abysmal with respect to comprehension of decontextualized sentences in a linguistic judgment task. If speakers possess passive competence in varieties other than their own, Trudgill hypothesized, their underlying grammars include rules for variant forms, that is, forms from other varieties; and, by rule extension alone, speakers should be able to interpret these forms. However, this proved not to be the case in his study: “Without any context to help them, most native speakers are unable to draw on the rule systems of their own dialect in order to understand a grammatical form new to them” (p. 185).

An equally strong position is taken by L. Milroy (1984), who views “the idea that nonstandard speakers ‘understand’ standard English as a not very clearly defined and quite unsupported assumption, rather than a self-evident truth” (p. 10). She shows that although interlocutors can usually rely on linguistic and situational context and perceptual strategies to understand utterances, there remain occasions when these factors do not aid in the understanding of an utterance because of a difference in the grammars of the interlocutors. In a comparison of Hiberno-English (HE) and standard (British) English, L. Milroy notes that the SE utterance *How long are you staying here?* is often interpreted by HE speakers to mean *How long have you been staying here?* This can lead to communication breakdowns such as the following (in which A is a native of South West Donegal and B and C are both SE-speaking linguists):

A NONSTANDARD APPROACH TO STANDARD ENGLISH
A: How long are youse here?
B: Till after Easter.
(A looks puzzled; a pause of two seconds follows)
C: We came on Sunday
A: Ah, youse're here a while then. (p. 21)

A’s opening question would translate into SE as How long have you been here? B responds inappropriately, having interpreted A to mean How long will you be here? C then repairs the breakdown, finally recalling the fact that this was an area of difference between HE and SE.

What is important, L. Milroy (1984) points out, is that this knowledge was not enough to prevent the breakdown. Interactions among nonlinguists would presumably not be so easily or frequently repaired, since it is extremely difficult to pinpoint moments of confusion or uneasiness about what is being said in real-time interaction and to determine that the source of dissonance is specifically linguistic.

In a study of her own acquisition of Trinidad English Creole, Winer (1985) reports communication breakdowns triggered by a mismatch of conventionalized question forms. In spite of the apparent decodability of utterances addressed to vendors in a marketplace—for example, How much are the yams a pound? and What is this thing called?—she was not understood. The usual way of posing such questions proved to be, What a pong fuh di yam? and How yuh call it?

Communication difficulties caused by such differences are also underestimated because of some early research findings that were interpreted as showing an absence of SE comprehension problems for speakers of nonstandard varieties. In a number of studies reviewed by Hall and Turner (1974), African American and Caucasian primary-school children were presented with sentence imitation and comprehension tasks. The African American children’s ability to perform these tasks was taken to indicate an absence of comprehension difficulty across varieties.

More recently, however, these optimistic interpretations have been challenged by sociolinguists examining language variation and communicative competence across varieties in adults (Berdan, 1983; L. Milroy, 1984; Trudgill, 1982, 1983). This work maintains that although the communicative context of natural talk often provides enough cues to prompt appropriate responses, either verbal or nonverbal, it is not the case that interlocutors understand all aspects of either the surface or underlying structure of utterances to which they respond.
In critiquing the methodology of studies using sentence repetition tests, Berdan (1983) argues that such tests “have very little to say about comprehension” (p. 132), in part because of poor item construction, and he cautions against use of elicited imitation across varieties without extremely careful item construction and explicit consideration of “all relevant aspects of the grammars involved” (p. 134). Berdan’s own study of African American (BEV-speaking) and Caucasian (SE-speaking) college students in California provides evidence that linguistic differences across varieties can and do lead to miscommunication.

The students in this study listened to 60 potentially ambiguous sentences for which they constructed tag questions to indicate their comprehension. The sentences involved particular morphosyntactic features of SE and BEV, for example, auxiliary verb contraction and deletion, pluralization, and past tense marking. Results showed that the relationship between comprehension of ambiguous sentences and underlying grammar was less direct than had been anticipated, with the students’ responses influenced by syntactic and contextual cues in the stimulus sentences.

For example, “Her best [frenz] playing jump rope” is interpretable as either (a) “Her best friend is playing jump rope” or (b) “Her best friends are playing jump rope” (Berdan, 1983, p. 124) by BEV speakers, since BEV allows copula omission. Another example is the prompting of a plural subject reading in a sentence such as “Their best [frenz] playing jump rope” (p. 124), in the context of a plural possessive determiner. Contextual cues appeared most influential when they did not conflict with syntactic cues, and although most of the SE speakers showed no sensitivity to these conditioning factors, most of the BEV speakers did. Berdan concluded that there were “major differences in comprehension for certain kinds of sentences” (p. 136) between the BEV and SE speakers.

There is another source of evidence contradicting previous studies (e.g., Hall, Turner, & Russell, 1973) that claimed that speakers of minority varieties of English were able to comprehend SE well. This is research on the linguistic and general academic development of HCE-speaking children. A study by Choy and Dodd (1976), arguing that the earlier studies were limited by the use of tasks that required subjects to process single sentences rather than extended discourse, had 14 HCE-dominant and 14 SE-dominant fifth-grade public school students listen to stories in HCE and SE and answer comprehension questions about them. They also performed a reaction-time task to determine the amount of processing effort required by the story-comprehension task. Results indicated that each group performed significantly better in its own
dialect: The HCE speakers comprehended the HCE stories more easily and more accurately than the SE stories, and the SE speakers comprehended the SE stories more easily and accurately than the HCE stories.

Other researchers have reported results consistent with those of Choy and Dodd (1976). In reviewing findings from the first 5 years of a research program at Kamehameha Schools on HCE-speaking children’s academic achievement, Gallimore and Tharp (1976) observe that although speaking HCE per se does not pose a problem in the classroom context for many children, “language may be implicated in the academic difficulties of HCE speakers” (p. 33). For some of the HCE-dominant children in their studies, “three years of school experience would appear to have had little impact on the use of SE in a conversational/narrative setting. It seems they understand SE perfectly well, but they do not use it” (p. 52).

The question of whether these HCE-dominant children even understood SE adequately was addressed in a subsequent Kamehameha study (Speidel, Tharp, & Kobayashi, 1985) involving 60 HCE-dominant children from two public schools and 60 SE-speaking children from a public school serving a high proportion of children from out-of-state U.S. military families. Both groups listened to tape-recorded stories in SE, in SE with HCE pronunciation, and in HCE and then answered comprehension questions based on the stories. Combined scores for the two groups revealed no significant difference between the HCE and SE groups on overall listening comprehension ability. The subtests showed, however, that the HCE speakers demonstrated greater comprehension for the HCE stories, and Speidel et al. maintain that “with Hawaiian children, the linguistic differences between their dialect and standard English result in comprehension difficulties” (p. 91).

These differences can also impair performance on standardized tests. In another Kamehameha study, Speidel (1981) investigated HCE-dominant children’s psycholinguistic abilities and reading achievement. Using the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) with three groups of students (27 kindergarteners, 27 first graders, and 39 third graders), Speidel found that although the children’s general language development was average, they did not perform equally well on all subtests. They did better on those using the visual channel and lower on several auditory sections. They had most difficulty with automatic production of SE grammatical features in oral language. Speidel concluded that the uneven pattern of skill development may have resulted from speaking a different form of English rather than from socioeconomic factors, with the children’s difficulty with the automatic production of SE syntax
becoming more pronounced with age, despite 4 years of instruction in SE (K-3).

In summary, the studies on BEV and HCE speakers reviewed above argue for a careful reconsideration of differences in varieties whenever the educational problems of a linguistic minority group are of concern. As indicated in a number of the studies, the phonological, lexical, and morphosyntactic differences between varieties of English need not be as massive as those that obtain between typologically distinct languages (e.g., English and Vietnamese), nor need they occur in every instance of communication across varieties for problems to arise in the classroom. Furthermore, as is shown by the classroom process studies to be examined next, there is another domain in which differences in varieties occur—the organization of discourse.

Minority Varieties of English in the Classroom

In situations in which miscommunication across varieties cannot be ruled out, it becomes critical to examine participant structures in classrooms (Philips, 1972, 1983). Doing so can reveal interfacional styles that help reduce chances of miscommunication or prevent them altogether, as demonstrated by research on language use in communities and classrooms (see Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1972; Gilmore & Glatthorn, 1982; Heath, 1983; Schieffelin & Gilmore, 1986; for a review of ethnographic work in bilingual settings, see Cazden, Carrasco, Maldonado-Guzman, & Erickson, 1980). The central theme emerging from this research is that differences between varieties of English also obtain at the level of discourse organization and interfacional patterns. Recent in-depth analyses of BEV- and HCE-speaking populations are illustrative.

In a study of “sharing time” activities in a first-grade classroom in Berkeley, CA, Michaels (1981, 1986) details a contrast in the discourse patterns of BEV-speaking students and their Caucasian teacher. The teacher is shown to have difficulty accommodating to what Michaels refers to as the “topic-associating” presentational style of the African American students, which is contrasted with the more “topic-centered” style of the white students in the same class. The “topic-centered” style is “tightly organized, centering on a single topic or series of closely related topics, with thematic development accomplished through lexical cohesion, and a linear ordering of events, leading quickly to a punch line resolution” (1986, p. 102). The African American students’ “topic-associating” style, on the other hand, presents “a series of segments or episodes which are implicitly linked in highlighting some person or theme” (1986, p. 103).
A particularly interesting aspect of Michaels’s analysis concerns prosodic features of the children’s speech in both styles, features that evoked successful teacher scaffolding with the Caucasian children but not with the African American children. With the former, the teacher was able to time her comments and questions appropriately, cued by the students’ falling terminal intonation contours at certain points in their accounts. With the latter, the teacher appeared to misread cues such as stress placement and vowel lengthening, which resulted in her disrupting rather than supporting and elaborating on the students’ presentations.

The fact that the Berkeley research was a single-classroom case study, for which quantitative evidence of the topic-centered versus topic-associating styles is not presented, raises questions as to the applicability of its findings to other groups of BEV-speaking children. However, a subsequent study (Michaels & Cazden, 1986) of four classrooms in Boston public schools over an academic year has confirmed the Berkeley findings concerning ethnically based narrative styles and differential teacher treatment of these styles.

At least one study of classroom discourse processes reports on classrooms in which “interference” from a variety is precluded by children’s development of functional language skills and of situationally appropriate language use. In a study of kindergarten, first-grade, and sixth-grade African American children in a Washington, DC, school, Lucas and Borders (1987) analyzed video- and audiotaped classroom interactions and found variable distribution of BEV features across activity types—for example, whole-group-with-teacher, small-group-without-teacher, and one-on-one-without-teacher—and a developmental progression from kindergarten to sixth grade. By the fourth grade, the children generally did not use BEV features in the presence of the teacher.

Lucas and Borders (1987) concluded from their study that “there was no evidence of dialect interference resulting from dialect diversity, as far as everyday classroom discourse [was] concerned” (p. 136). This may appear to contradict the argument laid out above concerning the occurrence of miscommunication across varieties. However, what must be taken into account here, which Lucas and Borders do not discuss, is that three of the four teachers in the study were African American. Unlike the teachers who had difficulty interacting with BEV-speaking students in the studies by Michaels (1981, 1986) and by Michaels and Cazden (1986), the teachers in this study appear to have been quite familiar with BEV and African American interfactional patterns, which undoubtedly allowed classroom discourse to proceed smoothly.
In Hawaii, the issue of sociolinguistic mismatches involves, not a single ethnic minority, but children from a wide range of ethnic groups (e.g., Hawaiians, Filipinos, Samoans) as well as those of mixed ancestry (e.g., Chinese-Hawaiian-Irish-Japanese), who speak HCE natively. As in the case of BEV speakers, their classroom difficulties have been traced thus far to questioning patterns and the structure of conversational narratives.

Ethnographic research by S. T. Boggs (1972, 1985) in two communities on the island of Oahu has revealed the different functions of questions for part-Hawaiian, HCE-speaking children at home and at school. Questioning by parents and other adult caregivers was generally found to indicate negative sanctioning (i.e., scolding and imminent punishment), and children’s reaction to such questioning, to avoid further self-incrimination, was usually silence or a minimal response. Adults’ use of questions as a friendly invitation to conversation, on the other hand, was not familiar to the children Boggs studied,” and direct questions asked in informal conversations also received brief answers.

In the classroom, S. T. Boggs (1985) argues, this response style can be interpreted as indicating either hostility or inability to answer the direct questions of teachers when these questions are intended simply to elicit comprehension of subject matter. However, when information is solicited from the group rather than from a single child or when an adult simply indicates interest in a topic or issue, without asking a direct question of a child, the result is longer, more elaborate responses.

In general, Hawaiian children seem to orient themselves primarily toward one another and secondarily to the teacher, probably because of their extensive experience with sibling caretaking (Gallimore, J. Boggs, & Jordan, 1974). This orientation is evident not only in their reactions to questions, but in their narrative style as well.

In a study of 5- to 7-year-old part-Hawaiian children’s peer-group interactions outside the classroom (Watson, 1972; Watson-Gegeo, 1975; Watson-Gegeo & S. T. Boggs, 1977), the children were found to be skilled at producing complex narratives, including what Watson (1975) termed “contrapuntal talk story” (p. 59), a narrative performed jointly by two or more children. Detailed analysis of this type of story indicated its basis in a “contradicting routine” (Watson-Gegeo & S. T. Boggs, 1977), in which an assertion made by one speaker would be flatly contradicted by another and in which subsequent turns at talk involved reassertions, further contradictions, challenges, and even insults. These routines contributed to story structure in that the “lead” storyteller, in anticipation of or in
response to contradiction in the course of narration, would elaborate on his or her claims and allegations or accept the claims, clarifications, or counter allegations of a conarrator.

Valuable insights into the structure and social functions of routines and speech events for part-Hawaiian HCE speakers have emerged from S. T. Boggs’s and Watson-Gegeo’s work, insights that have had a direct impact on teacher training and the organization of instruction. Specifically, the findings suggested that these children’s active involvement in academic tasks would be facilitated by (a) careful use of direct questions to individual children and (b) the creation of participation patterns similar to those produced by the children in talk story. Both these modifications of classroom discourse have, in fact, been incorporated into a successful reading program at the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) (Au, 1979, 1980; Au & Jordan, 1981; Au & Mason, 1983; Jordan, 1984, 1985; Speidel, 1981, 1987a, 1987b).

The aims of the KEEP research program, to “facilitate the learning of basic academic skills and content” and part-Hawaiian children’s “adaptation to conventional school situations” (Au, 1980, p. 93), motivated the modification of reading lessons toward talk-story-like participation structures and the training of teachers in appropriate discourse-management strategies (Jordan, 1985). A microanalysis of a videotaped talk-story reading lesson (Au, 1980; Au & Jordan, 1981) revealed that more than half of the speaking turns in the lesson involved “cooperation and precise synchronization of talk among two or more children and the teacher” (Au, 1980, p. 97) rather than single-speaker turns. The teacher maintained control of the lesson and yet gave children “breathing room,” by refraining from criticizing their (HCE) answers, and “equal time,” by allocating speaking turns equitably among the children during the lesson (Au & Mason, 1983, p. 149).

Talk-story reading lessons are seen as achieving a “balance of rights” between students and teachers, with which the former are able to exert control over some, though not all, dimensions of the lessons (Au & Mason, 1983, p. 150). In a comparison of the interfacational styles of two teachers, one who had worked extensively with part-Hawaiian children and one who had not, Au and Mason found significant differences between them. The former established a clearly talk-story-like framework in her lessons. In sequences in which she controlled the topic and nominated individuals to respond to questions, she did not prevent other students from commenting, as did the other teacher, who had had minimal contact with Hawaiian students. The former also initiated sequences by posing a question or providing an explanation,
without nominating a particular respondent. The students were free to comment, either individually or jointly, that is, to negotiate turn taking among themselves during these sequences. Neither of these participation structures occurred in the other teacher’s lessons, which were dominated by sequences in which individuals were nominated by the teacher to speak one at a time. Au and Mason (p. 165) concluded that the culturally congruent style of discourse management was more effective, as it led to more productive achievement-related behavior by the students on a variety of measures, including time on task, correct responses, and text content discussed.

Other researchers at KEEP have argued that culturally congruent participation structures in the classroom not only foster reading achievement, but facilitate the development of spoken SE as well. In another discourse analysis of a teacher’s reading lessons, this time with six other Hawaiian, HCE-speaking KEEP children, Speidel (1987a) sought to determine whether “conversational reading lessons,” that is, talk-story-like lessons, (a) stimulated HCE speakers to use SE features more frequently and (b) improved their SE grammatical skills, the latter as measured by standardized tests.

An analysis of the first 50 utterances from each of three lessons for the six students revealed that they all repeated many words previously spoken in the lessons, and almost one fifth of their utterances consisted of incorporations from one another’s contributions to the discussion. Although the crucial kind of evidence for acquisition of a grammatical feature (as opposed to its transitory use) will come from longitudinal study of such behavior (see Sato, 1986), Speidel’s (1987a) results do suggest the discourse mechanisms by which the opportunities for use of SE features are created in teacher-managed interactions.

Some indication of the development of SE grammatical features was obtained from the children’s performance on two standardized tests, which was compared with that of a group of first graders from a public school. Unfortunately, the lessons in which the latter participated were not observed. Both groups were tested in the fall and spring semesters of the academic year on the Carrow Elicited Language Inventory (Carrow, 1974), a sentence repetition test, and the Grammatic Closure subtest of the ITPA. They performed similarly on both measures in the fall testing, but the KEEP group made greater (although not statistically significant) gains in the spring testing than did the public school group. Although she is careful to note limitations in the design of the study, Speidel (1987a) argues that these results suggest a relationship between teacher discourse modifications in small-group lessons and HCE-speaking children’s use of SE grammatical features.
The studies of linguistic minority students’ classroom experiences that have been reviewed thus far indicate the existence of systematic differences at the discourse level between BEV and SE and between HCE and SE. Such differences undoubtedly exist for other varieties of English as well but have yet to be extensively studied. An important objective in such studies would be the identification of naturally occurring speech events, such as talk story, which might serve as “bridging” events between home and school contexts (Watson-Gegeo, 1988). Even assuming the eventual accumulation of such studies, however, a further constraint on the effectiveness of classroom discourse modifications must be taken into account—namely, pressures inherent in the larger institutional context of schooling.

Schools are commonly viewed as institutions that produce and reproduce unequal power relationships within the larger social order (Apple, 1978, 1982; Giroux, 1983; Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Ogbu, 1978). That teachers play a central role in such relationships, perhaps in spite of intentions to the contrary, is cause for concern (see Bailey & Galván, 1979).

In a recent ethnographic study, Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (in press) describe how institutionally legitimized “patterns of knowledge and authority are played out in moment-by-moment routine-governed classroom interactions” (p. 2) in writing conferences between teachers and sixth-grade students in two multiethnic urban classrooms in the northeastern United States. The teachers in the study were ostensibly following a learner-centered “process” approach to writing (see, e.g., Graves, 1983), in which learner-initiated revision was to be systematically scaffolded. However, this pedagogic innovation was shown to be undermined by the teachers, who were observed to stifle the engagement of certain learners in the writing process because of their own need to maintain control over knowledge (about the world and about language), which was in turn constrained by bureaucratic pressures on them to keep the machinery of schooling going.

Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (in press) describe a “factory model” of composition instruction, one in which the teacher is a manager assigning consecutive tasks to students as workers, and retaining responsibility for quality control of the final draft. The students carry out the tasks with little investment in the product . . . and resist doing too much on their own. In turn, the teacher assigns small tasks that work at bits of the composition until it passes final inspection. The end result . . . is the communication of a very simplistic, mechanical knowledge about writing. (p. 29)
It is not difficult to see that linguistic minority students, for whom schooling often amounts to a series of “gatekeeping” encounters (Erickson, 1975; Scollon & Scollon, 1983), are especially vulnerable to such treatment, precisely because teachers often have lower expectations of success for them (see, e.g., Ford, 1984; Laosa, 1979; Schinke-Llano, 1983).

**IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER TRAINING AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE**

Classroom discourse modifications of the type suggested above for BEV and HCE speakers have been frequently observed in ESL or EFL classrooms (for review, see Chaudron, 1988; Long, 1983). Various adjustments in teacher talk and classroom participation structures appear to facilitate learners’ understanding of both language and content (see, e.g., Brock, 1986; Long et al., 1984) and are hypothesized to have a positive effect on second language acquisition (Long, 1983). It is reasonable to believe that, like ESL learners, SESD learners would also benefit from interactional patterns in which they are able to negotiate meaning in both socio-culturally and psycholinguistically appropriate ways.

If the teaching of SESD is viewed as additive bidialectalism, teacher education and classroom practice need to be modified in certain ways. What is called for, however, is not simply consciousness-raising, that is, informing teachers about socio-linguistic diversity. Rather, teacher education programs should, if they do not do so already, provide concrete opportunities for the observation and analysis of sociolinguistic diversity and its effects on classroom processes, with attention to various levels of the organization of schooling in SESD settings.

The bureaucracy of the school system itself should be analyzed by teachers, in both preservice and inservice course work, to determine if and how curriculum and/or personnel changes can be achieved that will improve the academic experiences of linguistic minorities. Working in organizations such as teachers’ unions and parent-teacher associations can also lead to more sympathetic treatment of minority schooling issues by such groups. A recent controversy in Hawaii over the state Board of Education’s proposed “English Only” policy illustrates well how effective collective action by teachers, students, parents, and researchers can be against reactionary views toward sociolinguistic diversity (see Sato, in press).

At the microlevel of face-to-face interaction, behavior in teachers (and other personnel) that reflects pejorative attitudes toward minority varieties of English must be recognized and eliminated.
Teacher education programs can incorporate in required course work the analysis of videotaped (authentic and scripted) teacher-student interactions, with the objective of understanding these interactions from the students’ perspective and identifying apparently discriminatory behavior on the part of teachers. Inservice workshops can engage practicing teachers in discourse analyses of their own classroom behavior in interactions with students who speak different varieties.

Both preservice and inservice teacher education should also provide teachers with information on the nature of sociolinguistic variation in their particular communities and schools. Because substantial variation exists between standard academic English and minority varieties, especially those such as BEV and HCE with a history of creolization, course work should involve linguistic and discourse analysis of actual language samples. Activities might include listening comprehension exercises based on relevant English varieties and discourse analysis of authentic (videotaped) teacher-student interactions.

With respect to classroom practice, it should be clear from the preceding that teachers need to begin where students are. Classroom discourse management should facilitate learners’ participation in academic tasks rather than set up obstacles that learners must surmount. The use of learners’ varieties in the classroom is therefore not ruled out, either at the elementary level or in “remedial English” classes at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Learners at any level can be easily engaged in analysis and discussion of their own and other varieties of English through, for example, community sociolinguistic surveys or “matched guise” exercises in which audiotaped speech samples of different English varieties are analyzed with respect to language attitudes. “Local” or vernacular literature (drama, poetry, fiction) is another natural point of entry into literacy in SE, one that has gained considerable popularity among HCE speakers in Hawaii (Chock, 1981; Westlake, 1979). Whatever the particular emphasis in “language arts” curricula in SESD situations, the overall objective should be the addition of SE, not the replacement of native varieties of English.

CONCLUSION

It has been argued in this article that understanding of the political context of teaching SESD and greater familiarity with differences in varieties and the classroom experiences of minority students are necessary for both policy making and pedagogy. The “nonstandard” approach to the teaching of SESD advocated here
takes as fundamental (a) the social and linguistic integrity of minority varieties of English and, therefore, (b) the need to design sociolinguistically appropriate pedagogy for speakers of such varieties. Rather than remediation of students’ language and replacement of minority varieties with “proper” English, the teaching of SESD may prove more successful if systematically practiced as additive bidialectalism.

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REFERENCES


A NONSTANDARD APPROACH TO STANDARD ENGLISH 279

280 TESOL QUARTERLY


Attention to Form or Meaning?
Error Treatment in the Bangalore Project

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This article reports an evaluation study of the Bangalore project, a content-based approach to language learning. It examines the question, Do teachers attend to meaning or to form, and is such a distinction observable in classroom practice? The study investigated the way that error treatment in Bangalore classrooms was realized in practice in a sample of 21 lesson transcripts. It was found that the treatment of linguistic error was largely consonant with the project’s statements about the kinds of attention that are appropriate to a focus on meaning and that this could be distinguished from the ways of treating linguistic error that are attributable to a focus on form. However, the most likely explanation for this finding is that as the project developed, task types were selected that would curtail learner production and, thereby, the risk of making linguistic error. This finding has implications for teachers interested in content-based curricula.

BACKGROUND

The Bangalore/Madras Communicational Teaching Project (CTP) was set up to explore a major current model of language learning, one that stresses unconscious processes (see Corder, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). According to this view, there can be no teacher prespecification of what language is to be learned in any given lesson because the teacher’s agenda may not match the learner’s unconscious process of hypothesis construction and revision. For the CTP, the guiding principle was that form could be best learned when the learner’s attention was focused on meaning.

A series of problem-solving activities evolved through a sustained period of trial and error; the result was a task-based syllabus that was intended to foster a preoccupation with meaning “not ‘English for communication’ but ‘English through communication’; not ‘learn English so that you will be able to do and say things later’ but ‘do
and say things now so that as a result you will learn English” (Prabhu, 1980, p. 23).

The project was conducted in eight schools for durations of up to 3 years between 1979 and 1984. Although it is no longer in operation (it was intended as a 5-year project), it is timely to consider the CTP now for three reasons: (a) The evaluation of it has only recently been completed (Beretta, 1987); (b) the person most influential in initiating the project and its Director has only recently made available a substantial account of it (Prabhu, 1987); and (c) most important, it may be seen as one of a series of efforts toward task- or content-based teaching that are currently generating a great deal of interest (e. g., Edwards, Wesche, Krashen, Clement, & Krudenier, 1984, and Wesche & Ready, 1985, in Canada; Nunan, in press, in Australia; Long, 1985, in Hawaii; Yalden, 1987). The CTP has itself attracted much comment in the literature on syllabus design and methodology (Brumfit, 1984; Crookes, 1986; Ellis, 1984; Johnson, 1982; Richards, 1984).

This article reports on one of several strands of the evaluation of the Bangalore project: error treatment. Other strands of the evaluation are reported elsewhere. (For a comparison of experimental and control groups, see Beretta & Davies, 1985; for a qualitative study of implementation, using CTP teachers’ accounts of their experience as a data base, see Beretta, in press; and for an investigation of CTP teachers’ anxieties in coming to terms with an innovation in the South Indian setting, see Beretta, in press. The archive document for all of these studies, including the present article, is Beretta, 1987.)

RATIONALE

As noted, the CTP abjures attention to linguistic form; lessons are planned only with problem-solving activities in mind but not with an accompanying plan for language input.

With a structural syllabus, the intention is that certain language forms should be practiced. In the CTP, however, there is no such intention; the plan is to present learners with an activity that will engage their interest and impel them to use whatever language they have at their disposal. The most obvious question is, Are these different intentions realized in tokens of the teacher’s classroom talk?

Unfortunately, there is no way of determining what might have been in a teacher’s head during any given lesson. The following anecdote illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing between planning to teach language form and planning to teach meaning (or content) when actual classroom practice is examined.
At a seminar held at the Regional Institute of English (RIE) in Bangalore in 1980, a transcript of a CTP lesson was presented to seminar participants (a consultant from the United Kingdom, British Council staff, project teachers, and teacher trainers). In the lesson extract, which dealt with distances on a map, the teacher asked the pupils how far one town is from another. Almost the only question the teacher asked was, “How far is [X] from [Y]?” and he proceeded to swap roles so that the pupils could ask him about distances. In all, the teacher asked the question “How far . . . ?” 15 times, and the pupils asked it 7 times. This was followed by an exercise in which How far . . . ? was also the focus.

After the transcript was considered, the very first comment by a participant was, “One thing is very clear. One structure is drilled. Is that the intention?” He followed this question with another: “In the second part of the task, was there not an attempt to get back the structure from the students?” Prabhu replied that that “was never the intention.” Another participant claimed that if he was doing a structural lesson, he would do it in the same way. Yet another observed: “If the teacher has predetermined what structure he is going to deal with, then this is a structural lesson. And it seems to me that this is the case. The teacher selected the map with how far . . . in mind,” to which Prabhu retorted, “It came in naturally.” Whether the lesson was structural, functional, notional, or anything else depends, according to one participant “upon what it is that the teacher is trying to do when he goes into the classroom, whether to practice how far and other ways of asking about distances, or to give an interesting communicative activity.” Prabhu rejoined that the intention to teach form would be noticeable: “The lesson would reflect it.”

The problem is that for the seminar participants the CTP lesson did indeed reflect a plan to teach language form, whereas for Prabhu it did not. The debate ended with all parties apparently entrenched in their views. (The anecdote and the lesson transcript may be read in full in Regional Institute of English, 1980, pp. 44-53).

Clearly, then, the question of intentionality or planning cannot be pursued with any expectation of success. However, in relation to the CTP, Prabhu has made some fairly clear statements about what is acceptable and what is not with regard to actual teacher treatment of pupil error (both linguistic and content). This makes it possible to investigate teachers’ attention to form and attention to meaning in terms defined by the project.

In other words, because we can ask whether or not CTP treatment of error corresponds to Prabhu’s prescriptions, we can address the fundamental question: Did Bangalore teachers focus on
meaning or on form, and is such a distinction observable in classroom practice? That is what this article aims to examine.

**CTP APPROACHES TO THE TREATMENT OF ERROR**

Prabhu (1982) describes four elements of the kind of “incidental” correction that he believes is appropriate for a meaning-focused classroom:

(a) Incorrect language from learners is corrected (i.e. rephrased, restated, or drawn attention to) in roughly the same way that interested adults do with children—or the subject-teacher in an English-medium class does in teaching his subject.

(b) This is done more in the context of writing (either on the blackboard, as part of the pre-task, or on paper in performing the task) than in oral work, as being more natural in that context.

(c) All such attention to language is limited to facts (as against generalisations) and treated as contributory to the successful performance of the task on hand.

(d) Learners’ work is always marked for content, not correctness of language, though errors of language are corrected (as far as they can be, in the time available). Learners are not asked to rewrite in the light of the observations made. (pp. 5-6)

In a later publication, Prabhu (1987) presents a more elaborate explanation of the treatment of error. Rather than risk distorting this explanation by paraphrasing it, I have quoted his statements in full:

The teachers made the correction on the blackboard, or told the learner who was writing what to change, but did not attempt to follow up an error with an explanation or other examples of the same kind. . . . It seems useful to call such language-repair ‘incidental correction’ and to distinguish it from ‘systematic correction’, which involves a larger interruption of ongoing activity to focus learners’ attention on an error that has taken place by providing an explanation or a set of other such instances in the hope of preventing a recurrence of the type of error it represents. Systematic correction also involves making the errors noticed in one lesson the basis of some planned work in the classroom in a subsequent lesson or anticipating particular types of error and taking some preventive action. . . . Incidental correction, by contrast, is (1) confined to particular ‘tokens’, (2) only responsive (i.e. not leading to any preventive or pre-emptive action, (3) facilitative (i.e. regarded by learners as a part of getting on with the activity in hand, not as a separate objective and not as being more important than other aspects of the activity), and (4) transitory (i.e. drawing attention to itself only for a moment—not for as long as systematic correction does). (pp. 62-63)
Prabhu’s labeling provides the following contrasts: systematic versus incidental, long interruption versus transitory reference, explanation versus no explanation, exemplification versus no exemplification, preventive versus responsive, relating to types versus relating to tokens, and a primary objective versus merely facilitative. In addition, the kind of learners’ errors that would receive attention, according to Prabhu (1982, p. 5), would have more to do with content than with linguistic accuracy, which would contrast with a structural approach and give us the dichotomy of linguistic versus content.

FORMULATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Not all of Prabhu’s statements and the dichotomies derived from them are capable of being researched. The reference to correction as “roughly the same” as that of interested adults to children is not perhaps very helpful, since interested adults vary considerably in their reactions to errors made by children (see Wells, 1985), and Prabhu is only ready to commit himself to an approximation anyway. The reference to the concentration of error treatment in written work might have been relevant, but recordings of lessons available to the inquiry reported in this article did not permit observation of corrections made in students’ notebooks, and as most of the recordings are audio, it is not even possible to know what was written on the board. We are thus restricted to oral treatment of error.

The notion of transitoriness would be difficult to examine (though see van Lier, 1987, for suggestions). Just how brief and how fleeting exchanges should be allows considerable latitude for interpretation, so no related hypothesis is proposed. Similarly, the claim that CTP error treatment is intended simply to facilitate the task at hand is unfalsifiable. If it were shown that a teacher’s utterance contravened Prabhu’s strictures regarding the use of exemplification, it might be argued that on this occasion exemplification contributed to the task at hand; that is, in the teacher’s perception, it cleared up some doubt in the student’s mind and allowed the task to proceed. However, an unfalsifiable claim cannot be used as an argument, or we are reduced to the kind of debate witnessed in the anecdote related above. Therefore, it seemed justifiable to leave the “facilitative” claim out of the present inquiry.

However, some elements did seem reasonably tangible. It was clear that explanation, generalization, and exemplification are unacceptable as treatments of linguistic error and that error
treatment should focus on content and not on linguistic accuracy. Thus, from Prabhu’s descriptions cited above and on the basis of the dichotomies derived from those statements, the following simple hypotheses seem permissible:

1. In CTP lessons, more content errors are treated than linguistic.
2. Treatment of linguistic error involves no explanation.
3. Treatment of linguistic error involves no exemplification.
4. Treatment of linguistic error involves no generalization (i.e., no rules or types).

In addition, it appeared to be worth documenting in as much detail as possible just what kinds of treatment are given. This required the selection of a checklist of treatment categories. Chaudron’s (1977) framework was modified for this purpose.

Chaudron’s 31 categories were tested on five CTP transcripts to test their adequacy for our data. As a result of this probe, 11 categories were deleted, since they were not used. In addition, the descriptions of certain categories were slightly modified to better accommodate the data. The resulting categories and descriptions are presented in Appendix A.

It will be clear from the descriptions of the categories that they overlap and that most of the error treatments require multiple coding. Thus, one treatment might be associated with more than one category. Wherever multiple coding was applicable, every possible categorization was counted; this procedure explains why there are many more treatments than errors.

In addition to the four hypotheses and the description of treatments, it seemed helpful from the perspective of external validity to try to explain the incidence of particular kinds of error and error treatment and the relationship between them.

The most obvious candidate for investigation would have been the differences between the regular teachers in the schools and the nonregular teachers (highly qualified personnel drafted for the project), since other strands of the Bangalore evaluation (Beretta, 1987, in press) had shown that to be an important variable. However, our data did not include lessons given by regular teachers, so such an inquiry, though particularly relevant, was denied to us. At this point, it should be made clear that the 21 lessons analyzed in this investigation are simply those that were recorded and made available to the author. Of the 21 lessons, 18 were taught by the Director and a close associate so it is unlikely that there would be as much focus on form as visitors had noted in the lessons of regular teachers on the project.
However, four other potentially revealing lines of inquiry seemed pertinent: First, a reasonable variable for investigation was whether errors were treated differently in the early stages of the program than later on. The CTP was a developmental program; that is, it did not start life with a ready-made methodology but evolved one over time through a process of trial and error. In view of this fact, it seemed quite feasible that error was treated differently in the early and late phases of the project. To make this distinction, it was important to find a watershed, a period when the project methodology had become relatively stable, when it would have been unlikely to undergo any further major modification.

Barnes (1982), who visited the project in March and April of 1982, reported that the lessons were “impressively consistent” (p. 2) and, in a letter to Prabhu, sought his views on the question. Prabhu (personal communication, May 1986) responded as follows:

The pattern of classroom activity was least settled in the first year of the project (June 1979-April 1980), most settled in the last two years (June 1982 to April 1984) and was settling steadily in the second and third years (June 1980 to April 1981 and June 1981 to April 1982).

Thus, pre- or post-1982 appeared to be the appropriate division. Coincidentally, none of the lessons accessible to the present inquiry took place in 1982 but were instead all either before or after that year.

Another potentially important variable was the length of different lessons. If some of the recordings were shorter than others or incomplete, this might have a bearing on our interpretation.

Yet another possible explanation of the incidence of different kinds of error treatment was the matter of the teacher’s personal style. As noted above, 18 of the 21 lessons at our disposal were taught by two teachers. Although it was possible to compare error treatment by these teachers, with only 2 out of 16 teachers represented, inference to a wider population is extremely tenuous.

The fourth variable that demanded attention was that of task type. Was the incidence of error and type of error treatment dependent on the nature of the task? Again, this would influence any interpretation of treatment of errors in CTP classes.

Thus, explanation of error treatment comprised the following elements: (a) location in time (pre-1982 versus post-1982), (b) length of recording, (c) personal style, and (d) task type.

To sum up, the present inquiry involved three strands: the four hypotheses relating to actual error treatment and stated CTP attitudes to error treatment; a descriptive account of all error treatment in the 21 available lesson transcripts; and an attempt to explain why errors were treated as they were.
METHOD

Description of Data

With reference to task type (see Table 1), five of the lessons were lecturettes (A, B, F, G, and I); four involved letter writing (C, D, E, and M); four revolved around timetables (H, K, O, and R); three were based on drawing figures (P, Q, and S); two focused on town maps (L and T); one on distances (N); one on telling the time (U); and one on short narratives plus questions (J).

TABLE 1
Summary Information on Available Lesson Transcripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Medium*</th>
<th>Lengthb (in mins.)</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Task type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Lecturette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Lecturette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Letter writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Letter writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Letter writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Lecturette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Lecturette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Train timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Lecturette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Short narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Train timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Town maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Letter writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Distances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>School timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Figure drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>School timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Figure drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Town maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Telling time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A = Audio, V = Video, T = Transcript only.

b For Lessons K-P, the duration is not known because only transcripts were available.

Lecturettes were long narrative descriptions (e.g., of the development of the current postal system) periodically interrupted by oral comprehension questions. Letter writing consisted of the teacher’s eliciting from the students the necessary language for a coherent letter on a predetermined topic to be composed on the blackboard. Students were initially presented with scripts of the letter containing errors and asked to improve them. Timetables
required logical reasoning in order to complete empty cells. Figure drawing demanded that students listen to instructions and draw what they were told to draw. Town maps required students to follow directions. Lessons about distances focused on the ability to make simple calculations, adding up or subtracting distances between towns. Telling the time required students to make inferences to answer many of the questions.

Of the 21 lessons, 10 were taught by Teacher X, 8 by the Project Director, 2 by Teacher Y, and 1 (Lesson H) by an unidentified male teacher (see Table 1).

As for the length of the lessons, some were clearly incomplete. Also, recordings of the task phase of each lesson were inaudible as the teacher moved around the class checking the work of individuals. Therefore, it was only possible to investigate the pretask phase of each lesson. Even here, the range varied from 6 minutes to 39 minutes, with a mean of 22.67 minutes and a standard deviation of 8.67 minutes. These computations include only the recorded lessons; for the six lessons for which only transcripts were available, the duration is not known.

Lessons A to N all dated from February and March 1981 (14 lessons). Lessons O to U were from 1983 and 1984 (7 lessons).

Settings

The pupils being taught were aged between 8 and 13, and their first language was either Kannada or Tamil. Schools in the project were either state schools or those founded by religious orders and were selected by the project team because they were not English-medium schools but were still well enough managed to accommodate an innovation.

The project teachers ranged from British Council and teacher-training college staff to regular teachers in the school system. As noted, the sample of 21 lessons includes 8 lessons by the Project Director, 10 by a close associate, but none by regular teachers.

Procedures

The first step was to identify errors. The following three strategies were adopted: (a) A judgment was made concerning the linguistic accuracy of a student’s utterance; (b) a judgment was made as to the accuracy of a student’s response to a teacher’s question in terms of content (i.e., was the solution to a problem correct or incorrect?); and (c) if a teacher clearly disapproved of a student’s utterance, the utterance was considered to contain error
(in practice, this meant that attention was alerted to the likelihood of error, and attempts were made to identify it).

The second step was to categorize the error as either linguistic or content. A *linguistic* error was defined as a morphosyntactic or phonological error. In the event, only four phonological errors were noted; in these few cases, the teacher failed to understand the students’ utterances. This failure to understand was used as a criterion.

A *content* error was defined as any response by a student to a teacher’s question that was unsatisfactory in terms of its propositional content. Thus, if a student answered a question that was not asked or simply answered the right question incorrectly, a content error was coded. For example, if the teacher’s question required a calculation to which the answer was “6” and a student answered “7,” a content error was made, irrespective of the linguistic accuracy of the utterance. (Four lexical errors were noted and were included as content errors. ) Any error that was both linguistic and content was classified as both.

The third step was to calculate the percentages of linguistic and content errors that were treated (to permit a judgment with reference to Hypothesis 1, that more content errors are treated than linguistic).

Next, treatments were identified in terms of the 20 treatment categories adapted from Chaudron (1977). This required a great deal of working back and forth between codings given at different sittings and for different lessons to try to ensure a reasonable level of consistency. Since this analysis was carried out only by the author, some form of self-checking protocol seemed appropriate. Thus, after all of the lessons had been coded, three lessons were recoded months later. The agreement was only 71%. The difficulties of such analysis are well attested to in Chaudron (1977), Allwright (1975), and Fanselow (1977), but the lack of *intracoder* consistency needs to be stressed, as intercoder reliability would probably be somewhat lower.

Once the error correction strategies had been coded, the transcripts were scanned for treatment of linguistic error that involved explanation, exemplification, or generalization (in order to test Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4). The categories in the framework that were intended to track these strategies are explanation and clue. *Explanation* includes both giving information about the cause of the error and making a generalization about the type the error represents. *Clue* includes the use of further examples of the same error type.
Finally, the incidence of various strategies was calculated for descriptive purposes, and the analyses were arranged for examination of potentially explanatory variables.

RESULTS
Treatment of Linguistic and Content Errors

Once all errors had been identified and classified as either linguistic or content, it was possible to calculate how many linguistic and content errors were treated. The total number of error treatments for the 21 lessons was 926 ($M = 44$ per lesson); the total number of content error treatments was 599 ($M = 29$ per lesson); and the total number of linguistic error treatments was 327 ($M = 16$ per lesson).

Treatment includes the categories of ignore, acceptance, and acceptance* (see Appendix A for definitions). If, however, these categories (which are really nontreatments) are deducted from the number of treatments, a more accurate picture emerges of the comparative attention given to linguistic and content errors. We find that only 211 out of 327 linguistic errors were treated (65%), whereas 529 out of 599 content errors were treated (88%). The difference is significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 926) = 73.10, p < .001$, which indicates support for the first hypothesis: In CTP lessons, more content errors were treated than linguistic.

Explanation, Exemplification, and Generalization

There were very few examples (only 4) of explanation in the treatment of linguistic error when compared with the far greater frequency (50 instances) of this strategy to deal with content errors: $\chi^2(1, N = 926) = 18.27, p < .001$.

Three of the four events occurred in one exchange

S: Requested you
T: Requested? When?
S: [Request
T: [Request. He’s requesting now [1]. If he requested yesterday, then we can say ‘requested’ [2].
S: Yes sir.
T: Now he’s requesting the post office [3].

The three instances of explanation are numbered in square brackets. The first provides the student with information about the cause of the error—there is something wrong with the marking of time (the location of which error has already been highlighted on the second
line of the exchange). The second instance goes even further; a generalization is made. In the third instance, the cause of the error is stressed.

A fourth instance of explanation comes in the following exchange:

S: Cow dung, cow dung was
T: No, not cow dung was. It is there. It’s not was. It’s not in the past. It’s there now.

The teacher’s response quite clearly focuses on the cause of the error and generalizes to the extent of invoking the concept of the past.

In regard to the question of exemplification, it was found that clue was coded six times for linguistic error, but closer inspection revealed that only one of these was a matter of exemplification:

T: You please send me?
SS: Application form.
T: Application form. Do we want anything here? Application, application. Will you please send me a application form?
S: No, no, sir. Two.
T: Will you please send me a application form? Application form, a? . . . a apple? Do we say a apple?
SS: [Laughing.]
T: Yes? You want one more letter here.
S: An application.
T: Right, an application.

Exemplification of the type of error is given when the teacher says, “a? . . . a apple? Do we say a apple?”

The above three exchanges demonstrate that the nature of the focus on form contravenes Prabhu’s statements about how error should be handled to be consistent with CTP principles. Explanation, generalization, and exemplification are all used—although rarely—in ways that do not conform with Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. If the strict wording of those hypotheses is adhered to (“no explanation,” “no generalization,” “no exemplification”), then the hypotheses are rejected.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that the incidence of such “violations” is very low. Moreover, all except one of the exchanges occurred in one lesson. However, this lesson was taught by the Project Director, and if the chief proponent of the CTP could slip into a focus on form, then it is hardly surprising that other CTP teachers did. (This is confirmed by CTP teachers’ own accounts of their experience; see Beretta, in press.) From the point of view of
external validity, it is important to note that it was not only regular teachers who reverted to more familiar classroom practice.

A Descriptive Account of the Treatment of Error

The incidence of different treatment types for linguistic and content errors is displayed in Table 2. With regard to linguistic error treatment, by far the most common strategy was repetition with change (n = 116), which is to say, when a student made a linguistic error, almost 36% of the teachers’ correction strategies consisted of repeating the student’s utterance in an accurate form and moving on. This is entirely consistent with the CTP perceptions of appropriate error treatment.

TABLE 2
A Descriptive Summary of Error Correction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Linguistic</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition/no change</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition/no change + emphasis</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition/change</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition/change + emphasis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loop</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompt</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clue</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original question</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered question</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verification</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: % = the percentage of all error correction (linguistic and content) in that category; % total = the percentage a category represents of linguistic or content error correction. Due to rounding, columns do not total 100.

Similarly appropriate was simply to ignore the error. This treatment figured largely in CTP teachers’ strategies—61 instances, or
nearly 19%, of the total range of strategies. Whatever may be thought of the pedagogic value of acceptance and acceptance*, they are within the CTP frame of acceptable treatments, occurring 36 (11%) and 19 (6%) times, respectively. Altogether, our data show that 232 out of 327 (71%) linguistic error treatments entail either a simple, unstressed rephrasing or a willingness to let the error pass altogether. When this is contrasted with the incidence of the same strategies in relation to content errors (74 out of 599, or 12%), there is obviously a massive difference in general approach: \( \chi^2(1, N = 926) = 325.58, p < .001 \).

Apart from those mentioned, the rest of the strategies used to correct linguistic error are few in number and more or less neutral with regard to CTP policy.

By contrast, content errors evoked a wider range of treatments. The incidence of different types is more evenly spread. This may reflect more sustained attempts to bring about in the learner a preoccupation with solving a problem correctly. When one form of treatment fails, others are tried.

The overall picture provided by Table 2 is fairly clear. A few major strategies dominate in correction of linguistic error, and these reflect a general willingness to allow errors to pass with a simple rephrasing, without comment or even with apparent acceptance. This is in keeping with expressed CTP attitudes to error correction. Content error, on the other hand, receives far more sustained and varied treatment, possibly indicating an emphasis on solving the problem at hand. However, this overall description hides the contribution of potentially relevant factors, such as location in time, length of recording, teacher style, and task type.

Variables Contributing to Incidence of Treatment Types

Location in time (pre-1982 versus post-1982). As elaborated above, one possible explanation of the spread and frequency of types of corrective treatment is that the CTP methodology had not achieved the relative stability of later years until about 1982. Of the lessons available to this study, 14 took place in 1981 (A to N) and 7 in 1983 or 1984 (O to U). Table 3 details the frequency of linguistic and content errors and the percentages of correction (i.e., deducting the ignore, acceptance, and acceptance* strategies) for the two sets of lessons.

It can be seen from Table 3 that there is a slightly higher incidence of content error in the post-1982 lessons (an average of 19.43) than in the pre-1982 lessons (an average of 17.64). There is also a higher rate of correction for the later lessons. With regard to
linguistic error treatment, there is again a higher rate of correction. However, the most salient difference is that in the pre-1982 lessons, the mean number of linguistic errors per lesson is 17.36, but in the post-1982 lessons, this mean has fallen to 5.14: $t(19) = 2.297$, $p < .05$. The immediate question that emerges is, Why are so many fewer errors being made in the later lessons? It was possible that length of pretask, teacher style, or task type could account for this very substantial drop.

Analysis revealed that length of pretask could not explain the differences between early and late lessons: Mean duration for pre- and post-1982 lessons was practically equivalent. Nor could teacher style shed any light: The number of errors and the incidence of correction were very similar for the two teachers whose lessons comprise the majority of the 21 transcripts. Task type, however, did have a tale to tell.

**Task type.** Although the mean number of linguistic errors for the later lessons is 5.14, closer inspection of the data reveals that 25 of the 36 errors occurred in one lesson. This lesson was different in kind from the others; instead of just receiving instructions, students gave them too. Teacher X, who taught the lesson, explains in her account (see Beretta, 1987) that the intention was to increase learners’ productive ability in English; she points out that this was atypical of CTP teaching. If this atypical lesson is discounted in the pre- and post-1982 analysis, the later lessons average only 1.83 errors, which, compared with the 17.36 of the earlier lessons, is a very pronounced difference, $t(18) = 2.982$, $p < .01$. Thus, on a first examination of task type, it would appear that there are barely any linguistic errors in the later lessons.

Barely any errors require barely any treatment. So the question now becomes, What is the association between task type and the incidence of linguistic error? And once this is answered, it would be germane to ask whether task types that have little association with
linguistic error occur more often or solely in the later period. In other words, did the CTP phase out tasks that appeared to draw student responses that might contain morphosyntactic error?

Table 4 indicates the mean incidence of linguistic error associated with each task type (not including, because of its atypicality, Teacher X's figure-drawing lesson that contained student-student instructions). Table 5 arranges the task types according to pre-1982, post-1982, or both periods and includes in parentheses the frequency of their occurrence in each period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task type</th>
<th>Mean incidence of linguistic error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short narrative</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter writing</td>
<td>27.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturette</td>
<td>15.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distances</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town maps</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling time</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure drawing</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4
Mean Incidence of Linguistic Error
Associated With Each Task Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task and Location in Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturette (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter writing (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distances (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short narrative (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre- and Post-1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town maps (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure drawing (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling time (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers in parentheses refer to the frequency of occurrence of a task type in each period.

Tables 4 and 5, when considered in conjunction, demonstrate that the tasks that are most associated with linguistic error occur only in the pre-1982 period and that those that occur in both periods and in the post-1982 period only are characterized by a low frequency of such error. It appears, then, that task type has a bearing on the incidence of linguistic error and that the CTP phased out those tasks that tended to induce grammatically inaccurate responses from students.
A closer examination of the data reveals that 198 of the 200 linguistic and content errors in the letter-writing tasks are verbal, whereas in the figure-drawing tasks, only 12 out of 46 are verbal (and 10 of them are simply wrong answers to yes/no questions or wrong letters or numbers called out). The difference is significant, $x^2(1, N = 246) = 153.41, \ p < .001$.

In the lecturettes, the teacher talks at length on a theme and then asks a series of comprehension questions that prompt verbal responses, usually of phrase length but sometimes longer. In letter writing, students are presented with scripts containing error that they are required to improve, so that language itself becomes the focus of the task and greater demands are placed on students’ verbal productive capacities. The figure-drawing lessons, by contrast, call for mainly physical responses (i.e., writing or drawing on the blackboard); thus, whether the response is right or wrong, there is very little possibility of the student making phonological or morphosyntactic errors.

Because the sample of 21 lessons could well be unrepresentative, further clues were sought in RIE Newsletters and Bulletins, lesson reports produced by project members, and Prabhu’s writings. There was no mention at all of the lecturettes and no post-1982 mention of letter writing. All of the tasks demanding little verbal production, on the other hand, received frequent mention. Figure drawing, telling the time, and timetables were referred to as “beginners’ tasks” (Prabhu, 1987, pp. 37-39), presumably because they focus on receptive skills. However, it is possible that as the CTP matured, a tendency grew to protect learners from the risk of linguistic error attendant upon production beyond the beginner level and that tasks such as lecturettes and letter writing were dispensed with. Certainly, they are not included in the long list of task types presented in Prabhu (1987, pp. 138-143).

The story that seems to be emerging is that the CTP started out with a range of tasks that permitted or encouraged not only receptive but also productive skills. However, as the project methodology stabilized, it moved toward delayed production and physical rather than verbal responses, probably not just at the beginner level, as indicated by Teacher X’s perception that “generally our tasks were cognitively very challenging, but

---

1 Prabhu (1980, p. 21) has argued from the early days of the project that CTP practice is based on a belief that reception comes before production and that a period of incubation is to be reckoned with; that is, production will occur when the learner is ready for it. All of the lessons in this study postdate these statements, and yet the differences between the 1981 set and the 1983/1984 set are clear. But in any case, there is presumably a difference between “forcing” production (which Prabhu disapproves of) and “permitting” production (which is markedly truer of the 1981 lessons than the later ones).
linguistically did not make adequate demands on the learners’ productive abilities” (see Beretta, 1987, Vol. 2, p. 246). But it is stressed that this cannot be considered the full story; a sample of 21 lessons, although endorsed by all available evidence, is still only capable of supporting tentative conclusions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to gain a clearer perspective on the extent to which Bangalore teachers focused on form or on meaning. The relative specificity of Prabhu’s (1982, 1987) discussion of the CTP treatment of student error provided a means of examining this issue.

It was found that there was a significantly greater incidence of treatment of content than linguistic error, consonant with the CTP focus on meaning rather than form. The descriptive analysis revealed that the majority of treatments for linguistic error involved minimal intervention or none at all. Content errors, by contrast, were treated in a wide variety of ways, indicating that more sustained attempts were made to secure the correct answers to problems. The descriptive analysis thus broadly supported the stated CTP approaches to error correction. (It should be recalled, however, that only Prabhu and his closest associates were represented in the 21 transcripts, and visitors to the project had noted that regular teachers tended to revert to a focus on form; see Brumfit, 1984; Davies, 1983.)

The stipulation that explanation, generalization, and exemplification be avoided was not strictly observed; the fact that not only regular teachers but also nonregular teachers could slip into a focus on form was noted.

The most salient finding to emerge from an examination of variables contributing to treatment type was that there was very little error treatment in post-1982 lessons. This was due to the simple fact that there was very little error. The best explanation seemed to be that task types calling for production were phased out and that only those that stressed reception were retained. When this interpretation is considered along with Teacher X’s testimony that the CTP did not attend sufficiently to production, confidence in the interpretation is increased.

Bearing in mind the limitations of the data and analysis in this study, one can suggest the following tentative findings. On the whole, the treatment of error conforms with the fairly precise attitudes stated by Prabhu. However, in the later years of the
project, selection of task type virtually precluded even the possibility of learners making linguistic error (in turn, precluding the possibility that the teacher’s correction might focus on form).

In short, this article shows that although attention to form and meaning in a limited sample of classroom lessons conformed by and large with project principles, there appears to have been an unacknowledged move to eliminate the possibility of a focus on form. Thus, an important message of this study is that teachers who are involved in content-based curricula and who are interested in changing correction habits might wish to consider whether they are prepared to engage only in tasks that inhibit learner production in order to ensure that form does not become a focus.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Treatment Categories Based on Chaudron’s (1977) Framework

Ignore: Teacher ignores learner’s error and goes on to another topic.

Acceptance: Teacher says a simple approving or accepting word (often as a sign of reception of the utterance) but may proceed to correct an error.

Attention: Teacher uses an attention getter, like think.

Negation: Teacher shows rejection of part or all of learner utterance.

Provide: Teacher provides the correct answer when learner has been unable to or when no response is offered.

Repetition with no change: Teacher repeats learner utterance, with neither change of error nor omission of error.

Repetition with no change and emphasis: Teacher repeats learner utterance with no change of error, but the emphasis locates or indicates fact of error.

Repetition with change: Usually, teacher simply adds correction and continues to other topics.

Repetition with change and emphasis: Teacher adds emphasis to stress location of error and its correct formulation.

Explanation: Teacher provides information as to cause of error, possibly including a generalization of the type of error.

Repeat: Teacher requests learner to repeat utterance with the intention of having the learner self-correct.

Loop: Teacher honestly needs a replay of learner utterance due to lack of clarity or certainty about its form.

Prompt: Teacher uses a lead-in cue to get learner to repeat utterance, possibly at point of error and possibly with a slight rising intonation.

Clue: Teacher reaction provides learner with isolation of type of error or the nature of its immediate correction, without actually providing the correction (e.g., further examples of the same error type may be given).

Original question: Teacher repeats the original question that led to the incorrect response.

Altered question: Teacher alters original question syntactically but not semantically.

Questions: Teacher uses numerous ways of asking for a new response, but not just original or altered questions; that is, when error occurs, a new line of questioning is taken up.

Transfer: Teacher asks another student or group of students to provide correction.

Acceptance*: Teacher shows approval of learner utterance and then repeats the error, apparently confirming that it is correct.

Verification: Teacher attempts to make sure that the class ha. understood the correction.

ERROR TREATMENT IN THE BANGALORE PROJECT  303
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Writing Required in Graduate Courses in Business Administration

GRACE CANSECO and PATRICIA BYRD
Georgia State University

The increasing proportion of graduate students to undergraduate students in ESL academic preparation programs in the United States suggests that more information is needed about language use in graduate courses. This article reports on the characteristics of writing assignments found in syllabuses for graduate courses in business. First, the types of writing assignments and the vocabulary used to label those assignments are analyzed and discussed. Second, the use of prompts to guide the writing of the assignments is examined. Finally, implications are suggested for ESL writing courses for nonnative speakers who are planning to enter (or already attending) U.S. graduate degree programs in business.

Two trends are now coming together with profound implications for the curricula of university-based ESL programs in the United States. First, more institutions are deciding to move ESL into their academic programs and are offering credit for ESL (Byrd & Fox, 1988). The result is that ESL programs and their courses need to be reconsidered to be sure that they articulate effectively with the next level of courses beyond ESL.

Another trend has fewer undergraduates coming to the United States to study. In ESL programs as well as in degree programs in U.S. universities, the proportion of foreign graduate students to foreign undergraduate students is increasing (Kaplan, 1988; NAFSA Newsletter, 1989; Swales & Cukor-Avila, 1989; Zikopoulos, 1986, p. 1). Foreign students have a greater impact on U.S. graduate programs than they do on undergraduate programs: In 1985-1986, foreign students made up 8.7% of all graduate students in the United States (Zikopoulos, 1986, p. 1). In that same time period, foreign students made up 2.7% of the total U.S. student population. Compared with 1984-1985, the 1985-1986 foreign student enrollment at the bachelor’s level dropped 5.7%, whereas at the graduate level it increased 8.0% (Zikopoulos, 1986, p. 1). This trend continued
in 1987-1988 with undergraduate enrollment decreasing 3% and graduate enrollment growing by 7% (NAFSA Newsletter, 1989, p. 3).

The increasing numbers of graduate students and their relative importance to our academic institutions mean that we need to look carefully at how language is used in graduate education to be certain that we are providing appropriate preparation in ESL courses. The authors’ experience has been that writing required of graduate students is significantly different from that required of undergraduates, especially in freshman and sophomore courses, but little research has been done in the area.

Most studies, such as Zemelman (1977), Johns (1981), Eblen (1983), Herrington (1985), and Faigley and Hansen (1985), have presented information on undergraduate writing. Horowitz (1986) sought information on both graduate and undergraduate courses in different disciplines at one institution; however, he received information about only one graduate course. West and Byrd (1982), whose findings are referred to later in this article, surveyed graduate engineering faculty about writing assignments.

THE STUDY

To find out more about the writing tasks assigned to graduate students in U.S. universities, we sought syllabuses from the graduate courses taught in the College of Business Administration at Georgia State University (GSU) in the winter quarter of 1988.

In U.S. universities, course syllabuses are the fundamental source of information for students enrolled in those courses. Syllabuses are part of the collection of official documents (such as the institution’s catalog, admissions documents, and other official documents relating to admission, progress through the system, and graduation) that make up the contract between students and the institution (J. Marshall, personal communication, September 21, 1988). Typically, a syllabus is expected to contain the following information:

1. Name/number of course
2. Time/place of class meetings
3. Instructor’s name/office number
4. Information about office hours of instructor
5. Prerequisites for the course
6. Course objectives and an outline of course content
7. Course description and rationale for course (sometimes the wording from the institution’s catalog is given)
8. Explanation of grading system (or evaluation process)—test dates are often given
9. Required textbooks
10. Class schedule (topics for discussion, assignments, due dates, and so forth)
11. Rules of the institution/instructor (about attendance, plagiarism, cheating, and so forth)

Many instructors include a detailed class-by-class chart of reading assignments and lecture topics. Reading lists are also often included as part of the syllabus. Course syllabuses can be as short as 1 page but more often are 4 or 5 pages long (the longest that we received as part of this project was 15 pages).

Because of indications that writing requirements change from one academic discipline to another (Shih, 1986), it seemed advisable to start with detailed studies of one academic area rather than looking immediately at writing across the institution. We decided to focus on the writing required in business, since approximately 18.9% of all foreign graduate students in the United States in the 1986-1987 academic year were studying in management and business (Zikopoulos, 1986, p. 1). This number continues to increase as business gradually nears engineering as the most popular major for foreign students in U.S. universities (NAFSA Newsletter, 1989, p. 3).

In the winter quarter of 1988, we requested copies of course syllabuses for the 133 sections of the 84 different graduate courses being taught in the six departments in GSU’s College of Business Administration with the largest enrollments of foreign graduate students—accounting (AC), computer information systems (CIS), decision sciences (DSC), finance (FI), management (MGT), and marketing (MK). These syllabuses also included those from courses labeled Business Administration (BA); these are general business courses taught by faculty from the various departments in the college. Ultimately, we received a total of 55 course syllabuses from 48 different graduate courses. (Twelve of the syllabuses given to us were dated for previous terms, but we were led to understand that the information in such syllabuses was current. No syllabus was more than 1 year old at the time it was given to us.)

Types of Writing Assignments and Vocabulary Used to Describe Writing Tasks

These syllabuses were analyzed to find what writing assignments were listed and what requirements were given for the final written
products. Writing assignment was defined as any assignment that required students to produce a piece of written English to be given to the instructor. Thus, written tests were included, but oral reports were not. Many students could be expected to prepare written versions of these oral presentations, but the writing was not collected by the instructor as part of the grading process for the course.

Seven categories of writing assignments were found in the syllabuses: examinations, problems and assignments, projects, papers, case studies, reports, and a group of miscellaneous writing assignments. A single syllabus could require two or more writing tasks—for example, an examination along with a research paper.

By far the most frequently required type of writing was the examination: 52 of the courses required final examinations (see Table 1). Problems and assignments—written versions of problems in the textbook or other problems provided by the instructor—were the second most frequently required type of writing.

Projects were clearly more popular than papers or reports—20 syllabuses assigned projects, 10 assigned papers, and 10 assigned reports. Thirteen of the projects involved small-group or teamwork approaches to the assigned research and writing tasks, such as that described in the syllabus for MK 935, Research Seminar in Marketing:

You will be expected to participate in an on-going research project and to report analysis of data back to the seminar. Quite likely, the source of these data will be surveys completed by faculty members in our department. You will probably be working in groups of two or three.

### TABLE 1
Writing Assignments Given in Each Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of writing assignment</th>
<th>AC (n = 7)</th>
<th>BA (n = 18)</th>
<th>CIS (n = 11)</th>
<th>DSC (n = 6)</th>
<th>FI (n = 5)</th>
<th>MGT (n = 6)</th>
<th>MK (n = 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problems and assignments</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AC = accounting; BA = business administration; CIS = computer information systems; DSC = decision sciences; FI = finance; MGT = management; MK = marketing; n = number of syllabuses from each department.
The goal here should be that of a complete research article which may be submitted to a journal or convention. You and your group members will also serve as “reviewers of papers prepared by others.”

The 12 case studies in this analysis include only those that had to be presented in written form; case studies were also discussed in many classes without any writing being required. The category of miscellaneous encompasses a wide variety of writing tasks that were each listed on five or fewer syllabuses: outlines, surveys, business plans, audits, critiques, evaluations, Lotus forecast models, diaries, project proposals, and political polls.

That five instructors required outlines for papers or projects suggests that outlining is seen as a basic skill expected of graduate students. Further investigation of the use by graduate instructors of outlines—and their attitudes and expectations about that prewriting task—would be helpful in making decisions about teaching a skill that has fallen in some disfavor among ESL composition instructors.

Table 1 indicates that although an individual department might show a slight preference for a particular type of written work, students can expect many types of writing to be required in any department. Even the quantitatively oriented Department of Computer Information Systems included all possible categories.

It will not be surprising to members of the U.S. academic community that we found wide variety in the vocabulary used to describe the writing tasks. We think, however, that awareness of this diversity in vocabulary could be useful for ESL teachers in the preparation of instructional materials for nonnative-speaking graduate students. For example, the terminology for examinations included final exam, exam, review exam, makeup exam, written examination, midterm exam, midterm examination, examination, test, objective test, class test, final test, final, midterm, take home exam, and quiz. (The only uses of the term make-up exam were in policy statements to make it clear that no such tests would be given. Quiz was primarily used in business mathematics courses such as BA 605, Probability and Statistical Inference for Managers, and BA 601, Linear Algebra and Calculus for Managers.)

The use of the word project needs further clarification, since the products described in the syllabuses could in other contexts have been termed papers. In the syllabus for CIS 859, Information Systems and Competitive Strategy, the instructor used paper in the heading Requirements of the Paper but then used project immediately under that heading in the discussion of the product to be provided by the student writer. (In addition to plain projects, other terms used included class project, term project, minor project,
The Use of Prompts

In addition to analyzing the types of writing assignments and terms used to describe them, we also looked for what Horowitz (1986) termed *prompts*, detailed explanations by the instructor of the content and organization expected in the written product. Since his sample was so small, Horowitz could only suggest that prompts seemed to be a characteristic of academic writing assignments. An example of our use of the term *prompt* is the statement from AC 803, Tax Research, shown in Figure 1. In this statement, the instructor gives explicit details about the writing assignment, focusing primarily on the form in which the writing must be presented, including documentation and information about the audience to be assumed for the written product.

**FIGURE 1**
An Example of a Prompt Specifying Format

A. All written assignments must be well organized, presented in an easy-to-read format, and neat. If your handwriting is not legible, type the written assignments. Moreover, pay particularly close attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and understandability. Communication is extremely important in this course.
B. Documentation is likewise very important. Unsupported statements or opinions are worthless to the reader who desires to verify your findings. Complete and specific documentation is mandatory. For example, do not write 864 when you actually want to direct the reader to 864(c)(4)(C). Also, your references should be to primary sources, except in rare, unusual situations.
C. Quoting should be kept to an absolute minimum!
D. Assume for each assignment that you have been given research to do on behalf of a client. The information you prepare will be used by your supervisor as he or she meets with the client or with a Revenue Agent.

Note: This statement, from AC 803, Tax Research, is only the beginning of a much longer prompt.

Figure 2 provides an example of a prompt that details the content of the writing assignment. In addition to two examinations, students are required to write an industry analysis paper. One would anticipate that most of the papers would have three sections, following the pattern established in the prompt: Section 1 would assess the level of technology usage between firms; Section 2 would compare technology usage in that industry to other industries; Section 3 would turn to a specific firm and describe (a) the firm itself, (b) its current situation, and (c) strategies selected from the
list in the syllabus. In all three sections, the writer would be expected to show familiarity with the current literature on the topic.

FIGURE 2
An Example of a Prompt Specifying Content

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Industry Analysis Paper: Each course participant is required to conduct an analysis of a selected industry to assess:

1. The level of technology usage between firms.
2. The level of technology utilization for the industry as a whole in comparison to selected other industries.
3. The opportunity for a specific firm to deploy additional information technology to improve its competitive posture in the industry. Includes description of the firm, its current competitive posture, and specific strategies for dealing with customers, competitors or suppliers, or for developing new products.

The paper should demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of current capabilities of information technology and insight into trends and anticipated developments. Evaluation criteria also include writing style, structure of the paper, and use of meaningful illustrations. Grammar and spelling suitable for business are expected.

Examinations: 2 exams will be given

Grading: Examinations: 60%; Industry analysis paper 40%

Note: This prompt is a section from the syllabus for CIS 859, Information Systems and Competitive Strategy. The section is reproduced here in the same format used by the instructor in the syllabus.

In contrast to the prompts in Figures 1 and 2, many other syllabuses contained elaborate instructions for writing assignments. The instructor for BA 867, Computer Based Information Systems, included a section labeled Project Requirements, which went far beyond specifying the topics for the project by suggesting a lengthy sequence of prewriting and revision. Under Requirements of the Paper, the instructor provided an outline for the final product. This instructor’s syllabus provides support for the idea that the process approach to writing can occur within the context of the preparation of a rigorously defined academic product—if process is taken to mean that the writer goes through a process of thinking, selection of evidence, writing, and revision.

Prompts were found in two places in the syllabuses: in instructions for carrying out writing assignments and in explanations for how the writing assignments would be graded. The instructions were usually labeled in a straightforward way, for example, Written Assignment Instructions. The prompts in the syllabuses we examined included two types of information: details about format—length, typing, number of pages, etc.—and discussion of content and organization.
In a few cases, only a student sophisticated in the ways of syllabuses would recognize that the details given in the grading section of a syllabus provided important information about the assigned writing task. For example, the syllabus for BA 608, Marketing Fundamentals, provided information about the content of the written project under the headings of (a) Grading and Weights and (b) Notes. The information given under a section called Adherence to Directions implies that the writers would have the freedom to choose a topic so long as it fit within the context of answering an instructor-supplied list of questions. That same section reveals that as in many other business courses, the students in BA 608, Marketing Fundamentals, were to work in teams to prepare a written product (which counted for 30% of the grade for the course).

In 24 of the 55 syllabuses that we analyzed, prompts were given that controlled many of the students’ choices in the preparation of the writing assignments. (It was our understanding that instructors in other courses in the College of Business Administration provided prompts in handouts other than their course syllabuses; thus, the percentage of classes in which students received detailed information about writing assignments is even higher than that in our sample.) Our analysis of course syllabuses, therefore, supports Horowitz’s (1986) insight that much of the writing required of students in U.S. universities (at least in the context of graduate courses in business) is highly structured and instructor controlled. His interpretation that the nature of academic writing precludes the process approach to teaching composition does not seem to follow directly from the characteristics of prompts but rather from his understanding of what the process approach involves.

What we have seen in these prompts is that a composition course that emphasizes selection, prewriting, writing, revision, and editing within the confines of academic formats (including learning to deal effectively with topics presented by instructors rather than selected by students) would be useful for students going into graduate courses in business. On the other hand, an extreme version of the process approach, in which writers must be free to select their own topic and invent their own organization of the final product, might not be as realistic a preparation for the U.S. academic world.

**IMPLICATIONS**

In sum, analysis of the syllabuses has led us to a number of observations about writing in graduate courses taught in the College of Business Administration at GSU:
1. Production of written products is a major part of the requirements for graduate students in business courses.

2. Graduate students in business are expected to write in a number of different formats.

3. Writing is often tightly controlled by instructors through the use of detailed instructions, or prompts, which can specify organization as well as the topic areas for the written products.

4. Students need to be able to interpret syllabuses to know what the exact requirements will be for their written work and to know when to ask for additional prompts.

5. Foreign students might need to learn the various terms that are used to name different types of written products—quiz in contrast to exam, for example.

6. Although one instructor required the writing of diaries, writing assignments are primarily based on some type of research activity rather than on personal experience.

7. Writing is frequently a mode of testing. Of the 55 courses described in the syllabuses, 52 required examinations; frequently courses had many different written tests, including quizzes, midterm examinations, and final examinations. West and Byrd (1982) found that the most frequently assigned writing in graduate courses in engineering was the examination. Since examinations are such a major part of the work required for graduate courses in both business and engineering, investigation is needed into the types of writing required for success in taking examinations in graduate courses in various disciplines in U.S. universities. Such investigation should include questioning graduate faculty about difficulties that nonnative speakers seem to be having with examinations—and about their relative success on examinations in contrast to other writing tasks.

8. Writing is considered an important communication skill by many graduate instructors in business. For example, the reading list on the syllabus for TX 803, Federal Tax Research, included this entry in a section on Writing Skills: "'How to Write More Effectively,' Practical Accountant (December 1984, 99-105)." The syllabus for BA 822, Applied Decision Science, gave as a goal for the course the development of "reporting and presentation skills, demonstrating an ability clearly and effectively to communicate the results of your undoubtedly brilliant work. These include preparation of effective text, tables and graphics." This same syllabus included the following comment:
This report is a formal document and will be evaluated as such. You are to take and to assert a position persuasively. Organization, spelling, grammar, conciseness, and presentation quality all count in the instructor’s evaluation of your work. The report is limited to a maximum of ten pages. If you can cover the ground in fewer pages, your prowess will be held in high regard.

9. Group work is an important feature of many courses in business. Reid (1987) documents the preference of most students from most cultures (including the U.S.) for individual work. The syllabuses analyzed for this project indicate that foreign students will need to learn to work productively in small groups, not just for their ESL classes; but also to succeed in graduate courses in business administration. Not only must most students learn to overcome personal preferences for individual study; they may also need to become accustomed to the American approach to group work, with its emphasis on task completion rather than development of personal relationships (Stewart, 1972).

CONCLUSION

Spack (1988) challenges the idea that ESL courses should be developed to prepare students for particular writing tasks based on the requirements of their fields of study or of courses that they might be required to take during their academic study. Rather, she argues that general writing tasks can be taught in ESL (and English) classes to prepare students and that they can adapt these general skills to the more particular demands of their course work. This argument is perhaps reasonable for ESL courses that are preparing students to enter freshman English sequences. That is, ESL courses do not need to do the work of the English composition course. Nonnative-speaking graduate students, on the other hand, cannot expect to have much, if any, additional training in writing—some might take a technical writing course, but few are required to do so.

Thus, it appears that ESL courses might have different responsibilities toward their graduate students than toward their undergraduate students. Graduate students, for example, would benefit from instruction that focuses on interpreting and responding to topics provided by instructors. In addition, successful performance in many graduate courses will be based on accurate analysis of syllabuses (and other handouts from instructors) so that students understand both the general nature of the course and the specific requirements for various writing tasks. Finally, the syllabuses from graduate business courses demonstrate some of the limitations of the personal essay as a model for academic writing:
Foreign graduate students must learn to write impersonal expository prose that is based on selection and presentation of appropriate (and often numerical) evidence.

The exact nature of these different responsibilities to different types of students needs further research and discussion. One area particularly deserving of attention is the characteristics of prompts (and any other control by the instructor of the written products of students) in undergraduate courses as well as in other graduate disciplines. From the findings of such research, ESL academic preparation courses and programs can make principled decisions about curricular issues.

THE AUTHORS

Grace Canseco, who is currently teaching ESL in the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL at Georgia State University, taught EFL in Mexico for 8 years. She is developing materials for use in advanced writing courses for nonnative English-speaking graduate students at U.S. universities.

Patricia Byrd, Chair of the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL at Georgia State University, has recently published *Improving the Grammar of Written English: The Handbook* and *Improving the Grammar of Written English: The Editing Process* (with Beverly Benson; Wadsworth, 1989) and *The Foreign Teaching Assistant’s Manual* (with Janet C. Constantinides & Martha C. Pennington; Collier Macmillan, 1989). Canseco and Byrds research focuses on the nature of academic discourse in U.S. universities and on the characteristics and needs of the advanced ESL learner.

REFERENCES


The *TESOL Quarterly* welcomes evaluative reviews of publications relevant to TESOL professionals. In addition to textbooks and reference materials, these include computer and video software, testing instruments, and other forms of nonprint materials.

**Edited by POLLY ULICHNY**

*University of Massachusetts at Boston*

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**Linguistic and Cultural Influences on Learning Mathematics**


The purpose of this volume is to examine the problem of low mathematics achievement among language minority learners. Drawing together contributions from researchers from various disciplines, the volume demonstrates clearly that the issue is a complex one, one in which language and culture and the learning of mathematics are closely interrelated. Although the relationship between language skills and mathematics is not fully understood, this volume advances our understanding while at the same time raising crucial issues. Teachers at any educational level—elementary, secondary, college/university—working with students whose primary language is not English will find that the text provides valuable insight into the language- and culture-related components of mathematics teaching and learning.

Cocking and Mestre have brought together discussions of changes in perspective on cognitive-developmental aspects of mathematics learning, discussions that pay special attention to the influences of learning and teaching contexts and the role of language in both. This variety in emphasis and perspective underscores the complexity of learning mathematics in a second language and the problems faced in providing access to educational opportunities for language minority students.

The content of this collection has implications for the learning of other disciplines in the school curriculum, particularly science and social studies. As a result, this text makes a significant contribution to the growing literature on ESL and content-area instruction. It complements other, more general works such as Crandall (1987),
Cantoni-Harvey (1987), and Mohan (1986) by offering an in-depth, research-based focus on the influences of language and culture in the learning of one content area.

The volume is organized into three sections of five chapters each. The first section focuses on links among mathematics, language, and learning. In their chapter, “Conceptual Issues Related to Mathematics Achievement of Language Minority Children,” Cocking and Chipman point out that increasing ethnic diversity in the student population has led to a new conceptualization of the relationship between language and mathematics achievement. Previous assumptions based on linguistic, cognitive, pedagogical, psychosocial, and sociocultural factors need reexamination if we are to arrive at a fuller understanding of how to meet the challenges of educational quality and educational equity for students whose home language is not English.

Saxe’s chapter, “Linking Language With Mathematics Achievement,” looks in particular at bilingual children’s developing mathematical conception. In a chapter reflecting on the learning of deaf students, Stone assumes that language plays a role in the development of mathematical reasoning but argues that the language of mathematics instruction varies significantly from the structure of everyday discourse. The section concludes with a chapter by Scholnick on developmental issues in arithmetic acquisition, particularly as they relate to linking mathematical thought with linguistic and cultural contexts.

The second set of chapters emphasizes cultural and linguistic influences on mathematics learning. The contribution by Charbonneau and John-Steiner, “Patterns of Experience and the Language of Mathematics,” stresses the need for minority students to have hands-on experiential learning structured to reflect cultural practices in the home and neighborhood. De Avila discusses a number of issues related to the intellectual and social functioning of bilingual children in school; he pays special attention to educational programs accommodating the linguistic and educational heterogeneity of ethnolinguistic minority students.

Examining the mathematics achievement of Asian-American students, Tsang observes that despite perceived success for that ethnic group, studies show a wide range of achievement, a result attributed to, among other things, variations in language proficiency and cultural bias in test taking. MacCorquodale’s discussion of achievement by Mexican American women in mathematics also cites the critical role of English language proficiency. In Leap’s study of Ute students in Arizona, pragmatic factors affecting classroom performance are seen as playing a critical role in mathematics performance.
In the third section, particular attention is paid to the effects of linguistic influences, reading comprehension, and problem-solving strategies on mathematics reasoning. Travers’s study, using data from eighth-graders, considers, in addition to linguistic and cultural factors impeding achievement in mathematics, the reduced opportunities for language minority students to learn mathematics. A seminal chapter in this section is Mestre’s analysis of the influence of language on mathematical problem solving, a new field of study called problem processing. The study of the interaction of language and problem solving has particular significance for language minority students for whom inadequate language proficiency inhibits achievement. Studying the learning of algebra by ninth-grade Hispanic students, Mestre and his colleagues argue that a “technical threshold”—a certain level of proficiency in technical language and in symbolic language—must be reached for successful performance in problem solving. This adaptation of Cummins’s (1981) notion of a linguistic threshold hypothesis may have relevance for the registers of other academic areas as well.

For ESL educators, one of the most useful contributions to the volume is the chapter “Linguistic Features of Mathematical Problem-Solving,” by Spanos and his colleagues at the Center for Applied Linguistics. The clear, comprehensive analysis of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features of the mathematics register, developed by analyzing data collected from college students, provides a basis for designing an approach to teaching the language of mathematics. Such an approach offers students the opportunity to acquire receptive and productive ability in the language of mathematics, including understanding the instructor’s presentation, class discussions of problems, and text explanations and being able to work through a wide variety of problems using appropriate features of the mathematics register.

Section 3 concludes with two chapters dealing with bilingual students. Duran’s study of bilingual Puerto Rican college students’ logical reasoning aptitudes addresses issues confronting older learners, particularly the strong relationship between reading comprehension and performance on deductive reasoning tasks in Spanish and English. In the closing chapter, Myers and Milne report a study to determine the effect of home and primary language on the mathematics achievement of language minority students. They found significant differences in mathematics achievement between various language-status groups and English monolingual students, although the role of intervening mechanisms, including proficiency in English and exposure to mathematics courses, was not always clear.
The role of school subject matter as a context for second language learning is an area of considerable interest to researchers, curriculum developers, and teachers. Although many questions remain concerning the integration of content-area and language instruction, the reality is that second language learners must be able to handle school content if they are to succeed at school. The more that those responsible for language instruction understand the interrelatedness of language and specific disciplines, the greater is the likelihood of school success for language minority children. Cocking and Mestre have raised critical issues and provided useful insights into a wide range of factors relevant to the language-mathematics connection.

REFERENCES


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BOOK NOTICES

The *TESOL Quarterly* welcomes short evaluative reviews of print and nonprint publications relevant to TESOL professionals. Book notices may not exceed 500 words and must contain some discussion of the significance of the work in the context of current theory and practice in TESOL.

**Nontraditional Materials for Adult ESL**

Book notices in this issue of the *TESOL Quarterly* are organized around the theme of nontraditional materials for adult ESL instruction (as opposed to more mainstream competency-based and survival texts). The listing, compiled by the staff, colleagues, and students of the English Family Literacy Project at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, is an attempt to provide teachers with a sense of currently available resources that speak in the authentic voice of immigrants and refugees, reflect their experiences, and invite active participation in learning. Selections were included either because they represent innovative, participatory trends in adult ESL or because they come from outside the field of ESL and may not be traditionally considered “textbooks,” although they provide rich resources for use in the classroom. All have been tried and used successfully with adult ESL students.

**ELSA AUERBACH, Guest Editor**

*University of Massachusetts at Boston/English Family Literacy Project*


Doing critical thinking about one’s life while learning the English language? It never happened to me while I was learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan. “English” was painful memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules. It had nothing to do with my life.

*ESL for Action* encouraged me to do a great deal of thinking as I participated in the lessons as an ESL learner. It was such a delightful feeling to be treated as an individual who has knowledge. Moreover, as my personal life experiences were welcomed by the lessons, I had an emotional involvement and did not get bored as I usually would when using grammar-based texts.

There are nine units in this book, each centering on one issue of the daily lives of working people. Within each unit, the lessons (usually three) open with a code (the presentation of a problem in dialogue form), followed by
five levels of questions for discussion, thinking activities, and action activities. This sequence of activities is a realization of the problem-posing methodology: identifying the issues related to work, analyzing the causes of the problems, and developing strategies for change. Completion of the whole process can be said to be a journey of critical thinking. In fact, by answering the questions and exploring the activities provided in a lesson, I seemed to better understand myself, as a foreign student in the United States, and the world of immigrant working people.

Competency instruction is integrated throughout each lesson. This may sound antithetical to genuine problem posing in that the text is giving “solutions” to its users—both the teacher and the learners. This kind of problem solving, however, differs from a typical competency-based adult ESL text. Questions for discussion encouraging critical thinking still prevail, even in sections teaching specific competencies. As a user of this book, I liked this somewhat directive, but not dominating, way of introducing competencies. As a foreigner in this country, I sometimes would prefer to be told directly, rather than to learn a lesson from painstaking mistakes resulting from my ignorance of the social and cultural expectations of American society.

When I was participating in the lessons, an inner voice asked, “Why didn’t I have a textbook like this before?” As an ESL learner, I like ESL for Action and believe that many other learners would also like it.

SU-KUEI LAI

*University of Massachusetts at Boston*

**English at Work: A Tool Kit for Teachers.** Deborah Barndt (Coordinator). North York, Ontario: CORE Foundation. (Available from CORE Foundation, 5050 Yonge Street, North York, Ontario, Canada M2N 5N8)

More than a text, *English at Work* is a multimedia package of learning materials centered on workplace issues for immigrants. As such, it requires active engagement on the part of the teacher in becoming familiar with its contents and possible uses. It is by no means a “teacher-proof” curriculum, and therein lies its strength. The range of tools in the kit encourages a flexible, participatory approach to adult ESL that can be used in a variety of contexts. Because it is not a traditional, linearly sequenced, bound volume, but rather a collection of stories, photos, tapes, cartoons, and a poster, accompanied by a 150-page teacher’s manual to guide their use, teachers can select and adapt materials to fit the particular needs and interests of different groups.

Activities are centered around five themes: Histories of Immigrant Workers, Jobs Within the Industrial and Service Sectors (including six kinds of workplaces), Work Relationships, Working Conditions and Work, and Home and Community Life. Because workers are seen as whole people with lives that go beyond the doors of the workplace, many of the
materials are suitable for students who are in community-based classes as well.

_English at Work_ masterfully combines a Freirean philosophical perspective with a practical on-site orientation, without either sacrificing the sociopolitical aspect or being so overtly political as to be unusable in business and industry programs. It does this by guiding participants through an open-ended inquiry process that invites them to look at their own roles in production and work relationships, leaving the analysis up to the participants. It thus achieves what so few curricula do: It poses without imposing.

Furthermore, the text is eminently usable with lower level students because of its clear graphic layout, large print, and use of charts, maps, line drawings, and photos. Teachers are instructed how to incorporate content from students’ own lives and work situations into both structured grammar activities and more creative student-generated materials.

This tool kit is not a “consumable” product, but rather a resource that can be used over and over again without ever using it the same way twice. It is sturdy and durable and, as such, on the expensive side (about $40 U.S. currency), but it is well worth the investment!

ELSA AUERBACH

_University of Massachusetts at Boston/
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*Getting There* is like a Russian doll: It is a text within a text within a text. As a self-reflective account of how a group of immigrant women worked with ESL teachers to produce photostories reflecting their experiences as newcomers, it documents both a process and a product. *Getting There* serves many needs and audiences at once: It includes essays that outline the basic principles of participatory education and describe in detail the methodology for producing photostories; it presents two examples of photostories, produced according to this model, which can serve as texts for classroom use; it provides suggestions for using these texts with students; and, most important, it serves as a model, inviting teachers and students to follow a similar process in addressing issues of concern to them.

The essays explain the basic principles of participatory education, starting with the notion that “people learn and take action best when they explore common issues together” (back cover). The issue that the volume focuses on is finding work, which itself is a metaphor for the journeys immigrant women take and the obstacles they face in dealing with a new culture. Since part of addressing day-to-day challenges like finding work
includes understanding the social context, *Getting There* includes a chapter analyzing this context for immigrant women workers, with a historical account of their roles in the work force. The final essay addresses how the media and advertising project images of women that shape their perceptions of themselves. The authors hope that the photostories will provide women with a tool for creating their own images and a framework for reflecting on their own reality.

Although the text does all these things in a clear and powerful way, the one area that is neglected is discussion of the more mundane obstacles to engaging in participatory production: time or money constraints, problems in sustaining energy and interest, balancing student and teacher roles in determining the direction of the project, and working within constraints imposed by bureaucrats and funders.

Despite this omission, however, *Getting There* is an invaluable resource for both teachers and students: It is both a practical tool and a philosophical guide for adult educators interested in more empowering, student-centered approaches to curriculum development.

**ELSA AUERBACH**

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There is a great deal of interest in using literature in the ESL literacy curriculum, but practitioners often have difficulty finding texts that are appropriate in both content and language level. *Don’t Be Afraid, Gringo* is an oral history that fits the following criteria for inspiring classroom literature: It is a “real” text written for a general American audience; it is written in a clear, simple style; it treats themes that are relevant to adults who come from peasant or colonized cultures; and it demonstrates literacy as a tool for empowerment.

The book chronicles the life of a Honduran peasant woman, Elvia Alvarado, who has been organizing for land reform in rural Honduras. Her struggle takes her up against her own government, large landowners, and the United States, whose political influence and military presence shape Honduran national policy. However, this story is not a treatise on American imperialism. It is a collection of Elvia’s experiences and reflections on her culture. Through getting to know her, readers have the opportunity to explore and compare their own cultural perspectives and attitudes about schooling, marriage, social roles, faith, democracy, and many other themes with those that Elvia discusses in simple prose.
The simplicity of the narrative makes this text particularly accessible to new English speakers, although, more important, readers can readily identify with Elvia’s experiences and concerns. Because of their familiarity with the content, ESL readers do well in predicting and expanding upon the story. Cloze versions of the text, role plays, invented dialogues and interviews, and written reactions to issues raised are all activities that flow naturally from work with this text. And because it bridges oral and written traditions, it is a fine catalyst for comparing these traditions in terms of style, point of view, need for contextualization, and relationship to audience.

The most important contribution of Don’t Be Afraid, Gringo is that it demonstrates the power of literate forms to validate a voice—even the voice of a poor peasant woman who does not speak English. Unlike the traditional reactive relationship ESL learners have to English print, Elvia models an active role in declaring her voice worthy of respect and attention. This relationship to literacy is one that will benefit all her readers.

ANDREA NASH
University of Massachusetts at Boston/
English Family Literacy Project
Cardinal Cushing Center


Often the English that students hear in the street strikes them as quite different from that taught at school. With just one fluent English speaker in the classroom, namely the teacher, it is difficult to create real-life colloquial language situations. Spaghetti Forever, a low-intermediate reader, provides such a context, in which colloquial language is used by American characters in their daily lives.

Spaghetti Forever is the continuing story of a single mother and her three teenage children. (The first book, by the same authors, is called Spaghetti, Again? [Collier Macmillan, 1988] and is geared for beginning readers.) The dialogues deal with issues such as adolescence, romance, parenthood, security, and trust, all of which are good motivators because they are of immediate interest and concern to students.

The authors have written the story with schema theory in mind, that is, the theory that “accurate comprehension of a text is dependent on the prior knowledge that readers bring to the reading activity or the concepts they are able to activate by reading the text” (p. iv). It follows, then, that the format of the book leads students through a series of activities that activate some of the concepts with which they are already familiar, as well as introducing new concepts and language relevant to the story line.

BOOK NOTICES
process first encourages students to talk about the pictures, ask questions of the story based on those pictures, then read the dialogue, and analyze the characters and the plot to predict what might happen next.

Although this format works well in general, there are a few specific activities that I find problematic. For example, not all of the prereading pictures relate to the story; some are merely intended to illustrate new vocabulary. Students are confused by these decontextualized pictures, especially as they have just been encouraged to utilize all available clues to build their understanding of the story.

One further limitation of the text is that the dialogues are interrupted with questions the authors hope the students will ask themselves. Although this kind of questioning is intended to aid students in becoming active readers, it can also disrupt the flow of the story and students’ engagement with the text.

These less effective activities, however, can easily be skipped and/or used in more appropriate ways. Overall, Spaghetti Forever is a high-interest reader that provides students and teacher with an opportunity to explore and practice colloquial English, to analyze the dynamics in a modern American family, and to understand the motivations of its diverse members. It also provides the group with a starting point for discussions of cross-cultural comparisons and contrasts, writing, and even video work.

JANET KAPLAN
Cardinal Cushing Center


The House on Mango Street is a collection of short stories, or prose poems, about a Chicana girl named Esperanza and the neighborhood she grows up in. This neighborhood is multicultural or, rather, an intersection of families, generations, and communities in transition from one culture to another. Unlike most ESL textbooks, which plunk down an immigrant family alone in an Anglo environment to “survive,” Cisneros’s book gives us the opportunity to discuss the survival strategies of immigrant communities and their ambivalence about assimilation.

In each story, Esperanza shares her puzzlement over the characters and occurrences in her life, some mundane and some quite magnificent. The reader cannot help but slip into his or her own thoughts about neighbors, sisters, first jobs, coming of age, and papaya juice. The characters who pass through Esperanza’s life—the woman across the street who never comes out because she is afraid to speak English; the battered woman who writes poetry; the beautiful woman who is not allowed out without her husband’s permission; the Anglos who are afraid to enter her neighborhood; her father, who treads through his life exhausted and overworked—
speak to the experiences of many immigrant families and invite readers to ponder the conditions of their own lives. Esperanza herself, who writes poems and dreams of having a house of her own, voices the aspirations of the many immigrants pouring into our community centers to learn English for a well-paying job.

One of the beauties of this book is that each of its stories, many of which are less than one page in length, can stand alone. The accessibility to real literature that this format provides to new readers makes the book a milestone. However, there is a great value in piecing together the distinct stories to see also the larger conflicts in Esperanza’s life, especially the conflict between her ties to her Chicano neighborhood and her desire to get out. This is a dilemma that many ESL learners are facing—or if not they themselves, then their children.

Since Cisneros writes in poetic prose, it is essential that prereading activities precede class use of these stories. I have found that a preliminary discussion of the general theme (neighborhoods, overwork, English, names, etc.) works very well. Of course, teachers can write simplified versions of the pieces. But the richness of this literature comes partly from the author’s use of metaphor, so teachers should weigh this trade-off carefully. With a bit of creativity, there is something in this book for any class.

ANDREA NASH
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Tell Me About It uses oral histories as a tool for implementing a Freirean approach to ESL language and literacy development. Curriculum material is drawn from interviews with residents of two multicultural Philadelphia neighborhoods including immigrants, refugees, and an African American. The author has arranged excerpts from these interviews into six thematically based units, each of which is accompanied by structured follow-up activities geared toward intermediate-level ESL students.

The rationale for using oral histories is that their language is “alive, close to the learners’ experience, and lends itself to dialogue and drama” (p. i). Like other Freire-inspired approaches, selections are chosen for their relevance to adult learners and provide a context for the development of critical thinking. A particularly interesting feature of the book is the attempt to situate individual stories in a social and historical context.
Interviewees talk about the experiences of their cultural groups going back as far as World War I, through World War II, the Japanese internment, and up to the present. The interviews are interspersed with photos, political cartoons, newspaper articles, and historical texts.

What is powerful about these passages is that they deal with familiar issues (often covered in more traditional “survival” texts) in the authentic voice of immigrants, documenting their struggles with the impact of immigration on family life, work, and cultural adaptation. Taken together, the voices in the interviews paint a composite picture of both the commonalities and differences in lived histories, paving the way for the kind of social analysis that is the backbone of a Freirean approach.

The one shortcoming of the book is that the activities tend to be very text based rather than reader based, focusing on phonics, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. After the very moving stories, these activities seem quite mundane. Greater emphasis on questions that invite critical analysis and the generation of alternatives for action would be more in keeping with a Freirean orientation. It could be argued, though, that the very traditional form of the exercises may be useful in legitimating this innovative approach with students who themselves expect grammar and drill work. Nonetheless, the activities detract little from the power and authenticity of the stories as catalysts for dialogue.

ELSA AUERBACH
University of Massachusetts at Boston/
English Family Literacy Project


Southeast Asians: A New Beginning in Lowell documents with captioned photographs many of the experiences of Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese refugees settling in the United States. Each of these nationalities has its own section in the book, prefaced by a short political history. On the page facing each photograph are captions and quotations that are, for the most part, the words of the subject of the photograph. The text is written in Cambodian, Lao, Vietnamese, and English.

This book is a powerful representation of the disparities of refugee resettlement. Issues for class discussions, language experience stories, and family literacy activities leap from the pages. Statements about loss, culture shock, victimization, new jobs, the isolation of the elderly, the Americanization of the young, and cultural and religious celebrations express the world of the refugee in our country.

Young adults, intermediate students in a worksite literacy program, had diverse reactions to the book. When asked to evaluate the book, the
Cambodians said it made them sad; they did not like “so many pictures of poor people.” Their favorite photos were of a young Laotian athlete kicking a ball and of a family in front of their new house. The sole Vietnamese student reacted favorably to the pictures of his countrymen, all prosperous images. He said, “I like the pictures. They wake me up and show me the good. Make me remember my country, my history, the New Year.”

Another class of adult beginning ESL students became very animated and interested as they chose their favorite pictures and described the subjects. They wanted to include additional pictures.

The photographs in this book were taken not by Asians but by North Americans, and teachers should encourage their students to view them critically. In this way the book can serve as a springboard for students to express their own images of their world.

CYNTHIA COOK
The Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Lowell
Altron, Inc., Worksite Literacy Program


In a field that suffers a dearth of materials for adults with low literacy, especially materials that promote a student-centered, content-based curriculum, In Print makes a long-awaited contribution. Designed for both adult basic education and ESL adults, it prompts readers to think about current socioeconomic issues (employment, education, family roles, etc.), to work on related linguistic subskills, and then to use those practiced forms to relate and analyze their personal experiences. In this way, it uniquely challenges the intellect and appreciates the sophistication of adult learners, who are often faced with materials that reserve creative activities for students who demonstrate proficient decoding skills.

The book is organized by theme, each chapter opening with a picture/situation/question (a Freirean “code”) to be discussed. Following discussion, students move onto a variety of literacy exercises that build on the orally introduced material. These include phonics, linguistic analysis, sight words, practical application, and language experience stories. The first activity, however, is always the completion, in word and picture, of a simple chart that documents learners’ personal experiences. By inviting readers to tell their own stories, these graphics introduce literacy as an active, creative process. The authors chose to sequence writing before reading to reinforce this notion of literacy and to encourage a natural “learning by doing.”

Each chapter theme provides a context for the linguistic subskills and literacy formats practiced in the reading and writing exercises. Apart from
some decontextualized phonics work, all the activities address this context with a repertoire of techniques designed to accommodate many learning styles. However, a truly participatory curriculum process is unpredictable. An opening discussion about health care may go in myriad directions, and therefore, the literacy activities relevant to any particular group of learners will vary. Although this appears to limit the usefulness of this text, it really just reminds us that in a student-centered classroom, no text can respond to all needs and that In Print is one resource that needs to be supplemented by additional relevant materials. At the end of each chapter, the lesson circles back to writing once again, when students reflect on and respond to the issues raised throughout the unit. This completes a cycle that begins and ends with the voice of the learner.

In Print contains a wealth of thought-provoking situations and scenarios that are easily adapted for learners with low English ability. Although grammar exercises are not part of its content, it includes provocative writing activities, a variety of contexts within which literacy activities occur, and an opportunity to analyze those contexts. Long and Spiegel-Podnecky provide a model of participatory curriculum development that allows each learner to make literacy personally and socially relevant in his or her life.

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One day I heard that I was coming to Boston. I was happy in a way, but I knew that I was not going back to Haiti. I did not tell anyone because I didn’t have the heart to. (p. 45)

ESL students come to our classes with a wealth of diverse experiences, and discussing and writing about their life stories can greatly enrich and add meaning to the language skills they are acquiring. Materials that help us tap into our students’ experiences are always a welcome addition.

The Mango Tree: Stories Told and Retold by Children in the Cambridge Public Schools is a collection of oral histories that not only provides interesting reading material, but also can be used as a catalyst for students to talk and write about their own lives. This lively collection of stories and interviews includes topics that are part of every immigrant’s life: early experiences in this country; memories of the native country; traditional
foods and festivals; work experiences and childhood memories. Many of the stories powerfully recount feelings of joy and sorrow, fear and hope, love and hate. There is also a good deal of humor in a number of the stories. These oral histories recognize each individual’s unique experiences, while also expressing commonly felt emotions that arise in those situations.

*The Mango Tree* is appropriate for use with students at almost any level and age. Some of the vocabulary is uncommon, and there are many idioms that reflect the idiosyncrasies of spoken language. The context of many of the passages, however, will be familiar to students, and they will be able to figure out many of the new words with the help of contextual clues. The book’s entries are in both essay and interview formats. The latter, by presenting both questions and answers, provides students with a model for doing their own interviews.

*The Mango Tree* is a thoroughly enjoyable compilation of oral histories that will be an asset to any ESL teacher’s collection.

**MADELINE RHUM**
*University of Massachusetts at Boston/
English Family Literacy Project
Cambridge Community Learning Center*

*Need I Say More: A Literary Magazine of Adult Student Writings.* Boston: Publishing for Literacy Project. (Available from Kona Khasu, Project Coordinator, Publishing for Literacy, Adult Literacy Resource Institute, c/o Roxbury Community College, 1234 Columbus Avenue, Boston, MA 02120)

The Big Dream Was Always Alive
I Hoped It Was Just a Bad Moment
I Am a Woman Who Has Tumbled and Turned

These first lines or titles introduce student writings in the inaugural issue of Boston’s newest literary journal. *Need I Say More*, the first literary magazine of adult student writings in the Boston area, is the result of the fruitful partnership of the Brookline Public Library and the Adult Literacy Resource Institute. The journal is produced by the Publishing for Literacy Project, which has as its main goal the development and promotion of writing in the adult basic education (ABE) and ESL communities. The by-product of this city-wide effort, the journal has brought together, in writing, the diverse multicultural people of the city so that they may read about, be inspired by, and learn from each other’s experiences.

The first two issues of the magazine demonstrate once again, for teachers and students alike, the power of texts that come from real experiences. As the preface in the first issue states, “The nature of creativity is the struggle to tell a personal story as sincerely as your skills can afford” (p. i). Because adult students have different levels of skills,
some of the pieces are written in nonstandard English, and some are in the
students’ native language. This diversity in language skills is a real plus; it
means that the writings have not been homogenized by some teacher’s pen
but rather still reflect the student’s original vibrancy.

In addition to the mixed reading levels represented in the volumes, there
is a wide range of forms of writing and topics. One can find forms ranging
from essays to poetry, and topics from drugs to potty training. For these
reasons alone, issues of the magazine make ideal “readers” for both ESL
and ABE students. They can be used as whole texts or read in sections or
even as just individual selections.

The authenticity of the writings helps reconnect reading back to writing.
As one program director put it, “They have effectively awakened students’
interest in writing at all levels of ability.” The writings have then become
the inspiration for more writing.

Need I Say More is a welcome addition to the growing body of student-
generated materials now becoming available for adult learners. By
publishing the writings of adult students, recognizing them as authors, the
magazine has validated for the ABE and ESL communities that their
experiences and thoughts are worth reading, hence worth knowing.

LOREN McGRAIL
University of Massachusetts at Boston/
English Family Literacy Project

The Story of Ana, La Historia de Ana. Ely Patricia Martinez Vasquez (with
the help of Ana Lorena Sanarabia and others). Pasadena, CA: Hope
P.O. Box 60008, Pasadena, CA 91106)

The Story of Ana, La Historia de Ana, which was written and illustrated
by students in a California school with the help of their teacher, is a
bilingual book with English on one side and Spanish on the other. It tells
the story of a young girl who comes to Los Angeles from El Salvador, but
it is also the story of many refugees and immigrants who had to leave their
countries because of war. The story rings particularly true for those
refugees who have fled their countries but would like to return one day, as
this passage illustrates:

She missed her grandparents and friends in San Salvador but she didn’t want to
go back. She remembered what bad things had happened there. She wanted to
live in Los Angeles until the war ended. After the war ended, she would go back
to El Salvador and live with her grandparents. She would never come back.
(p. 24)

Even though written from a child’s perspective, the book describes
experiences—for example, the trip from El Salvador through Mexico—
that are common for most Central American refugees. The perspective,
because it is “other,” allows the adult reader to become deeply involved with the text. Like role plays or simulations, the story gives adults the opportunity to explore subjects and experiences that might otherwise be painful or that simply might never be mentioned. The bilingual text also enables Spanish-speaking students to develop their literacy skills in their native language.

I used this book with great success in a multilevel ESL class composed of Hispanics from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and El Salvador. All of my students read the story from cover to cover—in some cases overnight. Most of them read it in Spanish first, then went back to read it in English. The bilingual text also allowed the students to share the story with members of their household. Students with children who were becoming English dominant used the book to teach them Spanish. The process also worked the other way, with children helping their parents with the English.

Thus, in addition to being an authentic text that tells in simple words the experience of what it is like for someone to leave her country and move to another country, the book can also be used to foster biliteracy skills or to engage students in a discussion about bilingualism in general. Like other stories written by authors who have stories to tell and not grammar structures to teach, La Historia de Ana is a find.

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The Canadians have done it again! In an exciting “first” for adult literacy in North America, a group of students and teachers has produced a glossy and professional journal of student writings geared for use with new adult readers. Voices, a quarterly journal that first appeared in fall 1988 and that is already preparing its fourth issue, combines a variety of levels and genres of student-produced writings on a range of topics, with original art, photography, reviews of books for new readers, and some commentary by teachers. The design is attractive and accessible, with plenty of white space, relatively large print, and a variety of page layouts.

As the editors state in the first issue (Vol. 1, No. 1), the journal reflects their belief that “curriculum and instructional approach must be learner centred” (p. 1), language learning is a process, new readers need a range of reading material, and the work of beginning writers is “instructional and motivational” (p. 1) for beginning readers.

Clearly, the editors see this journal as connecting the reading and writing processes: The articles not only provide reading texts, but also serve as
models for student writing. For this reason, the journal might be stronger if it included more commentary by both teachers and students on how the writing developed, how literacy classes were structured to facilitate this process, and how the journal itself was produced. The advantage of such a beautiful adult literacy journal is that it validates and legitimates student writing as real literature; the drawback is that without explicit discussion of processes, the slickness may intimidate new writers or mystify the process, leaving readers with the question, How did they ever do it? There are some initial attempts to address this concern in early issues; one hopes that these will become more integral to the journal.

Another concern is that although the journal presents a range of levels, even the most accessible were beyond the grasp of beginners in ESL literacy classes. Teachers of ESL literacy felt, in reviewing the journal, that the range needed to be expanded to include some very brief and simple readings.

A final comment is that organizing the journal by level of “readability” makes for seemingly unrelated sequences of articles. It might be more in line with the perspective of literacy-as-the-construction-of-meaning to group articles thematically (e.g., the homeland, immigration, etc.), thus allowing readers to build background knowledge from one piece to the next and to move organically between levels.

All in all, Voices is a long-awaited contribution to adult literacy in North America. Best of all, the editors welcome submissions from students in other programs.

ELSA AUERBACH

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Student-based ESL and literacy materials on women’s issues have long been lacking. This need has finally been met with the publication of the *Women’s Kit*, a collection of excerpts from material about the lives of women from Latin America, Africa, and England.


Texts and illustrations—series of pictures and cartoons—complement one another to present the themes in an attractive format. Some texts are in the form of a short story and have a set of questions to lead a group discussion of the themes. Other themes not only are presented with short stories and questions for group discussion, but also describe some of the
ideas for action generated by the students who produced the materials. The language used in the booklets is defined as a function of the issue being discussed. But within every theme, there are texts with different degrees of difficulty.

The Women’s Kit’s greatest contribution to ESL is the presentation of language in context. It encourages the discussion of real-life situations, moving from discussion of a group issue to discussion of individual situations and back to the group situation again. The kit relies primarily on the participation of the students as individuals and as members of a group.

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El Centro del Cardenal
International Specialist Course

ELT textbooks and materials: evaluation, exploitation, adaptation and design

22 October-3 November 1989, London

ELT publishing is a multi million pound activity world-wide, with consumers ranging from individual students to education ministries. Despite this, the whole business of product assessment/selection, which can have profound professional and financial consequences, is frequently haphazard and under-researched, with a resulting mismatch between local needs and available materials.

The aim of this series of lectures, workshops and seminars is to look at the differing (and sometimes hostile) perspectives of the main parties in the published materials debate — authors, publishers, reviewers, education purchasers, teachers and learners — with a view to adducing sets of universal 'common core' evaluation criteria, both for commercially produced and locally written materials. Participants will be given 'hands on' experience in aspects of assessing/modifying and designing written, visual and aural teaching materials.

The Director of Studies will be Dr Leslie E Sheldon, Director of Pitman's International Division.

There are vacancies for 25 participants.

Course fee: £575. Accommodation fee: £450. (Non-resident participants need only pay the course fee.)

The working sessions will take place at the Pitman Education and Training College in central London, and resident participants will be accommodated at a conveniently situated hotel in single rooms with private shower or bathroom.

Further information and application forms are available from British Council Representatives overseas or from Courses Department, The British Council, 68 Davies Street, London W1Y 2AA.
Educating for Employment in Programs for Southeast Asian Refugees: A Review of Research

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For more than a decade, ESL programs for Indochinese refugees have been offered in overseas processing centers and at sites throughout the United States in accordance with federal policies emphasizing economic self-sufficiency (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1984). Both government and private agencies have evaluated these programs. This review offers a summary and critical assessment of these evaluations and discusses their major findings and implications.

THE OVERSEAS PROGRAM

The most important evaluation of the educational program in the overseas processing centers is The Effects of Pre-Entry Training on the Resettlement of Indochinese Refugees (1984), a study conducted by the RMC Research Corporation for the Bureau for Refugee Programs of the U.S. Department of State. An elaborate undertaking that involved site visits, a battery of tests and questionnaires, and interviews with refugees and staff in programs in Southeast Asia and the United States, the RMC report has gained a great deal of attention for its laudatory comments about the overseas program. It is often cited by program officials as evidence that the processing centers have played a valuable role in preparing refugees for economic self-sufficiency (see, for example, Purcell, 1985), and it provides the basis for arguments that current practices should be continued (see, for example, Tannenbaum, 1985).

The core of the RMC project is a “tracking study” comparing two groups of refugees 6 months after their arrival in the United States. One group of 259 people, called the trained sample, was resettled after completing overseas classes. The second group of 103 people, labeled the
untrained sample, was resettled without having attended overseas classes. A major finding of the RMC report is that the trained sample scored significantly higher than the untrained sample on the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1982) in every area except pronunciation (i.e., in listening, communication, fluency, and reading/writing). This finding is the basis for one of the central conclusions of the report: that “[overseas] training is having a major impact on the English proficiency of incoming refugees” (RMC Research Corporation, 1984, p. 139).

The RMC study also found no difference between the trained and untrained groups in their rates of employment and use of public assistance programs. Nevertheless, the report argues that the higher BEST scores in the trained sample mean that the overseas program is having an “enormous effect” (RMC Research Corporation, 1984, p. 143) upon refugees’ employability. This argument depends upon (a) an assumed causal relationship between language proficiency and employment and (b) the validity of the higher BEST scores obtained by the trained sample.

The belief that increased language proficiency will result in greater employability is based upon correlations between language proficiency and employment summarized in the RMC study as well as those reported in other studies (e.g., Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1985). In general, refugees with greater proficiency in English obtain employment more quickly than refugees with less proficiency. The RMC report assumes that this correlation means that proficiency level determines employability and that an individual who improves language proficiency will more easily find a job.

Although these assumptions have great intuitive appeal, it is possible that both language proficiency and employability are determined by other factors or that a more complex, noncausal relationship between language and employment is involved. The problem in sorting out the effect of language on employment in that proficiency in English is related to many other characteristics of refugees and their resettlement experience. In particular, there are strong correlations between education, work experience with American personnel during the Vietnam war, and language proficiency. The task for researchers is to determine whether English proficiency is highly correlated with employment, independently of these other factors.

Bach (1984) argues that previous education in the home country is by far the strongest predictor of employment. Each additional year of education prior to arrival in the United States increases the probability of employment by 3%, a much stronger effect than proficiency in English (Bach, 1984, p. 22). This finding suggests that refugees who had a higher socioeconomic standing and a higher level of education in Southeast Asia are in a stronger position to compete successfully for jobs after arriving in the United States. English may be a symbol of socioeconomic status in the home country indicative of other advantages, particularly education. Bach concludes from his research that there is no empirical basis for the belief...
that increasing English proficiency, apart from education generally, will improve the probability of employment (p. 29).

The second basis for the major conclusions of the RMC report is the finding that trained refugees scored higher on the BEST than untrained refugees. Unfortunately, the trained and untrained samples were tested only after they arrived in the United States. Although the trained sample scored higher as a group, it is impossible to determine whether its higher average score was due to preentry overseas classes or to other factors. The RMC report acknowledges that the study did not match the trained and untrained groups with respect to prior exposure to English (RMC Research Corporation, 1984, p. 30). Moreover, the report notes that the trained sample had many advantages over the untrained sample, such as a higher proportion of subjects with relatives already in the United States. These differences may account for the higher scores on the BEST by the trained sample.

A second problem with the BEST data involves the procedures for selecting the two samples of refugees. The trained sample was selected by agencies in the United States that were asked by the RMC researchers to locate volunteers who would be willing to cooperate in the study. Because it is likely that only refugees with intermediate or advanced proficiency would volunteer to undergo extended interviews with American researchers, this sampling procedure may have biased the composition of the trained group toward those with higher language proficiency.

In addition, the untrained sample was selected through a complicated procedure that favored refugees with low English proficiency. Initially, the State Department asked for volunteers among refugees in the processing centers, but few people were willing to resettle without taking classes, and those who did volunteer were people with high levels of proficiency. Therefore, to avoid having an untrained sample with high English proficiency, the State Department selected, only from those refugees with moderate, low, or no proficiency, additional subjects to be resettled without taking classes (RMC Research Corporation, 1984, p. 11). Thus, the higher scores on the BEST among the trained sample may be due to the selection procedure rather than to the impact of the overseas program.

These difficulties with the RMC study undermine its major conclusions. Indeed, the failure to gather longitudinal data, the possible bias in sampling procedures, and unverified assumptions about the relationship between ESL and employment mean that the RMC study does not offer a valid picture of the effect of overseas education on refugees’ resettlement.

A second project funded by the State Department evaluated the overseas program for 13- to 16-year-olds, the Preparation for American Secondary Schools (PASS). A far more modest study than the RMC report, the PASS Tracking Study (Pfleger & Yang, 1987) compared the school performance of students who completed PASS training with that of students who did not receive the training.

The PASS study relied upon a questionnaire completed by designated teachers in U.S. schools attended by the sample of PASS and non-PASS
students. Data were gathered for 258 PASS students and 231 non-PASS students, or 44.7% of the 1,093 13- to 16-year-olds who left processing centers in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia and enrolled in U.S. schools during the second semester of the 1985-1986 school year. The major finding of the study was that teachers considered PASS graduates to be superior to non-PASS students across a broad spectrum of skills, including aural/oral functional language, basic English literacy, basic computational skills, school behavior and study skills, and cultural orientation.

Three characteristics of the study undermine its reliability. First, although the project staff sought to ensure that the two groups were equally matched with respect to previous education, it was not possible to achieve a perfect match: A disproportionate number of Vietnamese in the non-PASS group had no previous education. Second, the questionnaire required respondents to rate students’ mastery on a 3-point scale (no skill, basic competence, or full mastery) for 52 separate items (e.g., responds to oral questions about a simple reading selection; expresses likes and dislikes; interacts with members of other ethnic groups). It is unlikely that teachers would be able to respond accurately to all items. Third, the respondents knew that the purpose of the questionnaire was to evaluate the PASS program. Thus, it is possible that their responses were biased by this knowledge.

DOMESTIC PROGRAMS

Two studies of domestic programs—Making It on Their Own: From Refugee Sponsorship to Self-Sufficiency (Church World Service, 1984) and Southeast Asian Refugee Self-Sufficiency Study (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1985)—present a disturbing picture. These studies describe the struggle of Southeast Asians to survive in a permanent economic crisis while attending ESL programs emphasizing minimum wage jobs that do not resolve their underlying economic problems.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) study surveyed 1,384 households of Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, and Lao who arrived in the United States after 1978. In all, the interviews yielded data on 6,775 individuals (4,160 adults and 2,615 children). The Church World Service (CWS) study involved a mail survey of cases sponsored by CWS denominations from fiscal year 1980 through the first half of fiscal year 1983; this latter survey yielded data on 2,189 cases, of which 40% were single refugees, 13% groups of two persons, and 25% groups of five or more. Though approximately 30% of the cases were not Southeast Asians, there were few differences between them and refugees from other countries.

Current refugee policy assumes that the key to self-sufficiency is employment, and federal regulations require refugees to accept minimum wage jobs if they are available (Tollefson, 1988). The ORR study found, however, that the increase in employment during refugees’ first 4 years in the United States was not accompanied by an equivalent increase in the proportion of families living above the federal poverty level (Office of
Refugee Resettlement, 1985, pp. 141, 179-180). In other words, many employed refugees remained below the poverty level.

The ORR study also compared refugees’ economic standing in the United States with their previous level in Indochina and found that for the vast majority of refugees, resettlement in the United States resulted in significant downward mobility. Moreover, most Southeast Asians who were employed found themselves in jobs that were quickly eliminated during economic slowdowns, that is, “peripheral” jobs that tended to be irregular, seasonal, and part-time, with low salaries and virtually no opportunity for advancement.

The study’s pessimistic conclusion: “In addition to being unemployed and underemployed, the refugees tend to hold dead-end jobs. . . . They tend to be low in wages, status, and any possibility of upward mobility” (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1985, pp. 133, 139). Thus, ESL programs that emphasize survival English for minimum wage employment help to track refugees into jobs that do not end the critical problems of poverty.

Both the CWS and ORR studies found strong evidence that refugees’ attitudes and values do not lead to a “dependency syndrome,” despite the widespread belief among government officials that this is the case (e.g., Douglas, 1982, p. 62). The ORR study found no evidence that refugees prefer public assistance to employment. Rather, the study concluded that Southeast Asians use public assistance primarily as transitional support until they can find jobs and that the rate of public assistance drops steadily as time passes and refugees improve their English, employment skills, and ability to locate jobs. The report rejects the argument that public assistance should be cut in order to force more refugees into jobs, since “in fact they got off [welfare] as soon as they can in any case” (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1985, p. 244). Similarly, the CWS study found that Indochinese are precisely the kind of population that welfare is supposed to assist, namely, people who have a genuine need for temporary public assistance.

The Adaptation of Southeast Asian Refugee Youth: A Comparative Study (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988) and Older Refugees in the United States: From Dignity to Despair (Gozdziak, 1988) examine two groups with widely differing problems. However, both studies imply that the emphasis on employment in refugee programs does not serve the needs of many people. The youth study compared Southeast Asian students to other groups in the San Diego area on various indexes of educational achievement, occupational goals, and specific problems such as dropout rates and police records. In addition, the project included in-depth interviews with Vietnamese, Khmer, and Hmong, as well as with adults with experience in refugee youth programs. The study found important differences among the various Southeast Asian groups in San Diego; overall, the report expressed the greatest concern for Laotian young people, particularly in regard to their dropout rate and police contacts.

The study of older refugees involved interviews with over 100 elderly refugees in five U.S. cities and a questionnaire mailed to service providers. Results were analyzed by an advisory committee, which recommended
important changes in services. Whereas the youth study found some reason for optimism, including high grade point averages among some Indo-Chinese students, the study of older refugees documents an alarming range of social, economic, and psychological problems, including long-term poverty, severe isolation, and poor housing, transportation, health, and nutrition. Although the study does not claim to be a statistically valid representation of Southeast Asian communities generally, its depiction of elderly refugee life suggests that the obsession with employment that characterizes refugee programs should be reconsidered.

IMPLICATIONS

ESL programs that encourage refugees to accept minimum wage jobs may serve the immediate political goal of reducing the use of public assistance, but they fail to confront the long-term social and economic consequences of migration and poverty. The obsession with minimum wage employment disguises the fact that these jobs may exacerbate rather than resolve major social and economic problems. The danger now is that many Indochinese are becoming permanent members of America’s working poor.

Taken together, the studies discussed here suggest that the long-term well-being of Indochinese in the United States depends upon educational programs that contribute to community organization, political action, and a capacity to confront the social, political, and economic causes of poverty. ESL classes designed to channel refugees into minimum wage jobs do not contribute to a resolution of the economic crisis now facing Indochinese in the United States.

REFERENCES


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**What Novice Teachers Focus on: The Practicum in TESL**

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- One traditional component of MA programs in TESL/applied linguistics is the teaching practicum, in which novice teachers are often required to teach a specified number of lessons in the field under the supervision of a master teacher (Richards & Crookes, 1988) and to complete a log or journal of the teaching experience (Hundleby & Breet, 1988). This is the case at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where students with fewer than 2 years of full-time teaching experience complete a 10-week field practicum during their first year in the program.
The study reported here used the journal entries of novice teachers at UCLA as a window on their evolving perceptions of themselves as teachers. By categorizing and quantifying the perceptions of the students enrolled in the practicum, the study attempted to examine the changing nature of their perceptions.

The practicum participants were required to keep a running log of their impressions of the field experience, lesson plans, materials used, and so on. The journals took the form of an ongoing written dialogue between the practicum participants and the course supervisor. This format was used in order to track more accurately the students’ perceptions of their teaching experience and to establish better contact between the supervisor and the course participants.

In this adaptation of the dialogue journal technique used for teacher-training purposes (Irujo, 1987; Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman, & Conrad, 1987; Roderick, 1986), participants submitted journal entries to the supervisor on a weekly basis. The supervisor responded to the entries, giving opinions where elicited and in general writing down her own impressions.

THE STUDY

The subjects of this study were 20 graduate students enrolled in the field practicum during the spring quarter of 1987. These practice teachers, 5 of whom were nonnative speakers of English, were placed in one of three adult education settings.

The researchers collected their journals and analyzed the entries to find recurring themes. Entries were coded into the following nine categories:

1. Student population: Students’ age, language background, ethnic mix, educational and proficiency level, expectations, and motivation
2. Instructional setting: Type of program (i.e., adult education program, intensive language institute), administrative policy, class size, socioeconomic setting
3. Curriculum and methodology: Program objectives, philosophies, and methodologies, including the time frame for achieving objectives
4. Methods and activities: For example, group work, role plays, drilling
5. Techniques: Correction; modeling; classroom management; L1 use; and teacher’s adjustment of input, register, and complexity
6. Material: Use of print medium, realia, and visuals; availability of resource materials and teacher-developed materials; and the match of the above with student needs
7. Role of the teacher: Dealing with multiple proficiency levels and differing paces of learning within a class, identifying the comfortable and appropriate role to adopt, setting clear expectations, determining a border between challenging students to find their own linguistic
resources and assisting (or “rescuing”) them when in need, and defining the general nature of assessment and feedback.

8. Lesson organization: Pacing, timing, recycling of material, variety of activities, and transitions between activities

9. Awareness of self: Presence/absence of self-confidence; language proficiency (of nonnative teachers); and comments about peer observations, observations by the supervisor, and videotaped lessons

The 10-week journal-keeping experience was then blocked into three periods of 3½ weeks each so that the researchers could record category frequency for each period and measure change in the kind and content of student comments. In addition, the supervisor-novice teacher exchanges were examined for differences between the responses of native- and nonnative-speaking novice teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 presents the numbers of overall student entries in each category by time period. Of the nine items coded, Categories 2 (instructional setting) and 3 (curriculum and methodology) elicited the fewest student comments for the total time period, whereas Categories 4 (methods and activities), 5 (techniques), and 8 (lesson organization) elicited the most. These overall results are not surprising. In this first teaching experience, the novice teachers found the instructional setting and the curriculum and methodology to be beyond the scope of their immediate concerns. Categories 4, 5, and 8, all of which showed a net increase over the 10-week period, have to do with the craft of teaching. At this beginning stage of teaching, the focus is necessarily on the mechanics of presentation and on engineering students’ language learning and practice. The 10 weeks spent observing and discussing successful and unsuccessful techniques, activities, and lesson organization are clearly reflected in these entries. As one student commented, “You have to learn to play the scales before you can play the sonatas.”

When the pattern of student comments over time is examined, it can be seen that the emphasis shifted somewhat. In the first time period, there was a fairly even distribution of student comments among Categories 1 (student population), 4 (methods and activities), 5 (techniques), 7 (role of the teacher), 8 (lesson organization), and 9 (awareness of self). The participants’ comments centered around the obvious—that is, the ESL students’ backgrounds and reasons for taking the class and the methods and activities used in their master teacher’s lesson planning. In this time period, the student teachers were more intensely aware of ESL teaching techniques, reflecting that their implicit knowledge of these techniques (gained in a previous methodology course) was now becoming more explicit. At this point in time, the clustering of comments in Category 9 (self-awareness) indicated that participants were self-conscious and struggling with their new persona as teacher: “There was a lack of sense of...
Average # of responses
security in my dealing with these adult students. As a friend, I get along quite well with them, but I haven’t been able to regard myself as their teacher.”

Gradually, as the students and the setting became more familiar during the second time period and as the student teachers gained confidence, they increased their attention to Categories 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The students remarked on methods and activities, techniques, materials, role of the teacher, and lesson organization as they began to prepare and present lessons for observation by their peers, master teacher, and practicum supervisor. The increased number of comments in Category 6 (materials) during the second time period can be explained in two ways. Not only were materials a focus in the practicum seminars during this time period, but the novice teachers experienced dissatisfaction with the assigned course texts as they began for the first time to prepare their own lessons based on these materials.

Interestingly, in all three time periods, techniques and lesson organization appear to be companion categories that represent the interplay between the microaspects of teaching (e.g., correction techniques, modeling, and classroom control) and the macroaspects of teaching (e.g., ordering of activities and transitions between lesson phases). We are somewhat at a loss to explain the decrease of comments in Categories 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 during the third time period. However, it is possible that this may be due to the smaller number of comments overall for this time period and to the fact that the students needed less guidance from the student supervisor.

There was no marked difference between the native-speaking (NS) and nonnative-speaking (NNS) participants in terms of the total mean number of comments made (see Figure 2), nor was there any shift in the focus of comments over time between the two sets of subjects. However, the NNSs made fewer comments in Categories 2 (instructional setting) and 5 (techniques) than did their NS counterparts, and they made noticeably more comments in Categories 4 (methods and activities) and 8 (lesson organization) than did the NSS.

As evidenced by the larger number of comments by NNSs in Categories 4 (methods and activities) and 8 (lesson organization), these novice teachers used the dialogue journals as a chance to focus on their own lesson preparation, presentation, and classroom predicaments. The following entry about the teaching of grammar demonstrates the more detailed attention paid by the NNS respondents to the basic building blocks of good teaching:

[Master teacher] likes to teach grammar points in an inductive way. She usually asks students to give her sentences first. Then she explains the grammar points. For example, she asked two students to compare their height, weight at the same time. She gave them clues such as heavy/light, tall/short. If students couldn’t give her the correct sentences, she would tell them the answers and asked them to tell the differences between her right forms and their wrong sentences. Then she let students figure out the rules orally. After this, she listed all the rules on the blackboard and asked students to write down. I think this is good for those
FIGURE 2
Dialogue Journal Entries: Comparison of NS and NNS Responses
students who know a little about comparative forms. If students have never learned English comparatives, it’s impossible for them to “compare” any things. Maybe under this situation, a deductive way is more suitable for grammar teaching, especially in EFL contexts.

The smaller number of comments by the NNSs in Category 2 may be attributed to the fact that the field placement site in which these students found themselves was quite different from settings they would encounter in their own countries, and it therefore lacked relevance to them and their future teaching situations.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This attempt to investigate the insights of novice teachers has a number of limitations. First, although the researchers analyzed the student comments quantitatively, by tabulating the frequency of entries in each category, no attempt was made to assess the comments qualitatively. In other words, two comments on a given topic, regardless of their length, were counted equally, with no attempt to judge the varying quality of their content.

Second, the coding system itself is subject to question. In retrospect, we feel the coding system could be refined and that an additional category—student responses and reactions—should be added to distinguish between comments about the demographic characteristics of the students (e.g., the ethnic backgrounds of students enrolled in the class, their ages) and comments related to the students’ responses to the instructional setting, materials, and techniques.

In the coding system used in the study, comments of the latter type were most frequently coded under Category 1 (student population) or were dispersed throughout the coding system, depending on the context of the student response. For example, without a category for comments on student reactions, the following comment by a student teacher about her poorly structured lesson was coded in Category 4 (methods and activities):

I started by eliciting the rule from the class. I then moved directly to the handout, and went through the classroom drama with three of the students. At this point, I started losing the class, and [master teacher] suggested I have them break into groups for further practice. What I feel happened, was that the teacher-student drill became boring for those just listening... and by doing the exercise in small groups, all the students were once more involved.

A third limitation of the study concerns the subjective nature of both the data and the assessment procedures. Although we checked our coding on a representative sample of journal entries, no attempt to compute interrater reliability was undertaken. In addition, as with any self-report data, the validity of the findings as an accurate reflection of the subjects’ actual development as teachers is open to question.

BRIEF REPORTS AND SUMMARIES
IMPLICATIONS

Despite these limitations, the results of this study are enlightening. The study itself was effective in establishing variables and categories that concern the teaching act. The changing nature of the student teachers’ commentary provides a chronicle of their evolving perceptions of themselves as teachers and, more important, their growing understanding of the craft of teaching.

This study was a preliminary attempt to understand how novice teachers use dialogue journals to construct and revise their understanding of themselves as teachers and of the teaching act. As these teachers experience the classroom in their field practicum sites, they use the dialogue journal as a kind of “scaffold” for constructing their understanding of the complexities of ESL teaching. In addition, the routine “conversation” with a trusted mentor allows them to honestly discuss problems they are experiencing in their teaching, and with the input of the supervisor, they are able to work through these problems.

The findings also indicate that although novice teachers are concerned with defining themselves as teachers, they are more preoccupied with understanding their own classroom, learning from their master teacher, and, in the final analysis, mastering the art of language teaching.

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Differences Between American English and British English: A Challenge to TESOL

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Until recently, British English (BE) was considered the sole model for learners of English in most countries of the world, including those in Eastern Europe. In the spring of 1976, when my English-SerboCroatian Dictionary was being readied for publication in Yugoslavia, many feared that it would be rejected by Yugoslav teachers and learners, since it gave priority to American English (AE). The English Language Officer of the American Embassy in Belgrade organized a lecture tour to four key Yugoslav cities so that I could reassure teachers and students of English that consistent attention would also be paid in the new dictionary to BE features. In the fall of 1978, a week before the actual appearance of the dictionary in bookstores, the Yugoslav publisher, Prosveta, ran a full-page advertisement in the newspaper Politika, including the translation of an article from the London Observer, which pointed out to the citizens of Great Britain that AE should be considered the dominant variety of English. The purpose of printing the Observer article was to prepare the Yugoslav public for the shock of having its largest publishing house put out a bilingual dictionary that described AE.

In the last 10 years, the status of AE among teachers and learners of English has risen significantly in many countries. It can be said that AE is now acknowledged to be a valid model for learners, along with BE, in many countries (Benson, Benson, & Ilson, 1986b, pp. 14-15). I lectured on the differences between AE and BE in May 1988 at the Foreign Language Institute in Belgrade and in September 1988 at the Lenin Pedagogical Institute and the Maurice Thorez Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages in Moscow.
Those specialists in English who attended the lectures—university-level professors, secondary-school teachers, and advanced students—were keenly interested in the topic. Although they had all been trained essentially in BE, most recognized that AE is no longer to be considered an "inferior" dialect, and they were eager to learn more about it.

An integral part of the lectures mentioned above was a test on the differences between AE and BE, based on *The BBI Combinatory Dictionary of English* (Benson, Benson, & Ilson, 1986a). Only around 20% of the items on the test were answered correctly by the Yugoslavs and Soviets. These results were the same as those of a similar test taken by Soviet and Hungarian English teachers in the summer of 1987 at the University of Pennsylvania (Benson & Benson, 1988, p. 344). In 1987 the test was also administered to 12 TESOL instructors who were native speakers of English—10 American, 1 British, and 1 South African (Benson, 1989). Their performance was only slightly better than that of the nonnative speakers: 24% of their answers were correct!

Here are two examples of differences that caused problems. None of the American instructors knew that *We cancelled our membership of that organization* is perfectly good BE. Eight marked it as unacceptable English; two marked it with a question mark. None of the American instructors knew that *She recommended me a good dictionary* is correct BE. Nine marked it as unacceptable; one marked it with a question mark.

My point is that if two world models for learners, AE and BE, are now recognized, TESOL programs should introduce work on the differences between them. Some will undoubtedly object and point out that many ESL/EFL instructors who end up teaching elementary and intermediate courses in the United States may never need to use this knowledge. However, many other instructors will teach English abroad or will teach English in the United States to students who have already studied the language abroad, presumably BE. (We must keep in mind that despite the gains made by AE in recent years, most learners who begin their study of the language outside of North America study BE.) It is vital that such instructors acquire knowledge of how AE differs from BE.

It is encouraging that two references to this problem have appeared recently on the pages of the *TESOL Newsletter*—those of Whiteson (1986) and Barnes (1987). Whiteson concludes that “we have to accept that differences exist and have to do whatever we can to be knowledgeable about them” (p. 28). Barnes points to the competition between BE and AE in Portugal.
Whiteson and Barnes discuss essentially AE and BE (although Whiteson does refer to South African English). In another recent discussion, Kachru (1988) radically expands the concept of English; he divides the countries in which English is spoken into three circles: The “Inner Circle” (in which English is used by most inhabitants as a first language), the “Outer Circle” (in which English was spoken by colonial rulers), and the “Expanding Circle” (in which English is studied widely as a foreign language). Kachru calls for a change in the methods of teaching English (p. 4). However, he offers no specific suggestions.

I would like to propose specifically that TESOL programs in the United States provide instruction on the differences between standard AE and standard BE. TESOL programs in Great Britain should do the same. As pointed out above, AE and BE are generally recognized throughout the world to be the predominant varieties of English. It would be at present impractical and unnecessary to include in most TESOL programs the other varieties of English such as Australian, Canadian, Indian, Irish, South African, and so on. (Note, however, that Canadian English is close to AE and that the others are close to BE.) It goes without saying that some American TESOL programs may also find it desirable to include work on dialectal varieties of AE.

Instruction should deal with the major orthographic, morphological, syntactic, collocational, and lexical differences between the two standards. Some of these differences have been covered by various investigators in varying degrees of accuracy and thoroughness, beginning a half century ago with the work of Mencken. A recent attempt to describe the differences is found in Benson et al. (1986b, pp. 14-174). Instruction should certainly stress that features peculiar to one variety are not to be considered “incorrect” English. It goes without saying that a student who uses a BE feature in an American setting should be informed of that fact and should be told what the possible consequences may be. It is also obvious that the training of future ESL/EFL instructors will have to be developed so as, for example, to treat differences between AE and BE at the level of discourse.

Orthographic differences are numerous; many are well known. It would be hoped that in the future, a student born in Jamaica and educated in Great Britain would not have the spelling colour marked as incorrect in a composition written at a state university in the United States. (This incident was reported to me by the student.)

Morphological differences are few but can cause trouble. American instructors should not correct the following verb forms often used in BE: The suit fitted him perfectly, She leant (rhyming
with bent) forward, We learnt the poem by heart, He quitted his job, and so on.

Syntactic and collocational differences can be jarring but should be accepted. Here are several examples of constructions used in BE: She sent it him, The company are promoting their new type of computer, The workers agreed the plan, Our firm has done a deal with a French company, He has earache, The police are always in the firing line, That gave him a new lease of life.

Lexical differences are the most numerous and complicated. Recent analyses of these differences are far more sophisticated than the simplistic lists of the past, which tended to indicate that monosemous (having only one meaning) item x in AE invariably equaled monosemous item y in BE. One example of lexicological complexity is the relationship between baggage (traditionally considered to be AE) and luggage (traditionally considered to be BE) (Benson et al., 1986b, pp. 34-35). Earlier analyses did not include culturally bound items such as AE garage sale, the Ivy League, revenue sharing, welcome wagon, and so on, and BE A-levels, front bench, giro, tied house, and so on.

It should be emphasized that AE and BE are constantly influencing each other. The traditional influence of literature and the press has been intensified in recent decades by jet travel, satellite communications, television, and films. Furthermore, the international press services like Reuters and International News Service diffuse AE and BE items worldwide, without a distinct pronunciation to identify their provenance.

Thus, we can understand why learners of English are at times confused. The time has come to prepare American ESL/EFL instructors to cope with the two major varieties of standard English. This means, in practical terms, that American instructors should be trained to recognize and comprehend the major features of BE. Such training will enable them to achieve the goal of TESOL—the teaching of World English.

REFERENCES


A Reader Reacts. . .

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In his recent TESOL Quarterly article (Vol. 22, No. 3, September 1988), Bernard Spolsky brings to the TESOL audience some of the latest modeling approaches available from the field of artificial intelligence. Although Spolsky provides a valuable service by presenting paradigms that have been used in theoretical modeling in other fields, he does not accomplish his goal without confounding different types of models.

Spolsky introduces three types of models. He states that his forthcoming model of second language acquisition is a preference model. I will not comment on this here, since a full explanation of his preference model had not yet been published at the time of this writing.

The second model, an expert system, is introduced as a metaphor for his theory of preferences. Expert systems, as he explains (p. 389), are computer models created to imitate certain decision-making or problem-solving algorithms used by humans. In this sense, his metaphor may be a bit confusing: To say that human behavior is
like that of a virtual machine that models human behavior is tautologi-
ical at best.

The third approach he introduces, connectionist modeling, is a par-
particularly curious addition for two reasons. First, the theoretical
underpinnings of connectionism are at odds with those of expert
systems. Indeed, connectionist models arose as an alternative to the
heavily rule-based expert systems. Second, the results he reports
from Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) for first language
acquisition are not as remarkable as they may seem at first blush.

If Spolsky did not intentionally meld the concepts of expert
systems and connectionist models, he may have caused this
confusion through the inclusion of connectionist models, as this
article seems to draw parallels between the models, rather than
highlight their differences. An expert system works on a set of “if-
then” rules. The major difference between these two types of
systems is that expert systems are constructed as rule-based systems
that do not learn as connectionist systems do, but merely take the
user through a set of preprogrammed options in the model. In fact,
this has been perceived as one of their weaknesses—the inability to
account for all the factors influencing a certain problem.

Connectionist models, on the other hand, do not rely on explicit
rules or preprogrammed choices. Rather, these models essentially
program themselves by reorganizing their internal structure to reflect
statistical relationships in the external environment. This is most
frequently accomplished by exposing the system to samples of
correct pairs of input and output patterns and by allowing it to
associatively learn correspondences between the features of the
patterns. After learning in this fashion, the model is typically exposed
to a set of novel items, and then it attempts to generalize its
knowledge by producing an appropriate transformation (see
Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986) or classification into grammatical
class (Sokolik & Smith, 1988). Thus, connectionist systems can apply
an implicit statistical approach to conditions in which rule systems
may be too complex or fuzzy to formalize in an expert system.

Beyond this apparent confounding of models, the success that
Spolsky attributes to the connectionist model for first language
acquisition is overstated. Spolsky reports that the Rumelhart and
McClelland (1986) model, after going through a training routine,
“was generating 91% of the correct features of low-frequency verbs
with which it had not previously been presented” (p. 393). This
remarkable success rate should be examined in a little more detail.

In brief, the system worked in the following fashion: A list of 460
verbs was presented to the system in paired input—the base form
with the correct past tense form. The system then learned these inputs by assigning weights to particular feature configurations. After the learning procedure was completed (200 passes through the word list), the system was presented with 72 novel verbs, and its task was to generate the appropriate past tense form.

As reported in Pinker and Prince (1988), if certain statistical criteria were met in the computer model, the model produced a "likely" past tense form for the present tense verb. As a result of this production process, 33% (24/72) of the responses were incorrect. Of these, 6 regularly formed verbs had no response at all (for whatever reason—probably attributable to similarities with irregular verbs). The remaining 18 verbs yielded, among others, some of the following odd productions:

- squat - squakt
- smoke - smoke
- mail - mumbled
- brown - brawned
- tour - toureder
- shape - shipt
- mate - maded
- sip - sept
- hug - hug
- slip - slept

In addition, double marking occurred on seven other forms (type/typed).

Spolsky claims of the Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) model that "its responses were always [italics added] plausible (if not always correct)” (p. 393). I think that this conclusion can be questioned, given some of the above examples of bizarre past tense forms created by the model. He also states that the responses “mirrored in a number of ways the behavior reported for children learning English as a first language” (p. 393), specifically (following the argument of Rumelhart & McClelland) that the errors the model made are analogous to the overgeneralizations observed in L1 learning. This claim also seems a bit overstated, based on the lengthy argument presented by Pinker and Prince (1988, pp. 128-165).

Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) claim that the overregularization that occurs in their model is like that which occurs in children’s speech. This is based on past + -ed forms, such as ated for the past tense of eat. Pinker and Prince’s (1988) most important argument against this notion concerns the possible sources of error in the child and in the model. This argument (supported by other first language data; see Kuczaj, 1981) states that the child has misinterpreted ate as the base form of a verb. However, such a misinterpretation is not possible in the Rumelhart and McClelland model, since the model (and in some cases, L2 learners) is given paired input/output of present/past tense verb forms. This clearly
does not occur in first language learning. In fact, the model allows a level of “blending” of independent subregularities that does not occur in children’s acquisition, and this clearly demonstrates a problem with its architecture.

Finally, I think it is important to point out that Pinker and Prince’s (1988) criticisms are aimed at the application of connectionist modeling to first language acquisition and may or may not be relevant to second language acquisition. In fact, we may find that such models have more to say about the latter than about the former. Only in relatively rare cases does L2 proficiency ever reach the level of L1 proficiency, and because of these unequal proficiencies, the L2 process may be quite different from the L1 process. Thus, connectionist modeling may provide a fresh angle from which to look at some of the L2 data, particularly the role of inductive learning in adult L2 learning. In other words, the question to address seems to be the age-old one: In what way is L2 learning different from L1 learning?

One possibility is that L2 learning may be associative in the connectionist sense, whereas L1 acquisition may be more rule driven in the generative sense. Spolsky’s article in no way addresses this possibility. Although this issue has not yet been explicitly approached in an empirical fashion, I can offer as anecdotal evidence, in contrast to the “bizarre” examples given above (mail/membled, etc.), the following responses on an ESL quiz covering past tenses of irregular verbs:

| weep - woop  | freeze - frooze   |
| shake - shoke | quit - quot       |
| light - light | steal - stealt    |
| weave - weft  |

These (and other) examples may show, with further investigation, the workings of associative learning in second language acquisition. That is, they illustrate the unusual type of overgeneralizations expected from a connectionist-type learning system. The past tense forms produced by adult second language learners are not like those produced by children. Pinker and Prince’s (1988) criticism of the Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) model is consistent with the possibility of different mechanisms operating during verb morphology acquisition in the second language versus the first language. Thus, the connectionist approach might provide important insights into second language acquisition.

In sum, this article fails to distinguish clearly between expert systems and connectionist models. In addition, the success attributed to the Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) connectionist
model in patterning first language acquisition is overstated. However, other incarnations of connectionist models may prove more successful for first and/or second language acquisition modeling, and Spolsky has opened an important door for those wishing to pursue these models further.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
I would like to thank Michael Smith and Suzanne Flynn for their comments on this article.

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The Author Responds. . .

BERNARD SPOLSKY
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I am grateful to Margaret Sokolik for her comments on my article and for the opportunity to clarify my presentation of two alternative models for a general theory of second language learning.
Her points are ones with which I mostly agree and are potentially constructive contributions to what I acknowledge is a significant debate: If I have helped to open a door, as she puts it, I am very happy.

Sokolik raises a number of interesting issues that are deserving of further comment. First, she expresses some surprise that I saw any possible usefulness in expert systems. As she concedes, I proposed expert systems as a metaphor (my word actually was analogy) for how the preference model that I have presented earlier (Spolsky, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987) might work: I argue that an expert system is one way to deal with fuzzy situations such as characterize language learning.

It is true that expert systems are attempts to model human behavior, just as Parallel Distributed Processing models use the brain metaphor (or model) in designing computer programs. There is no tautology involved; this is offered as a logical alternative to models that propose to explain brain processes with the analogy of computer operations. To the extent that expert systems suggest certain properties for rule systems, they should help explain how the preference model, which is a rule system, could operate and how it might be tested.

Second, Sokolik is distressed by my simultaneous championing of two models, the preference model (with its suggested analogy to expert systems) and the Parallel Distributed Processing models (or connectionism, as she prefers to call the approach). She is quite right in pointing out the fundamental difference between these two models, the former with its rich rule systems and the latter with its specific goal of explaining learning without rules. In the article, I noted this difference but obviously did not make my position clear enough. The dissimilarity between the two approaches is crucial, and I return to it again later in this response. But what the two models do have in common is an endeavor to make a better job of explaining the fuzziness that is so hard to capture in the categorical rule systems with which we have been accustomed to work.

Moreover, I am not at all worried by the existence of two competing and superficially contradictory explanations; just as Sokolik intriguingly suggests, various parts and kinds of learning may need to be explained differently. Moreover, as I suggest at the end of my article, once one accepts the notion of levels of explanation, it is reasonable and logical to accept that different models of analysis may cast considerable light on (even be true of) different aspects of the phenomenon we are studying. Thus, I welcome Sokolik’s decision to explore the value of Parallel
Distributed Processing models for explaining some aspects of second language learning, which, as she suggests, may in fact turn out to be different from certain aspects of first language learning.

Third, Sokolik usefully draws attention to criticism of the Parallel Distributed Processing models. I confess that my statements of the effectiveness of the model for past tense learning may have been overly optimistic, but I did draw attention to the risk of premature enthusiasm. I may have been a little hasty in accepting the authors’ judgment of the “plausibility” of the computer responses in the past tense experiment, although I did stress that the results are early, a “potential challenge” and not a disproof. I have since seen the work by Pinker and Prince (1988) that Sokolik cites and would expect continued lively controversy. But the importance of the challenge is one that, I am happy to see, Sokolik too recognizes.

It is critical to realize just what is at stake here. As I pointed out in my article, the outstanding theoretical weakness of the audio-lingual method was its failure to account for creativity; the notion of internalization of rules that is fundamental to generative grammar has in the intervening years been the most important theoretical implication of linguistics for language teaching (see Newmeyer, 1982; Spolsky, 1970). We have generally been convinced, therefore, that to study second language learning is to study rule learning. But a large number of problems have remained, many of which are now removed from central attention within generative theory by the postulation of differences between core and periphery.

As Kean (1986) notes, “The core is the highly restricted set of grammatical principles and parameters specified in the theory of Universal Grammar” (p. 80). This limitation has important consequences for the theory of learning. Core solutions are to be preferred, depending only on triggering; peripheral knowledge is marked, and learning it is more demanding. But as Chomsky (1981) has pointed out, one effect of this partition between core and periphery is to weaken the evidence provided by order of learning:

We would expect the order of acquisition of structures in language acquisition to reflect the structure of markedness in some respects, but there are complicating factors; e.g. processes of maturation may be such as to permit certain unmarked constructions to be manifested only relatively late in language acquisition, frequency effects may intervene, etc. (p. 9)

It may be that Parallel Distributed Processing models will succeed in accounting only for the periphery: that a restricted (but, for theorists, crucial) core of first language learning may still need to
be accounted for by a rule system, leaving a large (and, for practical concerns, vital) periphery, which is the main area of second (and first) language learning that can be usefully modified. I look forward to seeing the promised paper by Sokolik and Smith to learn what light they can cast on this problem. And I am gratified to find that Sokolik shares my interest in exploring the value of alternative models for understanding the nature of second language learning.

There is one final point that I would like to make. In the article and in my book (Spolsky, 1989), I deal with what I call a general theory of second language learning; Sokolik translates this to mean an interest in second language acquisition. Although I am among those who see no evidence for acquisition and learning being two different processes (see Spolsky, 1985a), Sokolik has (inadvertently, I am sure) introduced some potential confusion here. There has been a tendency for scholarship under the rubric of second language acquisition to be restricted to morphology or syntax learning (see Spolsky, 1988); my use of the term second language learning was intentional and embraces a wider view of outcomes and a much more general model.

What is of inherent interest here is the question of levels. It may well turn out to be necessary to use one type of model for explaining the nature of language learning in the wider sense (e.g., developing functional proficiency) and another type for explaining the acquisition of control of specific syntactic and morphological items (e.g., the morphology of the English verb or the French noun). However, it would be satisfying to fit them both into a single model. It is this gap that the general theory is struggling to bridge.

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**Comments on Elizabeth Gatbonton and Norman Segalowitz’s “Creative Automatization: Principles for Promoting Fluency Within a Communicative Framework”**

**A Reader Reacts. . .**

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As a teacher, it was both refreshing and inspiring to read Elizabeth Gatbonton and Norman Segalowitz’s recent *TESOL Quarterly* piece (Vol. 22, No. 3, September 1988), for I have long been thinking about what might be called automatization. Although I could only but agree with the five general principles that conclude the article, I have several comments and questions on the discussion that leads up to them.

I wonder how wide a definition of automaticity the authors intended. Although they call automaticity “a component of fluency” (p. 473), their descriptions range from a narrow “being able to execute a basic repertoire of commonly needed phrases with little
effort” (p. 476) to a more general “rapid, effortless speech production” (p. 478). The former description was included in the TESOL Quarterly Editor’s summary at the beginning of the issue, but for me, the article suggests a phenomenon closer to the second definition, one more truly creative than simply “being able to string memorized phrases together appropriately” (p. 476). Indeed, although the authors state that “the ability to automatically execute certain utterances” does not “necessarily imply . . . that the speaker has . . . possession of the underlying language competence that is the goal of language training” (p. 476), I believe that the concepts of automaticity and competence are closely related.

As described in the article, creative automatization means that students “generate (create) communicative intentions and produce the correspondingly appropriate utterances” (p. 476) rather than “merely repeat a sentence explicitly identified by the teacher” (p. 477). This may be true, but I feel it is an unnecessarily narrow definition of creative. The authors say they “do not mean to imply that students generate or create the target utterances from knowledge about the internal structure of sentences; they may well lack such knowledge at this point” (p. 477). I might add, “or perhaps at any point,” for “knowledge about the internal structure of sentences” may be a red herring.

I think there is something very creative going on when any language—be it a word, a routine, or the control of a function or element of grammar—becomes automatic. Automaticity means that learners are doing nothing less than automatically and instantaneously generating an aspect of their experience in the second language, just as they are able to do in their first language. Thus, automaticity is evidence of the “underlying language competence that is the goal of language training” (p. 476).

I have implied above that all language learning is a form of automatization. In order to write syllabuses, it is convenient to break language down into components such as vocabulary, functions, and grammar, but there seems to be a vast amount in common with the way all such items are automatized (acquired?) by the learner. This is one reason I was puzzled by the authors’ differentiating between utterances and structures, especially when they give one example of an utterance as “describing past activities (e.g., I went shopping; I went to bed late)” (p. 479). “Automatizing structures,” the authors contend, “requires students to produce semantically unrelated sentences” (p. 479). It seems likely, however, that most basic structures/utterances can benefit from the general principles of instruction outlined in the article.
Next, I would like to look at the activities the authors propose to promote automatization within a communicative framework. In short, it is a two-phase automatization process: a main activity that “aims to create in the learners a need to use target utterances repetitively while conveying genuine messages” (pp. 480-481) and a follow-up activity that “aims to provide more controlled but still communication-based exercises focusing on target sentences already elicited in the main activity” (p. 481). As there is no place for the presentation of language in this model, are we to assume that the relevant material from which to elicit has already been taught or that the students are false beginners? The authors do say that the main activity “initially establishes the repertoire of utterances” (p. 482) and that “no time is allotted for learners to study beforehand the utterances they will need” (p. 486).

Although I understand and agree entirely with the authors’ admonitions against “explicit prior rehearsal” (p. 486). I contend that students must already have somehow internalized the utterances they might need. Such a presentation/internalization phase seems essential to a full description of the process of automatization, for only if the students have successfully internalized the language they might need can they throw themselves into and benefit from the main activity, when they must “figure out for themselves what to do or say at each moment” (p. 486), I was also surprised, perhaps as a result of the above prejudice, that the authors put the more controlled phase as a follow-up, and not as a lead-in, to the main activity; controlled activities such as these would seem much more appropriate for the initial phase of learning.

Lastly, I would like to comment on what the authors call “two important issues: which utterances should be the targets of automatization and how to design activities to promote their repetition” (p. 479). The authors contend that “the question of which utterances to automatize is, at this time, the more difficult one to answer” (p. 479). However, syllabus is the one area in TESOL that is relatively advanced, in that there is broad agreement about what we should teach and in what order. Although I can with reasonable confidence select useful language to automatize, I have to sweat to write materials that are repetitive and focused and formulaic and psychologically authentic and genuinely communicative and (to add another general principle) inherently fascinating to all—this notwithstanding the authors’ breezy confidence that “there are infinite possibilities for such activities, and the imaginative teacher will have no difficulty developing new ones” (p. 484).
To illustrate the point, I may or may not be alone in wondering if the two follow-up activities presented in the article violate the authors’ principle of being “genuinely communicative” (in their admirably narrow definition of that term; see pp. 484-486). One of the activities, for example, has students presented with a hand-drawn “photo” and told to come up with “all the possible poses that the six people in the picture can assume to make a good class photo” (p. 482). After the excitement of the main role play, in which students have arranged themselves for real photographs, this might be a bit of a comedown and might be pretty close to speaking “simply for the purpose of serving a language-learning goal” (p. 486).

The fact that these activities did apparently satisfy the authors and their students, however, only shows how delicate and personal a thing it is to simulate real life successfully in the classroom. Teachers must, it seems, face the issue of designing activities on their own, armed only with general principles such as the ones outlined in the article. I end by thanking Gatbonton and Segalowitz for their contribution, and I join them in hoping for the “further development of methodological guidelines” (p. 489).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Marc Helgesen and Steven Brown for their comments on an earlier version of this piece.

The Authors Respond. . .

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We welcome the opportunity to respond to the comments of Julian Bamford. We found his comments to be insightful and to touch the very core of the points we attempted to make. We will try to address seven major concerns expressed in his commentary.
The Definition of Automaticity

Bamford wonders why we focus narrowly on the automatization of specific utterances when our article appears to him to deal more broadly with rapid, effortless speech production skills in general. Perhaps this impression arises from the idea that, given the nature of the activities we have proposed, students will receive practice in more than just the production of a particular set of utterances. For example, in having repeated opportunities to decide for themselves what to say in a given situation, students may also be automatizing their skill in selecting appropriate utterances from their repertoire. Also, because students are given control of the flow of conversation, they may develop strategies for handling unexpected occurrences and coping with the normal pressures that arise from using the language in authentic contexts.

We agree that the promotion of other aspects of fluency may result from our proposed activities. Indeed, it is likely that most training activities will affect more than one aspect of skill development. However, many of these other aspects of fluency skills can be promoted by activities other than the ones we proposed, such as debates, interviews, problem solving, reading, and writing activities. Such activities do not necessarily meet the five criteria outlined in our article. Nevertheless, they have a valued place in language teaching, and we certainly do not wish to exclude them or imply that our proposed activities will suffice for all the fluency needs of learners. By restricting ourselves to a narrower definition of automaticity, we focus on our primary concern: whether one can promote within a communicative context the sort of production automaticity that one usually sees as requiring pattern drill training.

We have chosen a narrow definition of automaticity because our main goal is to facilitate the creation of automatization activities for the classroom. A more specific definition of what is needed makes it easier to create activities that conform to this definition. Moreover, a narrow definition helps to keep our discussion focused and to reduce misunderstanding. After all, terms such as automaticity can have surplus meanings that may go beyond the bounds of our immediate intention and thus run the risk of giving rise to misunderstandings. A specific, narrow definition reduces this risk.

Another reason for focusing on the narrow definition is that it facilitates operationalizing automaticity for research purposes. Our focus on automaticity as processing specific utterances with
minimal demand on attentional resources is compatible with the
term as used by many laboratory investigators (see, e.g., Ackerman,
1988; Schneider, Dumais, & Shiffrin, 1984). Ultimately we hope
research will address whether classroom activities of the sort we
propose do actually lead to a reduction in the consumption of
attentional resources as we have suggested.

The Definition of Creativity

The term creativity is especially prone to the problems of surplus
meaning, and so here too we have tried to restrict ourselves to one
specific sense, namely the creation of communicative intentions.
We wish for now to exclude explicitly that aspect of creativity that
refers to the skill of constructing sentences on the basis of
knowledge of their internal structure. Discussing that sense of
creativity opens up a whole new and different area. Bamford
suggests that perhaps an L2 speaker may never have such
knowledge; for us this is an empirical question for which
“knowledge about internal structures” will have to be carefully
operationalized and researched.

Utterances and Structures

Bamford suggests that the acquisition of knowledge about
structures may proceed according to the same principles as the
acquisition of utterances and that therefore our distinction between
utterances and structures does not seem necessary. Bamford is not
explicit about why he takes this position, but it may be because he
observes that in accomplishing the goals of our activities, students
are likely to use utterances that share common underlying
structures. Thus, it might legitimately be claimed that automatiza-
tion of these structures also takes place.

We agree that this is a plausible position. Nevertheless, we
maintain our focus on the automatization of utterances, not
structures. Our main reason for doing so is that it enables us to
develop activities in which utterances are not simply strung together
because they have common underlying patterns but because they
are used to express communicative intentions.

We do not have space here to discuss a possible framework for
understanding the role of utterance learning in structure learning. In
broad terms, however, our view is this. When structure learning
does take place, it may very well be that it will have to be preceded
by utterance learning anyway. Grammatical structures can be
thought of as abstract patterns that underlie the particular sentences that exemplify them. The first step in the learning of any pattern, whether visual, auditory, or grammatical, is to attain mastery with some basic set of examples of the pattern to be learned; only later can the underlying pattern be abstracted from the examples that have been learned (see, e.g., Reed, 1972; Smith & Medin, 1981). Thus, it may be that to learn grammatical structures, one first has to master a basic repertoire of examples of those structures before the more abstract knowledge emerges. Of course, the issue is an empirical one that deserves research.

What Level of Beginners?

Would our materials work with complete beginners? In designing our proposed activities, we had in mind anyone with zero or minimal skills in English (those lacking a passive vocabulary), as well as incipient bilingual (some passive vocabulary; see Diebold, 1961) and false beginners (learners with a fairly wide vocabulary but unable to produce utterances beyond the one- or two-word stage). In our experience a group of so-called beginners usually includes many incipient bilingual, some false bilingual, and the occasional complete monoglot. Given the widespread use of English in the world today, most groups of adult beginners are probably mixtures of this type.

Our experience with such groups indicates that the materials can be used effectively with beginners. Adults have the capacity to learn vocabulary from context as long as they understand the communicative situation into which they are being plunged and as long as the students trust that there is a connection between the communicative intentions they wish to express and the target utterances supplied by the teacher and others at the moment of need. The greatest difficulty with groups of beginners is to explain the instructions. This may require the use of a great deal of pantomime or even recourse to the student’s first language. We find, however, that as long as there are a few individuals in the group who understand the instructions (e.g., the incipient bilingual or false beginners), the complete beginners soon learn to understand the demands of the activity.

Can our activities be used with groups of complete monoglots? In principle, there is no reason why not. The major differences between working with a group of complete beginners compared with a group of false beginners and intermediate-level students are the ease with which the instructions can be given, the pace, and the
duration of time in which the activities are carried out. Of course, lower level learners make more demands on the teacher’s ingenuity and imagination for conveying the instructions. The pace will be slower, and more repetition may be required. Thus, with very low-level learners, an activity such as the Class Photo may have to be prolonged by requiring more variations in the poses to be attained by the group.

The Follow-Up Activity

Bamford is concerned that the follow-up activities we described may violate our principle of being genuinely communicative. Perhaps we were not sufficiently explicit in our description of how the follow-up activity should be conducted. Consider the case of the Class Photo, for example. We find that if we ask the students to discuss the best alternative pose for a group depicted in a hand-drawn “photo,” we are able to harness their communicative intentions. The students have opinions and like to have their ideas understood and appreciated, and they enjoy comparing their opinions with those of other students. The exercise must, of course, be framed in such a way as to engage their personal commitment to their statements. Simply asking them to enumerate possible poses in the absence of a communicative goal, such as to find a consensus on the best alternative pose, does risk violating the principle of being genuinely communicative.

Bamford also suggests that follow-up activities may be useful as a lead-in to the main activity. In our view the follow-up activity is by design highly controlled, and the teacher necessarily focuses closely on particular utterances, since its purpose is to consolidate greater control of them. If we lead in with the follow-up activities, then students will have to learn new utterances without an opportunity to associate them properly with a wide range of communicative intentions. Using the follow-up as a lead-in would also undermine the main activity insofar as students would likely become too aware of learning a particular set of utterances highlighted by the teacher as the goal of the lesson.

More important, there is a danger that students might tailor their intentions in order to use utterances already highlighted rather than to focus on their naturally arising intentions and to search for utterances to express these. We believe our automatization process works only when learners repeatedly use utterances that they
themselves have chosen to use because the utterances are needed to express a communicative intention, not because the students see them as targets of learning.

In effect, we are suggesting a process of teaching that differs from what is commonly found in traditional methodology. Usually the approach is to move from tightly controlled activities, in which the utterances to be used are predictable, to more open, free activities, in which the utterances to be used are less predictable. Paulston and Bruder (1976) suggest that the pathway toward fluency begins with mechanical drills and progresses to communicative drills and then to free communication. Rivers and Temperley (1978) suggest that language learning consists of two components: skill building and skill testing. In practice, this is usually interpreted to mean that students first learn the mechanics of putting utterances together (skill building) before actually using these utterances in communicative contexts (skill testing).

In contrast, we propose beginning with the more open-ended situation and moving to more closely controlled situations. We think that students should learn utterances in cognitive contexts closely resembling those that will obtain when the utterances are needed later, so that they will be better recalled (according to the well-established psychological principle of memory-encoding specificity; see, e.g., Tulving, 1983). Only after students have learned the uses and functions of these utterances should they then focus on them more specifically, to consolidate control of their production and possibly even to examine their formal properties.

Which Utterances Should Be Automatized?

Bamford suggests that the answer to this difficult question may come from the syllabus work done in TESOL, in which he claims there is broad agreement about which elements of language should be taught and when. Although we agree that syllabus work is making indisputable contributions to the language-teaching area, much of it concentrates on the broader issues of determining which notions and functions are to be focused on in teaching. When it comes to selecting specific target utterances, teachers and textbook writers often have to rely to a great extent on their intuitions. We do not quarrel with this. Teaching cannot be postponed until there are definitive answers, and teachers and people who think about teaching often have valuable insights about such matters. Intuitions have also guided our decisions about what target utterances to focus on in our automatization activities.
It is important, however, that eventually we should have a more principled way to make the selections. A main priority would be to discover which are the most common sentences used to express particular functions. One way to do this might be to conduct the automatization activity with large numbers of native speakers to identify which utterances ought to be included in the target repertoire. We have proceeded to a limited extent in this way by first trying out candidate activities with small numbers of native speakers.

The Personal Qualities of the Teacher

Bamford concludes by touching indirectly upon one of the central problems of language instruction theory. Is the teacher or the methodology the more crucial determinant of success? It often seems that in the hands of a really good teacher any methodology will work, and in the hands of a poor teacher the best methodology will fail. We agree that the success of the activities we propose will depend to some extent on the skill of the teacher. We would like to suggest further that an essential quality of good teachers is their ability to engender in the learner communicative intentions and to successfully create an environment to promote that communication. Thus, some exceptional teachers succeed with methodologies that usually yield poor results because they intuitively know how to communicate with their students. Other teachers may fail with the “best” available methodologies because they lack the personal qualities that bring out genuine communicative intentions in the learner.

Our goal as researchers and teachers should be to identify the principles that underlie successful second language instruction and to articulate these as precisely as possible so that a wider range of individuals will succeed as teachers. There is no substitute for talent in teaching (or in music or in any other profession), but all levels of talent can benefit from working in a principled way.
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COORDINATOR
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
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EXCELLENT FRINGE BENEFITS

Fairfax County Public Schools in Northern Virginia serves approximately 130,000 students, K-12, including 16,000 language minority students representing more than 45 language groups.

The English as a Second Language (ESL) coordinator is responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ESL program which provides direct services to approximately 4,000 limited English proficient students. The coordinator evaluates and supervises the central office staff, provides leadership for approximately 140 ESL teachers and 20 instructional aides (grades 1-12), and serves as a resource to general education staff.

- Current, specific knowledge of second language acquisition, program management, and language instruction research and techniques.
- Skills and personal qualities necessary to provide leadership and direction to professional staff and to work effectively with staff, students, parents, and community members.
- Minimum of five years’ successful teaching experience and a combination of three years’ administrative or supervisory experience. At least half of the experience must be in ESL and/or bilingual instruction.
- Master’s degree (doctorate preferred) and/or postgraduate certification for elementary, English, or reading with endorsement in ESL.

Starting date: immediately

Interested and qualified applicants should send resume with letter summarizing applicable professional experience, career goals, and personal skills by July 28th to:

E. Pearl, Job I.D. #100
Fairfax County Public Schools
Department of Personnel Services
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392
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