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Editor’s Note

I am pleased to take this opportunity to introduce incoming TESOL Quarterly Editor, Sandra McKay. McKay has published widely in the areas of ESL composition, materials development, language minority education, teaching internationally, and second language literacy. She has been involved in teacher education programs worldwide and is currently coediting a sociolinguistics text for language teachers. In assuming the position of Editor, she is committed to serving the needs of both researchers and educators and to maintaining the journal’s high standards of professionalism. Sandra McKay’s editorship begins with the Summer 1994 issue. Effective immediately, submissions of full-length articles and Forum contributions should be sent to her at the address listed in the Information for Contributors.

In this Issue

Articles in this issue of the TESOL Quarterly argue that we must extend our current understandings of language learning, teaching, and assessment to better meet student needs. The lead article explores the conflicts students face in a Sri Lankan ESOL course; it goes beyond current theoretical models to examine the “lived culture” of the classroom. The second article recommends “alternative assessment” if we are to meet the needs of students in the integrated language and content classrooms that have become a popular alternative to traditional ESL instruction. The third article examines findings on the distinct nature of L2 writing, noting our need for a comprehensive theory of L2 writing, more comparative research, and assessment and instructional procedures that better meet the unique needs of second language writers. The fourth article provides a critical appraisal of learner training, counseling caution until longitudinal studies can provide us more evidence of success. The last article contradicts
cut-rent assumptions about the “local” character of number-person errors, providing suggestions for form-focused instruction.

- In response to recent theoretical discussions of domination and opposition, A. Suresh Canagarajah contributes a critical ethnography of a Sri Lankan classroom. In contrast to their professed motivation to study English, he finds opposition to their mandatory ESOL course among Tamil university students. He interprets this contradiction as a reflection of “the conflict students face between cultural integrity, on the one hand, and socioeconomic mobility on the other.” Canagarajah contends that this conflict explains students’ desire for grammar-based instruction, allowing them detachment from their Western textbook while they remain examination oriented. He argues, however, that this strategy “unwittingly leads students to participate in their own domination.” In the end, he argues for a pedagogy that is both liberating and meaningful.

- Deborah Short addresses the need for appropriate assessment measures in integrated language and content classes. Her goal is to isolate language features from content objectives so that they are not confused, one with another. To facilitate the use of alternative assessment measures, Short provides an assessment matrix as a guide for selecting assessments tools and determining assessment objectives (language or content). She surveys skills assessed and critically examines available assessment measures. The paper provides a wealth of examples of measures in use in elementary and secondary schools.

- Tony Silva reviews research comparing L1 and L2 writing, finding salient differences with respect to composing processes and the features of the written texts produced. On the basis of his examination of 72 empirical reports, Silva discusses “practical concerns of assessment, placement, staffing, and instruction” as well as directions for future comparative writing research.

- Janie Rees-Miller contributes a critical appraisal of “learner training.” Noting that studies of the “good language learner” have led to recommendations for strategy training, Rees-Miller critically assesses the bases of learner training, arguing that such practices are based on assumptions not yet supported by empirical evidence. She concludes that “the lack of unqualified success reported by proponents of learner training suggests that implementation of learner training in the classroom should be approached with caution.” Like Silva, Rees-Miller’s reading of the research literature leads to a call for more research.

- Jan Zalewski demonstrates the inadequacy of classifying errors in inflectional morphology as simply “local” and assuming that they do not interfere with comprehension. Zalewski presents data from ESL learners to demonstrate that “grammatical categories of number and person can [have] important . . . discourse-cohesive functions”;
such “global” errors affect text comprehension. Zalewski argues that incomplete acquisition of these inflections results from their being frequently overlooked by learners; he argues that we might facilitate learning by increasing their occurrence and raising their cognitive salience. His goal is to ensure that features are noticed, processed more often, and thus are rendered easier to learn.

Also in this issue:

• The Forum: Sarah Benesch discusses the ideological character of all ESL instruction, taking as an example the “apparently neutral pragmatism” of English for academic purposes. Patsy Lightbown and Manfred Pienemann’s commentary on Stephen Krashen’s “Teaching Issues: Formal Grammar Instruction” is followed by a response from the author; Michael Long and Graham Crookes respond to comments by Dave Willis on their TESOL Quarterly article, “Three Approaches to Task-Based Syllabus Design.” In the subsection Research Issues, Michael Busch and Jean Turner comment on the use of Likert scales in L2 research.

• Brief Reports and Summaries: William Savage and Rick Whisenand describe the use of student-teacher journals (here termed logbooks) to monitor teaching and help achieve learning objectives in an English for special purposes program in northeast Thailand. Additional advantages of the journals include their capacity to transform traditional teacher and learner roles and to provide information for program planning.


• Book Notices: pronunciation textbooks are the focus of this issue’s Book Notices section, for which Virginia Samuda has been guest editor.

Sandra Silberstein
State of the Art TESOL Essays
Celebrating 25 Years of the Discipline

Sandra Silberstein, Editor

Taken together, the contributions to this anthology comprise a portrait of TESOL—profession and association—as it enters its intellectual and institutional maturity. Each chapter explores a unique set of links between theory and practice, documenting the diversity and integrity of the language teaching enterprise.

As both a synthesis and a vision of the future, State of the Art TESOL Essays serves as the foundation volume to survey and methods courses as well as to classes focusing on materials development and teacher preparation.

As befits a volume intended to be both retrospective and prospective, Overview articles compose the first of its four sections. Mary Ashworth and H. Douglas Brown examine the field as it is and as it might be, addressing fundamental issues of what it means to be language educators in a global society.

The second section, Perspectives on the Field, observes the profession through a variety of lenses. Educators such as David Nunan, Pat Rigg, Christian Faltis, Ann Johns, and Diane Larsen-Freeman discuss communicative, whole language, and ESP approaches as well as perspectives on second language acquisition research and

In the Skill Areas and Beyond, readers will find state-of-the-art discussion of research and practice during the past quarter century. Although they do not necessarily endorse a “skills approach” to language teaching, the authors (e.g., Ann Raimie, Marianne Celce-Murcia, Joan Morley, and William Grabe) share the view that much can be learned about specific elements of language and language use.

James Alatis and Robert Kaplan look historically at the TESOL association, exploring its relationship to the field of applied linguistics and its growth from a learned society to a professional organization.

Critical Ethnography of a Sri Lankan Classroom: Ambiguities in Student Opposition to Reproduction Through ESOL

A. SURESH CANAGARAJAH
University of Jaffna

The article argues that the way in which domination is experienced and oppositional tendencies are formed in classroom life have to be observed closely rather than conceived abstractly. This ethnographic study of 22 tertiary-level Tamil students following a mandatory English for general purposes (EGP) course reveals that whereas the lived culture displays opposition to the alienating discourses inscribed in a U.S. textbook, the students affirm in their more conscious statements before and after the course their strong motivation to study ESOL. Interpreting this contradiction as reflecting the conflict students face between cultural integrity, on the one hand, and socioeconomic mobility, on the other, the study explains how students' desire for learning only grammar in a product-oriented manner enables them to be somewhat detached from cultural alienation while being sufficiently examination oriented to pass the course and fulfill a socioeconomic necessity. However, this two-pronged strategy is an ideologically limiting oppositional behavior that contains elements of accommodation as well as resistance and unwittingly leads students to participate in their own domination.

The recent introduction of poststructuralist perspectives on language and radical theories of schooling that view language teaching as a political act is a long-awaited development in TESOL. Such theories enjoy much currency in L1 circles, almost becoming the orthodoxy in areas like composition teaching, with words like discourse and empowerment becoming clichéd and posing the danger that they might have lost their critical edge. TESOL, on the other hand, while being a far more controversial activity, has managed to see itself as safely "apolitical" due to its positivistic preoccupation with methods and techniques.
In recent issues of the TESOL Quarterly, scholars such as Pennycook (1989) and Peirce (1989) have reconstructed dominant methods and the idea of method itself in order to expose the ideologies that inform TESOL. Though their papers perform a pioneering function, the force with which they are compelled to present their theses also involves some simplification. Whereas Pennycook's delineation of ideological domination through TESOL appears overdetermined and pessimistic, Peirce's characterization of the possibilities of pedagogical resistance appears too volitionist and romantic. We should now turn to the sober task of analyzing the complexities of domination and resistance as they are played out in ESOL classrooms and the confusing manner in which they are often interconnected.

Pennycook (1989) is generally convincing when, after a detailed analysis of the socially constructed nature of the concept of method, he asserts, "The power of the Western male academy in defining and prescribing concepts . . . plays an important role in maintaining inequities between, on the one hand, predominantly male academics and, on the other, female teachers and language classrooms on the international power periphery" (p. 612). This scenario is so true that, ironically, even pedagogues of resistance (of those like Pennycook and Peirce) have to reach us in the periphery from the West. However, in stretching the effects of the political economy of textbook publishing and research at the macrolevel to language classrooms, Pennycook is making too wide a leap—especially because his paper does not focus on classroom realities. What Pennycook overlooks in the process is that the classroom is a site of diverse discourses and cultures represented by the varying backgrounds of teachers and students such that the effects of domination cannot be blindly predicted. Such classroom cultures mediate the concepts defined and prescribed by the Western academy as they reach the periphery. It is possible that various modes of opposition are sparked during this encounter. Although Pennycook himself eventually exhorts teachers and academics to envision a more democratic social environment, this will not be possible if a space is not created for such resistance by acknowledging the relative autonomy of the school from other social institutions and processes. Through this term, Henry Giroux (1983) posits that the different social institutions and cultural sites "are governed by complex ideological properties that often generate contradictions both within and between them" (p. 102), that a specific institution like the school is not ruled inexorably by the interests of the state and economy, although necessarily influenced by them. Giroux (1983) in fact criticizes reproductive perspectives of schooling, such as those of Althusser (1971), Bowles and Gintis (1976), and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) for deterministically conceiving the school as serving to inculcate only the culture, ideolo-
gies, and social relations necessary to build and sustain the status quo.

If Pennycook has to attend to the noun in the term relative autonomy, Peirce has to note the adjective. That is, the attitudes, needs, and desires of minority communities and students are only partially free from the structures of domination in the larger social system. Hence, whereas Peirce (1989) makes a powerful case for how “the teaching of English can open up possibilities for students by helping them to explore what might be desirable, as well as ‘appropriate,’ uses of English” (p. 401), she assumes too much in considering “People’s” English as what will be unanimously desired by the “minority” students of South Africa. This is not to slight the importance of developing such pedagogies of resistance, that is, politically conscious approaches to learning/teaching which critically interrogate the oppressive tendencies behind the existing content and forms of knowledge and classroom relations to fashion a more liberating educational context that would lead to student empowerment and social transformation (see Giroux, 1983). They are certainly a pressing concern in TESOL and a much needed corrective to deterministic theories of schooling. However, with remarkable balance, Giroux (1983) also criticizes one-sided pedagogues of resistance for “not giving enough attention to the issue of how domination reaches into the structure of personality itself” (p. 106). Minority students may then display a complex range of attitudes towards domination with a mixture of oppositional and accommodative tendencies which have to be critically examined.

Pennycook and Peirce are unable to attend to the complexities of the classroom culture in the face of domination because their papers are broadly theoretical, focus on the politics of TESOL-related macrostructures, and only assume implications for language classrooms rather than reporting empirical observations of the classroom itself for how domination is experienced and oppositional tendencies are formed there. We can understand the “ambiguous areas” (Giroux, 1983, p. 109) of student response, where a confusing range of accommodative and oppositional tendencies are displayed, only if we take a closer look at the day-to-day functioning of the classroom and the lived culture of the students. It is by doing so that we can attain a realistic understanding of the challenges as well as the possibilities for a pedagogy of resistance in TESOL. The objective of this paper is not to outline one more pedagogy of resistance, but to interrogate the range of behaviors students display in the face of domination—the awareness of which should precede and inform any development of such pedagogues. The ethnographic study below of an ESOL classroom in Sri Lanka creatively complicates the perspectives on domination and resistance presented by Pennycook and Peirce.
CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY

Ever since the British colonial power brought the whole island of (then) Ceylon under its control in 1796 and instituted English education to create a supportive lower administrative work force, English has functioned as a valued linguistic capital over the local Sinhala and Tamil languages to provide socioeconomic advantages for native Lankans. Although since 1956 (8 years after independence), “leftist” governments have professed to raise the status of Sinhala (and, to a limited extent, Tamil), it is the English-speaking bilingual who have dominated the professions and social hierarchy. On the other hand, the democratization or popularization of English promised by “rightist” governments has only amounted to providing limited mobility into lower-middle-class rungs for aspirants whose newly acquired English is marked as a nonprestige “sub-standard Sri Lankan English” (see Kandiah, 1979). These developments have historically disgruntled the monolingual majority to make them perceive English as a double-edged weapon that frustrates both those who desire it as well as those who neglect it (Kandiah, 1984). Similarly, in the Tamil society, whereas the emergent militant nationalism has unleashed a Tamil-only and even “pure Tamil” movement, such parallel developments as the exodus to the West or the cosmopolitan capital as economic and political refuges have bolstered English to assure the dominance of English bilingual and to attract monolingual.

As for English language teaching, the teachers, administrators, and general public in Sri Lanka agree that English language teaching is a “colossal failure” (de Souza, 1969, p. 18) considering the vast resources expended on this enterprise by the state and Western cultural agencies. Though all identify the problem as one of student motivation, they differ as to why students are unmotivated. Hanson-Smith (1984), a U.S. TESOL consultant, and Goonetilleke (1983), a local professor of English, fault the educational system. In the university, for instance, they perceive that the requirements for English are not stringent enough to motivate students to take the subject as seriously as other subjects. Both, however, are in agreement that English does a world of good for Sri Lankan students: “English is learned not primarily to communicate with other Lankans . . . but to converse with the world at large—and not just the world of technology and machines, but also of dreams, aspirations and ideals” (Hanson-Smith, 1984, p. 30). Because Kandiah (1984), on the other hand, is of the view that the dreams encouraged by English are illusory (as English learning does not challenge but in fact perpetuates inequality) and its ideals are suspected by students of resulting in cultural deracination, he sees the problem of motivation differently: “[The] reasons why they lack this
motivation are socioeconomic-political” (p. 132). The present study developed as an attempt to arbitrate between these divergent approaches to the problems of motivation with empirical data because the papers of the above scholars were largely impressionistic and simply imputed to students attitudes neither systematically observed nor elicited.

**Method**

The methodological orientation and fieldwork techniques developed by ethnography enable us to systematically study the students’ own point of view of English language teaching in its natural context. Though ethnography is noted for its intensive, detailed focus on the local, contextualized, and concrete, the challenge in this study is to analyze how the attitudes formed by students in daily classroom life are impinged upon by the more abstract sociopolitical forces outside the walls of the classroom. However, current ethnography is taking up the challenge of “how to represent the embedding richly described local cultural worlds in larger impersonal systems of political economy” (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, p. 84). This new orientation in the fieldwork and writing of ethnography is inspired by a more complex, politicized view of culture in both anthropology and political economy. Such developments account for a small but growing body of ethnographic literature that looks at the culture of classrooms and student communities in relation to social conflict and political domination (see Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Ogbu, 1986; Weis, 1985; Willis, 1977).

In order to conduct such politically motivated ethnography, we have to go beyond the dominant descriptive ethnography that is practiced today in TESOL circles (see, e.g., Benson, 1989) and theorized in definitive terms for TESOL practitioners by Watson-Gegeo (1988). What we need in its place is a critical ethnography—an ideologically sensitive orientation to the study of culture that can penetrate the noncommittal objectivity and scientism encouraged by the positivistic empirical attitude behind descriptive ethnography and can demystify the interests served by particular cultures to unravel their relation to issues of power (see Marcus & Fisher, 1986). Willis (1978), whose 1977 study of working-class black students in an urban British school is a pioneering and sophisticated example of this orientation, defines the project of critical ethnography thus:

We must interrogate cultures, ask what are the missing questions they answer, probe the invisible grid of context, inquire what unsaid propositions are assumed to the invisible and surprising external forms of cultural life. If we can supply the premises, dynamics, logical relations of responses
which look quite untheoretical and lived out “merely” as cultures, we will uncover a cultural politics. (p. 18)

Practicing such a committed, value-laden ethnography does not mean that we can ignore Watson-Gegeo's (1988) warning that “true ethnographic work is systematic, detailed and rigorous, rather than anecdotal or impressionistic” (p. 588). Hence, an intensive participant observation of the ESOL class I taught 6 hr/week was carried out for an academic year (November 1990 to July 1991). Though it is possible that my dual roles as teacher and researcher could create certain tensions (as could be expected in any observation by a participant), my teaching also created certain advantages which I would have lacked as a detached observer. My daily interaction with the students in negotiating meanings through English and participating in the students’ successes and failures, with the attendant need to revise my own teaching strategy, provided a vantage point to their perspectives. Moreover, I enjoyed natural access to the daily exercises and notes of the students and the record of their attendance without having to foreground my role as researcher. As the teaching progressed, I stumbled into other naturalistic data that provided insights into students’ own point of view of the course, such as the comments students had scribbled during class time in the margins of the textbook (which, due to frequent losses, was distributed before each class and collected at the end).

To add a chronological dimension to the study, I situated the other methods of data collection at significant points in the progression of the course. During the first week of classes, I conducted a free recall procedure, asking the students to jot down their impressions of English. I also gave a detailed questionnaire covering their social and linguistic background to be completed at home. At the end of the course, but before their final examination, I conducted an oral interview with the students in my office to analyze their responses to the course, textbook, and learning English in general. Though I invited the students for a 15-min interview, eventually each interview ranged from 70 to 90 min. Because some students preferred to converse with me in the company of another classmate, I permitted them to meet me in pairs. Even then, 7 students, all females, failed to turn up—probably reflecting the taboo on close interpersonal relations between the sexes in Tamil society. The interview, like the questionnaire, was in Tamil so that students could express themselves freely. (Such data is presented below, in translation, unless otherwise stated. The original Tamil is cited only when discursively significant.)

The questionnaire and the interview modules were constructed in such manner as to enable cross-checking of students’ opinions. In the questionnaire, the first part surveyed students’ educational back-
grounds and exposure to English. The second part surveyed the educational and socioeconomic background of the parents. The third part provided a set of true/false statements to test more obliquely students’ attitudes toward the use of English. The final part contained open-ended questions that further sampled their attitudes, allowing comparison of these with their previous statements. Though the final interview was prestructured, I shifted topic freely according to the flow of conversation. Questions 1–3 queried the attitude of the students towards English in relation to their other courses; Questions 4-7 checked their response to the organization and cultural content of the textbook; 8 and 9 sampled the effects of English learning on their thinking and identity; 10–12 invited a critique of the pedagogy and curriculum; 13–15 explored their use of English outside the class; and 16–18 solicited their recommendations for the improvement of the course. Some of the similar questions in the interview then enabled me to compare the motivation and attitudes of the students with their opinions stated in the questionnaire in the beginning of the course. The other modes of data collection, too, enabled me to authenticate the data more effectively through triangulation (see Denzin, 1970). For instance, the lived culture of the students (as recorded in my field notes and students’ comments in the textbook) was at odds with their stated opinions in the interview and questionnaire, compelling me to reconstruct more complex hypotheses to explain their attitudes.

**The Course**

The class that I observed consisted of 22 first-year students in the arts and humanities at the University of Jaffna. The ESOL course is mandatory for all students of the faculty of arts. A pass is required in ESOL to qualify for admission to the second year. For eligibility to specialize in a specific subject from the second year onwards, students are required to score at least a B on the ESOL exam in the first sitting. It is from the second year that English teaching is structured into English for specific purposes (ESP), catering to the different subject specialties. The first-year course is based on English for general purposes (EGP), providing practice in all four skills.

Because the course is structured around a core text, it is necessary to discuss the organization of American Kernel Lessons (AKL): Intermediate (O’Neill, Kingbury, Yeadon, & Cornelius, 1978). We have to remember that such prepackaged material, which comes with a teachers’ manual, testing kit, and audiotapes for listening comprehension, represents “a direct assault on the traditional role of the teacher as an intellectual whose function is to conceptualize, design and implement learning experiences suited to the specificity and needs of a particular classroom.
experience” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 149). Although teachers in the University of Jaffna realize these problems, the limitations of time, funds, stationery, and printing facilities in war-torn Jaffna eventually drive them to use texts such as AKL which have been amply gifted by Western agencies such as the Asia Foundation. If existing books become dated, teachers have to simply wait for the next consignment of material.

As the title implies, the text is targeted towards intermediate-level students and focuses on the tenses, using eclectic methods organized around a predominantly situational approach (see Richard & Rogers, 1986). Each unit contains five parts. Part A introduces the grammatical item for that unit through a set of “situations,” accompanied by visuals. Part B, labeled Formation and Manipulation, introduces the grammatical item more overtly and provides pattern practice. Part C is a serialized detective story that introduces new vocabulary in addition to providing practice in reading/listening comprehension. Part D presents a conversation for role playing, whereas the final part contains guided composition. The last two parts also provide grammar revision exercises. Though grammar is presented overtly in some sections, in most others, students are encouraged to formulate their own hypotheses inductively through active use of the language in specific skills.

It is also necessary to analyze the ideologies that structure the text in order to place in context the attitudes and responses of the students to the course. What stands out in the note, “To the Student and Teacher,” in the beginning of the text is the concern with providing adequate “practice” so that students will “progress” in the “fundamentals of English” which intermediate students “still cannot seem to use correctly, easily and as automatically as they would like” (O’Neill et al., 1978, p. vi). The language echoes behaviorism and assumes that with sufficient drill, students can be made to display habit-oriented automatic responses. Furthermore, the fundamentals of English are considered autonomous, value-free grammatical structures (in the fashion of U.S. structuralism), ignoring the culture and ideologies that inform the language or the textbook. The students themselves are isolated from their social context, and there is no consideration of how their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds can affect or enhance their learning. In its concern with correctness (which, of course, is based on standard U.S. English rather than on the Englishes students bring with them), the textbook empowers the teacher as the sole authority in the classroom to regulate, discipline, and arbitrate the learning process. Such assumptions amount to what Giroux (1983) has identified as instrumental ideology (p. 209). Though AKL acknowledges the need to make learning an “enjoyable experience” and also provides opportu-
nities for collaborative pair work, these attempts provide only occa-
sional relief from the largely positivistic pedagogy.

In fairness to AKL, we have to note that certain sections are influ-
enced by the notion of communicative competence with advice to
students that “the situations themselves are more important than iso-
lated words” (O’Neill et al., 1978, p. v). However, the interactions
and the discourse employed in such situations assume an urbanized,
technocratic, Western culture that is alien to the students. Even such
simple speech activities as conversations are conducted in a strictly
goal-oriented manner (see Unit 2d), whereas Tamil discourse values
the “digression” and indirection typical of oral communities. The val-
ues that emerge through the situations are not hard to decipher, such
as upward social mobility and consumerism (4d). The work ethic (12a)
and routine of factory life (13a) are presented positively, whereas
strikes and demonstrations (5a) and the lifestyle of blacks (in the story
of Jane and her boyfriends) are not. The potential of the textbook to
influence students with certain dominant values of U.S. society is subtly
effective because AKL disarms its users by presenting language learn-
ing as a value-free, instrumental activity.

The Class

The class consisted of 13 female and 9 male native Tamil students,
of whom 3 were Roman Catholics and the rest Hindus. These students
had failed the initial placement test in English and fared among the
worst among the new entrants for that academic year. They were
enrolled in a range of subjects related to the humanities and social
sciences besides the mandatory ESOL. A majority of these students
were from rural communities and from the poorest economic groups.
Except for 4 students whose parents were in clerical or teaching profes-
sions (thus earning the relatively decent sum of 1000 rupees, or US$25
a month!), the other parents did not have steady jobs or salaries. In
the latter group, some were tenant farmers, and others were seasonal
casual laborers. The families of the students had also had limited
education. Only one student’s parents had proceeded beyond Grade
10. The parents of 5 others had not completed an elementary school
education.

Furthermore, the students came from backgrounds in which English
held limited currency. Only 8 students said their parents had managed
to study some elementary English in school. Of these, 3 reported that
their parents might listen to English programs on the multilingual
television or radio. Five reported that their parents could be expected
to utter some English words if they encountered foreigners or if need
arose in their workplace. None of them could read or write English. Considering the students themselves, although 18 had sat for the Grade 10 English language test, only 10 had managed to score a simple pass (i.e., a grade of 40%). Three students reported that they had read English newspapers/books or seen English films—although they could not remember the titles of any. Fourteen reported that they might occasionally switch on some English programs on radio or television. The same number said they might code-mix English with friends or when they needed a link language.

**CONTEXTUALIZING CLASSROOM LIFE**

**Precourse Determination**

When the university reopened belatedly for the academic year, it was after much doubt as to whether it would continue to function at all because renewed hostilities between the Sinhala government and Tamil nationalists had brought life to a standstill in the Tamil region. Yet students trickled in from jungles where they had taken refuge from the fighting—in some cases, trekking hundreds of miles by foot. In a country where only a small percentage of all those who annually qualify for tertiary education do get admission, the students valued their university degrees sufficiently to turn up for classes. As a grim reminder of the violence and tension that would continue to loom behind their studies, government fighter jets screamed overhead and bombed the vicinity of the university while the students were taking the English placement test during the opening week of classes.

Despite these problems or because of them, students were highly motivated for studies (including English), as is evident in an initial questionnaire I gave them. Asked whether they wanted to study English at the university, all of the students replied in the affirmative. However, the intensity of the feelings that accompanied their motivation is conveyed through some of the other data in which students enjoyed more scope for free expression. Thiru wrote the following personal note at the end of his free recall procedure:

1. It is difficult to study English in the village. And I am from Kaddaiparichchan in Mutur. There was no English from Grade 3 to 7. I lacked opportunities. But I really (extremely) desire learning English (Please don't reveal this to anybody else in the class: Here in Jaffna there are a lot of opportunities, and I am presently studying English from a private tutor also).

Students from remote villages profoundly regretted not having enjoyed opportunities to learn English earlier and admitted that it was
belatedly that they had realized the need for the language. Some of the male students including Thiru caught me alone a couple of times in the first month (while I walked back to my office after class) to impress upon me their previous frustrations with the language and their present desire to master it in the university.

The reasons for learning English however seemed predominantly utilitarian. In the questionnaire, 76.1% stated “educational need” as their first preference (including 61.9% who considered this their sole choice). “Job prospects” was cited by 19.2%, and “social status” by 4.7%. “To travel abroad” was cited by none. But the categories students themselves proffered suggest motives that are more pragmatic or idealistic as they emerge through a relatively open-ended later question. Students needed English (a) because ESOL is mandatory in the university, 5.8%; (b) because a pass is required in the first-year test, 5.8%; (c) to pursue postgraduate studies, 5.8%; (d) to understand other cultures, 11.7%; (e) to interact with a wider group of people, 14.7%; (f) to gather more information, 20.8%; (g) to know an international language, 23.5%; (h) “to become a complete person,” 11.7%. Although Motives a-c show a narrowly pragmatic view of education, Motives d-g are less so. And the final reason, which is the most idealistic stated, suggests that students are not always purely utilitarian in their perspective. Some, like Lathan insisted, “Through English a student becomes a mulu manithan [i.e., a complete man].” In fact, when the question was reframed as “What are the disadvantages of being a Tamil monolingual?” students expressed a paralyzing sense of powerlessness in the face of diverse peoples and circumstances.

Such high notions as Lathan’s about the functions of English are confirmed in the students’ attitudes toward English as a language. Although students would be expected to resist English at a time of heightened linguistic nationalism and purism in the community with political leaders daily condemning English, students’ attitudes were, on the contrary, quite positive. Except for one student (i.e., Supendran—whose remarkably consistent opposition will be discussed later), the rest disagreed with the statement “Studying English as a second language would create damage for Tamil language and culture.” Similarly, for the more personalized variant of this statement, “What are the social/personal disadvantages that would occur to you by your use of English,” all answered “none.” Such a favorable attitude on the part of the students is partly explained by a phrase that kept recurring in their responses: English as a pothu moli (i.e., common language). It was evident that students were not using this synonymously with sarvatha moli or akila ulaka moli (i.e., international language) with its usual connotations. When they used pothu moli in addition to the latter terms, they seemed to use it with the meaning that it was an “unmarked” language that
transcended the specific cultures and ideologies of different nations. So Gnani stated, “Although it is the language of a particular nation, it is a common language for all people and nations.”

Although the relatively more spontaneous impressions of the students in the free recall procedure largely confirm their positive attitudes toward English, they are also tinged with fears and inhibitions. Hence, though a majority of the students associated English with development, progress, learning, civilization, literacy, culture, social respect, and personality, one can also detect other comments which suggest that students are not unaware of the sociopsychological damage and politics of the language. Shanthi wrote:

2. British mother tongue. We were forced to study it because of colonialism. If we have a knowledge of this language we can live in whichever country we want. Brings to mind the developed life of the white people. A language that everybody should know.

Though conflicting impressions are mixed in Shanthi’s stream of consciousness, what is remarkable is that she remains detached from the negative features and fails to take a perspective on them. The fact that students are probably consciously rationalizing their fears or suppressing their inhibitions is evident from Ratnam’s comments. He argued, “Since the dominance of English is incontestable, the best strategy is to exploit its resources to develop our own language and culture.”

Midcourse Resistance

The inhibitions towards English which lay partly suppressed during the initial period of the course in the conscious responses of the students, came into relief in their largely unconscious lived culture as the course proceeded. It is evident from the record of daily attendance that students faced problems in the course. Although students recorded an impressive 94% daily turn out for most of the first 2 months, at the end of the second month, attendance fell to 50%. Students began to miss classes for the slightest reason: to write tutorials for another subject, to prepare for a test, to attend funerals of friends’ relatives. At times intense fighting in the district or the imposition of curfew also affected attendance. But none of this deterred 90% of the students from attending from the eighth month as the final examination was approaching, demanding that past test papers be done and revision undertaken.

The comments, drawings, and paintings students had penned in the textbook are more subtle evidence of the flagging interest of students. Because students had written these during class time, this activity sug-
gested that topics other than English grammar had preoccupied them while teaching was going on. Although students had appeared to be passively observing or listening to the teacher, as required by the instrumental pedagogy in the class, the glosses in the text suggest a very active underlife. Unknown to the teacher, students were communicating with each other or sometimes with themselves through these glosses. The glosses suggest the discourses and themes that seem to have interested the students more than those in the textbook. In one sense, these are the discourses which mediate for the students the situations, grammar, and language taught by the textbook. In another sense, these are students’ counterdiscourses that challenge the textual language, values, and ideology. Hence, they deserve close examination.

Many of the glosses are inspired by the ongoing nationalist struggle for a separate Tamil state. For this reason, in Unit 1c, the picture of Fletcher (the protagonist in the detective story) as he is seated in a prison cell is modified in a couple of textbooks. He has been painted with a traditional thilakam (a mark on one’s forehead symbolizing a Saiva identity), given a mustache, worn spectacles and referred to below as Thileepan (i.e., the name of a popular Tamil resistance fighter who had fasted unto death protesting against the Indian “occupation” forces in 1987). Two police officers talking to each other after setting up a roadblock to arrest an escaping convict (in Unit 10c) have been referred to as LTTE and PLOTE—two rival Tamil militant groups. When Fred joins the army in Unit 25a, the guns in the background are labeled AK-47 and T-57—the arms typically used by Tamil fighters. There are also refrains from Tamil resistance songs penned all over the textbook which talk about the domination of the Tamil nation and the need to resist.

Other glosses seem to seek cultural relevance from the situations and pictures. Jane and Susan are painted thilakam and kondai (i.e., a traditional hairdo) to resemble Tamil women. Some other characters are drawn with traditional dress to Tamilize them. Tamil proverbs and aphorisms comment on the moral of some of the situations presented in the textbook. Other situations are glossed by titles of films and refrains from cinema songs, reflecting the important place cinema occupies in Tamil popular culture. Bruce’s success story, in Unit 4a, from a factory worker to a factory owner, accompanied by the purchase of a bigger car, bigger house, having another child, and eventually a second marriage is aptly satirized by romantic film titles at each stage of the development.

Romance and sex, which are glorified by university students, inform other glosses. Because these experiences are often associated with a liberal Western culture (different from the conservative Tamil ethos), most of these comments, interestingly, are written in English. Fletcher
driving with Marilyn in Unit 14c is a target for many such comments. In one book Fletcher is presented as saying, “I love you darling.” In another it is Marilyn who says, “My dear lover.” Susan, whispering to Joe in a concert in Unit 9a, is made to say, “Love me,” while Laura leaning towards Bruce says, “Kiss me.” There are also comments through which students send messages to each other: “Meena loves Sugirthan.” Ironically, though students find it difficult to produce correct sentences in transformation exercises and pattern practice, in these comments they produce fairly complex sentences which have not been taught in the class: “I love all of the girls beautiful in the Jaffna University.” “Reader! I love you. Bleave me” has been replied to by another student: “I don’t love you because I do not believe you. You are terrible man.”

The sexual component gets expressed when the private parts of characters in the textbook are highlighted with ink. There are also different postures of the sex act drawn all over the book. Such drawing would create much sensation in a mixed class of students in a conservative society. However, it is impossible to avoid the impression that some of the drawings deliberately vulgarize sex. Perhaps they are aimed at insulting the English instructors, or the publishers of the textbook, or the U.S. characters represented.

While the cultural distance of the textbook from the discourses of the students is dramatized by these glosses, it intrudes more directly into the daily lessons to affect the learning process. Although the textbook expects teachers to use its visual aids to help students formulate interpretive schemata for comprehension passages, such exercises in fact end in frustration as the attempts of students are complicated by the cultural difference. After reading the first episode of the serialized story in which Fletcher, an ex-army officer, is presented in a federal penitentiary, I asked the students to reconstruct what they had heard with the help of the picture. (In the conversation below, reproduced from field notes, the contribution of the students was in Tamil):

3a. Teacher: Where do you think Fletcher is? . . . Shanthi!
   b. Shanthi: In the army barracks.
   c. Teacher: Army? What makes you say that?
   d. Shanthi: He is wearing a uniform.
   e. Teacher: Well . . . Indran?
   f. Indran: He is in the hospital . . . . He is seated on a bed.
   g. Teacher: But what about the bars? . . . Don’t you see the bars? He is actually in prison.
   h. Shanthi: Okay, but he is wearing good clothes. He is wearing shoes.
   i. Indran: And he is said to be going to the library and having regular meals . . . . And he is seated alone in the room.
The students’ image of prison life as overcrowded, dirty, and more repressive (based on Sri Lankan conditions) interferes with their interpretation. The other situations visually represented, such as an orchestra playing, air travel, department store shopping, and apartment living, also confused the students. Such cultural estrangement created an additional layer of problems to the linguistic ones students were already confronted with.

Other tensions in the course resulted from the styles of learning desired by the students. The students seemed uncomfortable with a collaborative approach to learning whenever it was encouraged. Because the textbook specified pairwork occasionally, and I myself wanted to create more linguistic interaction among students, I insisted that the desks be arranged in a circle. But before each class, the students rearranged the desks into a traditional lecture-room format, with the teacher’s desk in front of the room and their own in horizontal rows. Thus, students minimized interaction among themselves and failed to take initiative in the flow of classroom discourse. As the conversation cited above suggests, typical interactions follow the features of traditional teacher-centered classroom discourse (see Mehan, 1985; Stubbs, 1976), in which the teacher regulates and dominates talk. Turn taking follows the tripartite structure of Question (see Turn a above), Answer (Turn b), and Evaluation (Turn c); such sequences follow in c-d-e, e-f-g. Turns for students are assigned by the teacher (see Turns a and e); for each single turn by the student, the teacher takes two, thus dominating the quantity of talk. The questions asked are display questions for which the teacher already knows the answer. In a quite atypical move here, Shanthi and Indran attempt to contradict the teacher’s explanation; significantly, these were not framed as questions but simply as casual asides. It was only Supendran who asked for clarifications or challenged my explanations more explicitly. For most of the time, the rest preferred to sit, pen in hand, and write down whatever was on the board or simply listen to the teacher’s lecture (as in Turn j). Ironically, one of the glosses above an interactive pair-work exercise said, “This is a job for the jobless.”

Accompanying this desire for teacher-centered learning, students made learning a product rather than process. Students expected to be provided with the abstract forms and rules of language deductively or prescriptively for them to store in memory rather than to inductively formulate the rules for themselves through active use of the language in communicative interactions. Disregarding activities, students de-
manded notes. Whenever charts or grammatical paradigms were presented, the students eagerly wrote them down. They demanded more written work rather than speech or listening exercises because they felt that they could retain it for personal study and revision before tests. My diary records much time taken in discussing the importance of “use rather than rules.” But the slogan failed to create changes in their attitude. Gradually students noted my practice of reserving the 2-hr classes for activities and 1-hr slots for the more overtly grammar-oriented sections of the textbook and attended the latter while cutting the former.

Students also resisted the active use of English as a medium for instruction or interaction in the classroom. During the first week when I asked students to introduce themselves in English by making use of simple syntactic structures I had written on the board, they simply giggled and found it embarrassing to do so. Students responded in Tamil even though I used English for questions, commands, and explanations, whether in formal or informal situations. Thiru displayed the most paralyzing sense of inhibition. It was simply impossible for him to produce a single word of English from the textbook or by himself. The long moments of silence would become embarrassing as the class waited patiently for Thiru to open his mouth when his turn came to do an exercise or read a passage orally. Although Thiru was very voluble in class in Tamil about matters related to university policies and regulations, in English he was simply tongue-tied.

Much of the stress seemed to result from the implications of English for the identity and group solidarity of the students. A particularly trying time was the correction of pronunciation as required by the textbook. Because Tamil lacks syllable-initial fricatives, the students pronounced he and she as /ki/ and /si/. The discomfort of the students in my repeated attempts to correct such pronunciation was explained by their later comments that revealed their awareness of such pronunciation being identified as “nonstandard” Sri Lankan English. These students had been the target of insults by middle-class speakers of “educated” Sri Lankan English. Not only pronunciation but the very language was a class marker. Supendran said that he simply avoided contexts in which students (from “better backgrounds”) used English with him because he felt that they were flaunting their knowledge of the language in order to make him look ignorant. English then provided unfavorable subject positions to such students, making them feel disadvantaged, helpless, inferior, and uneducated. Students also felt that the use of English for interactions would be interpreted by their peers as an attempt to discard their local rural identity and pass off as an Anglicized bourgeois or even a foreigner. It was probably for this reason that in the questionnaire, although 50% stated that they would use...
English “with a foreigner who also knew Tamil,” all except one rejected the possibility of using English “with a Tamil who also knew English.”

The conflicts English created for the representation of their identity become more explicit in the conversation pieces students had to role-play in each unit. Students typically uttered their parts in a flat reading intonation when they were asked to dramatize the dialogue in front of the class. My model renditions with an eye for realism only increased their inhibition. Students said that it was “funny” or “unbecoming of themselves” to speak in such manner. It soon became apparent that the discourse behind these dialogues was itself so alien to these students that they had difficulty entering into the roles specified. One such conversation was between Joe and Susan in Unit 4d while they budgeted their weekly expenses: Joe’s casual remark that he has to hold a party soon for 35 people in his office to celebrate his promotion irks Susan because of insufficient notice and the amount of additional expenses involved when they have just purchased a new house. When, as usual, students found it difficult to imaginatively enter into the situation, I tried to construct local situations where such dialogue could be expected to occur. Students however pointed out that the genre of “money talk” or “budgeting conversation” was alien to their peasant background. “We spend as we earn,” according to one student, was their lifestyle. Even the consumerism, thrift, delayed gratification, and drive for social mobility assumed by the conversation turned out to be alien. It was not surprising then that such role-playing exercises were purely of academic interest to them and, therefore, nothing better could be employed for these other than the reading intonation for descriptive prose. Indran’s notes in his notebook at the end of the class were a telling comment on his attitude to the exercise. He had simply jotted down Tamil synonyms for new lexical items like adding, tradition, and promotion and identified some examples of count/non-count structures which the unit was supposed to teach: “How many employees are at the bank? How much money did you spend last week?” Indran had simply filtered out the necessary grammatical and vocabulary items from the supposedly interesting conversation.

What the lived culture of the students suggests is a dual oppositional trend. On the one hand, they oppose the alien discourses behind the language and textbook. On the other hand, they oppose a process-oriented pedagogy and desire a product-oriented one. Indran’s notebook suggests that both trends could be connected: Seeing little possibility of relating what they learned to their sociocultural background, students saw little meaning for the course other than the formal, academic one of acting through the examination and satisfying the English requirements of the institution.
Postcourse Contradiction

Although the final interview with the students soliciting their own impressions of the content and organization of the course confirmed some of the observations on their lived culture, it also contradicted many findings—at least at face value. Asked which subjects they had enjoyed most and which they had worked hardest in, students mentioned their different subjects of specialization for the former but unanimously cited English for the latter. When I pointed out the flagging attendance in English and contradicted their claim, I was confronted with a surprising piece of evidence. The majority of the students in the class had been going for private instruction in English outside the university. As Indran put it conclusively, “For no other subject in the university do we go for tutoring, thus spending additional time and money on it. The fact that we do this only for English proves our motivation to master the language.” The students continued to affirm, as they had done at the beginning of the course, the need for English and the priority they had given to it.

The admission that students had sought help outside the class was potentially an indictment of the university ESOL course. I then began exploring what it was that the students were getting in their private instruction that they were not getting in the university. It appeared that the tutors were using Sri Lankan or Indian textbooks—if they used any at all. But it was not the cultural relevance that students seemed to value in these courses as much as the grammar instruction. In fact, the texts and pedagogy were overtly grammar oriented and were rarely contextualized. Tharma praised his tutor (using lexical borrowings from English): “He ‘cleared’ the ‘grammar.’”

Other questions in the interview confirm the desire of the students for grammar-oriented instruction. When asked which section of the textbook they had enjoyed and which they had found useful (13 out of the 15 interviewed) replied that they found the grammar tables and exercises (Sections b and e) useful although they had variously enjoyed the serialized story, conversation, and listening sections. Some conflated these distinctions; Jeyanthi said that she enjoyed the grammar section “because it is useful for the test.” Statements such as Jeyanthi’s revealed that the desire of the students to learn the rules of grammar prescriptively was related to an examination-oriented motivation. In fact, the final 3-hr written test featured mostly discrete-item questions on formal aspects. Later, asked specifically what the students had initially hoped to achieve through this course and the extent to which the course had fulfilled their expectations, Siva said, “I expected that the course would prepare me for the test . . . that is, cover the necessary grammar comprehensively.” It was not surprising,
then, when all eventually agreed that the course had failed to satisfy their expectations.

The recommendations of the students for a more effective ESOL course that would also successfully motivate Tamil students was quite predictable. Tharma argued that a more grammar-based textbook should replace AKL. Vilvan expounded, “Grammar should be given primacy and covered first since this is crucial for other areas like listening, reading, or speaking.” Most students agreed that grammar has to be taught first before “wasting time” on skills and activities. Other recommendations also confirmed a product-oriented, examination-based motivation: “More notes should be provided . . . more homework should be given to retain grammar . . . allow textbooks to be taken home for personal study . . . teach more slowly . . . .” Only a couple also added: “Provide more communicative tasks . . . get more culturally relevant textbooks.”

Moving on to the attitudes of the students to the cultural content of the textbook, here again some observations on their lived culture were contradicted. Students did not perceive any threats stemming from the foreign culture. Some students disclosed that they had actually enjoyed learning about life in the U.S. In fact, because students failed to understand the force of my questions, I often had to reframe the questions to highlight the issue of the damage U.S. values and lifestyle could do to their subjectivity or culture. When I pointed to instances where details of people, places, and situations had confused them, students agreed that these had created some confusion especially at the beginning of the course but added that these difficulties were outweighed by the new and interesting information that they could gather from the textbook. They went onto state that AKL was “interesting,” although not “useful”—perhaps from the examination point of view.

Discussing next their impressions of U.S. society, they listed a variety of both positive and negative features with typical academic poise. Although they observed the individual freedom, technological development, comfort, and liberal relationship between the sexes, they also stressed the subtle forms of racism, social inequality, “decadence,” and imperialism (although it was not clear where in the text they saw the last feature displayed). Asked how these had influenced their own values and behavior, students displayed a remarkable detachment towards this clash of cultures. Jeyanthi said, “We don’t have to accept everything: We can take the good and leave out the bad.” It has to be observed that the students’ relaxed attitude toward U.S. culture (at least in their statements) might result from making culture, too, a product—something to be learnt for its information value and stored in memory.
Although the retrospective statements of most students are at tension with their lived culture, it was Supendran who displayed a remarkable consistency. Supendran, who came from a remote rural community and whose nonliterate parents lacked any formal education, entered the university relatively late after working as a teacher in his community. He did not go for private tutoring—partly due to lack of finances. Rather than being examination oriented or desiring grammar-based instruction, Supendran wanted English to equip him to serve his own community: “to enable me to help my village folk to draft official letters to institutions, to read documents we receive from the state, to understand foreign news broadcasts, to read labels on fertilizers and farm equipment.” Therefore, Supendran was the only student who categorically stated “AKL has to go.” He wanted a textbook and pedagogy that was not just communicative, but also based on local culture: “Rather than talking about apples, talk about mangoes; rather than talking about apartment houses, talk about village huts. Are we all emigrating to America? No! Some of us will continue to live here.” Being the single student who consistently stated that English posed a cultural threat, he sought deep social relevance from the teaching and textbook.

Before concluding the story of our classroom life, it is necessary to provide at least sufficient information to enable a consideration of how my own subject positions could have contributed to the construction of student attitudes and classroom culture. Young (in my early 30s), male, “progressive,” Christian, culturally Westernized, middle class, native Tamil, bilingual, director of English teaching at the university are the identities that I believe were most salient for the students. So students’ insistence on the use of Tamil in the classroom, for example, is motivated by my being a bilingual Tamil. If there had been a native-English-speaking teacher, students would have been compelled to use English. Additionally, use of English with me would have been perceived to violate our Tamil in-group solidarity. (However, my class and cultural identities separate me from the rural poor and would likely have increased students’ inhibitions in using their marked English.) Our common Tamil identity would likely have also forced students to sound more nationalistic, especially as the present communalist mood tends not to tolerate neutrality. In this context, however, their affirmation of English is daring. On the other hand, because I was in an institutionally powerful role, instances of opposition to English (as their failing attendance) are significant. The same identity, however, would have motivated students to affirm the language, textbook, and the course. (In a sense, then, my multiple subject positions seem to qualify each other.) Although the uniqueness of each teacher/researcher-student interaction should not be slighted in favor of the
generalizability of this study, we have to note that almost all Sri Lankan ESOL teachers are Westernized, middle-class, bilingual, native Lankans like me.

**CONTEXTUALIZING STUDENT OPPOSITION**

At face value, the findings of the study seem inconclusive, if not contradictory. On the one hand, students seemed to gradually lose motivation in the course, as it was most objectively displayed in their record of attendance. There is reason to believe that this drop in motivation was related to an oppositional response to the threats posed by the discourse inscribed in the language, pedagogy, and the textbook. At the very least, students were experiencing a tension or discomfort in the confrontation between the discourse they preferred and the discourses informing the ESOL course. But, on the other hand, students insisted that they worked hardest in English compared to all the other subjects (which is true because they had been attending private classes as well). They maintained, as they did in the beginning of the course, the importance of English and the high priority given to learning the language. They went further to insist that they enjoyed learning Western culture and using the U.S. textbook (although they did not find them useful from the examination point of view). In general, the oppositional attitude was manifested in the largely unreflected, untheorized lived culture of the students emerging from their glosses in the textbooks and my field notes; the receptive attitude emerges from the more conscious expression of their views in the questionnaires and interviews.

As a way of reconciling this tension, we have several options: We can suppress one set of data in favor of the other; we can judge the students as confused and contradicting themselves; or we can simply fault the methodology. Not seeing valid reasons to do any of this, I find it challenging to preserve both sets of data and consider how both attitudes of the students display a complex response to the learning of English. It appears that these dual attitudes simply dramatize the conflict students faced in the course between the threats of cultural alienation experienced intuitively or instinctively and the promises of a socioeconomic necessity acknowledged at a more conscious level. The students experienced discomfort in the face of the alien discourses, although they do not theorize about it. But this experience has to be juxtaposed with their awareness of the powerful discourses which glorify the role of English (such as those of policymakers Goonetilleke, 1983, and Hanson-Smith, 1984), the pressure from the educational system to display proficiency in English, the promise of social and
economic advancement English holds, and (especially for Tamil students today) the uses of English as a buffer against Sinhala nationalism and passport for exodus as political or economic refugees abroad.

The grammar-based, product-oriented learning which students alternatively desired (as exemplified in the lived culture as well as their statements) is one way for them to reconcile this conflict. That is, grammar learning enabled the students to be detached from the language and the course, avoid active use of the language which could involve internalization of its discourses, and thereby continue their opposition to the reproductive tendencies of the course. At the same time, this strategy enabled them to maintain the minimal contact necessary with the language in order to acquire the rules of grammar—which in their view was the most efficient preparation for getting through the examination. This strategy while enabling them to preserve their cultural integrity (however tenuously) also enabled them to accommodate the institutional requirement of having to pass English and thus bid for the socioeconomic advantages associated with the language.

Although noting that grammar learning functions as a possible strategy to negotiate the conflicts students face in the ESOL classroom, we have to realize that there are significant historical and cultural reasons which motivate them to adopt this strategy. The popular demand for grammar among all Sri Lankan university students is attested to by the chairperson for English Language Teaching Centres in the country (R. Raheem, personal communication, September 28th, 1991). Students’ desire to be simply given the abstract rules of the language by the teacher could be influenced by traditional styles of learning in Tamil society (or, for that matter, Sri Lankan society), which have been largely product oriented and teacher centered. Although it is hard to generalize about the different institutions of learning that have existed historically (such as thinnai, or “house front,” and temple schools), it can be said that typically the teacher (always male) passed on his stock of received knowledge orally to the disciple at his feet (see Jayasuriya, no date; Sirisena, 1969; Somasegaram, 1969). The disciples had to cultivate the art of listening meditatively and memorizing accurately the huge stock of information to be preserved without corruption. The reverence paid to the guru, as to the knowledge he transmitted, was almost religious in character. This tradition is directly inherited by private institutes in contemporary Tamil society, enjoying immense popularity among parents and students (and pitted by my own students as a corrective to the university ESOL course), which intensively prepare passive students for competitive examinations.

Moreover, traditional descriptions of language and pedagogues of language teaching display a penchant for prescriptive, deductive, and
formalistic methods. Although the well-known Dravidian scholar Emeneau (1955) outlines the fundamental influence of Hindu linguistic tradition on Western descriptive linguistics, he also notes: “Intellectual thoroughness and an urge toward ratiocination, intellection, and learned classification for their own sakes should surely be recognized as characteristic of the Hindu higher culture . . . . They become grammarians, it would seem, for grammar’s sake” (pp. 145–146). Similarly, as late as the colonial period, the teaching of local languages to European administrators was primarily based on studying and memorizing learned grammatical treatises (see Wickramasuriya, 1981).

Anthropological approaches based on a narrowly conceived egalitarianism would encourage us to fashion a method of language teaching that resembles the native tradition of a community (see, e.g., a description of the KEEP project in Watson-Gegeo, 1988). However, the grammar-focused tradition of Tamils—which resembles the now disrepute grammar-translation method in TESOL—drives to a reductio ad absurdum such attempts. Critical ethnography would posit that native learning traditions have to be interrogated for the interests they serve because minority cultures are steeped in traditions of domination as well as resistance. Without delving too much into how this favored pedagogy of Tamils traditionally bolstered their caste structure and religious hierarchy, we can proceed to its contemporary implications for the students discussed in this study. We must remember that such a pedagogy encourages a teacher-controlled, nondialogic, “banking” style of learning that is known to reproduce the dominant values and social relations of an oppressively stratified society (see Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983).

Furthermore, though a formalistic approach to the abstract rules of “standard English” might appear to preserve students from the more obvious cultural content associated with the communicative orientation of the course, it in no way saves them from other forms of domination: It disconfirms the Englishes students bring with them; it prevents students from interrogating their own culture and society through literacy; it fails to alter the unfavorable subject positions belonging to monolingual and English-incompetent Lankans. Nor does the formalistic approach enable students to effectively internalize the rules of the language or progress rapidly in fluent language use. In the in-course assessments carried out to monitor their progress, the majority of the students continued to score below the passing grade. They remained with the smattering of “marked” English they brought with them. What all this implies is that these students will continue to occupy the marginalized position accorded to the monolingual, poorly educated, rural poor in a social system dominated by the English-speaking, bilingual, urban middle class (see Kandiah, 1984). Ironically, the desire
for grammar-oriented learning only influences students to accept these limitations more uncritically and give in to social reproduction. Hence, although on one level the grammatical approach—which is a culturally mandated, indigenous form of learning—enables students to somewhat resist the ideological thrusts of the foreign language and textbook, it is doubtful whether we can glorify this as a form of radical “resistance” as Kandiah (1984) implies. This is not to deny that the study sympathizes with Kandiah’s explanation of lack of motivation in ESOL students as being a result of the sociopolitical implications of English in Sri Lanka; the study also refutes the alternative explanations of Goonetilleke (1983) and Hanson-Smith (1984) that this is simply a consequence of the educational policy which makes students give more time to rival subjects even though students are convinced of the benefits of English. Yet Kandiah fails to grapple with the complexity of students’ opposition which has to be qualified by their belief in the benefits of English, resulting in examination-oriented motivation. This tension results eventually in their giving in to social and ideological reproduction through English. It becomes important therefore to unravel the ambiguous strands of students’ behavior with the help of Giroux (1983) who warns that the concept of resistance must not be allowed to become a category indiscriminately hung over every expression of “oppositional behavior” (p. 109). Thus, Giroux distinguishes between resistance, which he sees as displaying ideological clarity and commitment to collective action for social transformation from mere opposition, which is unclear, ambivalent, and passive. Having analyzed the effects of classroom behavior in the larger historical and social contexts, we can say that the responses and attitudes of the students do not fall under Giroux’s definition of radical resistance. Students fail to sustain consciousness-raising or collective critical action. Theirs is largely a vague, instinctive oppositional behavior which, due to its lack of ideological clarity, ironically accommodates to their reproductive forces. It is perhaps in Supendran we see any signs of conscious resistance that display potential for the development of a radical pedagogy for the Lankan context. The behavior of most other students in the class is an ambivalent state which contains elements of accommodation as well as opposition in response to the conflicting pulls of socioeconomic mobility, on the one hand, and cultural integrity on the other. However, the prospects for a pedagogy of resistance for such students is not all that bleak. Giroux (1983) is quick to point out: On the other hand, as a matter of radical strategy all forms of oppositional behavior, whether they can be judged as forms of resistance or not, need to be examined in the interests being used as a basis for critical analysis and dialogue. Thus oppositional behavior becomes the object of theoretical
classification as well as the basis for possible radical strategy considerations.
(p. 110)

The foregoing study has been conducted in the same spirit and for
the same objectives. It attempts to disentangle the conflicting strands
in the classroom culture of marginalized students, to expose the accom-
modative impulses and encourage the potential for resistance, in order
to fashion a pedagogy that is ideologically liberating as well as educa-
tionally meaningful for such students.

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Integrated language and content instruction has become a popular alternative to traditional ESL instruction. Researchers have recommended this instructional approach to develop students’ academic language ability and facilitate their transition to mainstream classes. Practitioners have also favored this approach for several reasons: to prepare students for mainstream classes, increase student motivation and interest with content themes, and make ESL students feel part of the mainstream school curricula. Over the past 10 years, much progress has been made in developing, implementing, and refining strategies and techniques that effectively integrate language and content instruction. However, the issue of assessment is still being resolved. Neither traditional language tests nor content achievement tests are adequate. The difficulty with assessment centers on isolating the language features from the content objectives so one does not adversely influence the other. This article addresses the issue of assessment in integrated classes and provides a framework for organizing assessment objectives. It recommends using alternative assessment measures, such as checklists, portfolios, interviews, and performance-based tasks. Examples of the framework being implemented in elementary and secondary school integrated language and content classes are also included.

The integration of language and content instruction has come of age. No longer the new trend in methodologies, content ESL—or sheltered English, or language-sensitive content instruction as it is variously known—has assumed a valued and dynamic place in many school curricula. Language teachers have forged common ground with subject-area educators in implementing content-based syllabi. These educators recognize that although the need to prepare language minority students for a rigorous academic program is great, in many school settings, the time for such preparation is brief.

The demographic picture in the U.S. is revealing. The fastest growing sector of the school population comprises language minority stu-
students. Within the language minority student body, the underschooled group is the fastest growing. Educators can no longer rely on transfer of knowledge and skills as students learn English and then enter a mainstream track because so many students come to U.S. schools underprepared for the required grade-level work. In response, language and subject-area educators have been joining forces to get language minority students involved in the regular curricula before they have fully mastered the English language. There simply is no time to delay academic instruction until these students have developed high levels of English language proficiency if they are to stay in school, succeed in their classes, and graduate with a high school diploma. In a recent report, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 1992) notes: “For limited English proficient (LEP) students success in school hinges upon gaining access to effective second language learning opportunities, and to a full educational program” (p. 4). The report goes on to say that whereas language assistance programs help in developing English proficiency, they should, at the same time, “ensure that these students continue to learn and expand their knowledge of new content and therefore do not fall behind peers whose native language is English” (p. 6).

In many U.S. schools, bilingual education programs have been perceived as the answer to keeping students on grade level for content objectives while developing enough language proficiency for students to be mainstreamed eventually. Unfortunately, this ideal is rarely fulfilled in bilingual programs for several reasons. First, most of the programs are “early exit.” Students exit the program after 2 years, often on the basis of oral proficiency tests, before they have the academic language skills needed to master the demands of the regular classroom. (See Cummins, 1980a, and Collier, 1989, for a fuller discussion.) Second, bilingual programs are found primarily in the elementary schools, leaving secondary-aged students without that form of native language support. Third, a bilingual approach is not feasible in schools where the LEP students speak many different native languages. In these last two situations, students are often placed in ESL programs. However, traditional ESL programs, where the focus is on language development with little attention to subject-area curricula, are not serving the current influx of language minority students well.

As a consequence, the integration of language and content objectives in lesson plans has been implemented and accepted by a wide range of teachers and administrators as one solution to the dilemma of how to teach English to linguistically and culturally diverse students while preparing them for grade-level curricula. A number of teacher resource manuals and student textbooks have been written to guide
Preservice and in-service training have increasingly focused on the integration of language and content around the country. Journal articles and conference presentations abound. The U.S. Department of Education is sponsoring a national study, which, in its first phase, collected data from more than 1,500 programs in the U.S. that have an integrated language and content program in one school or more (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1993). The overall goal of the study will be to describe the range of practices for content ESL and identify key program features that produce effective educational results.

In content-based language instruction, language teachers use content topics, rather than grammar rules or vocabulary lists, as the scaffolding for instruction. Frequently, language teachers collaborate with content-area colleagues to plan instruction that complements and/or reinforces instruction occurring in the regular content course. In language-sensitive content instruction, such as in sheltered science, content teachers have been trained in ESL techniques, enabling them to adjust their instruction to meet the needs of language minority students. These techniques include increased use of visuals and demonstrations, emphasis on graphic organizers and thinking/study skill development, and promotion of student participation and communication through all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Moreover, most language and content teachers are using cooperative grouping, thereby enabling language minority students to access additional support from their peers. By providing students opportunities to use language in meaningful contexts—studying the academic subject matter while they develop language proficiency—teachers create an ideal learning environment for facilitating the transition of these students into mainstream courses.

How to teach academic content has been the first barrier to cross in order to improve educational practice for language minority students, but a second remains—how to assess student comprehension of subject matter and student language skill development. Students and teachers realize that most assessment instruments actually test both content concepts and language ability, particularly reading comprehension and writing. Because language and content are intricately intertwined, it is difficult to isolate one feature from the other in the assessment process. Thus, teachers may not be sure whether a student is simply

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1 Teacher resources include, among others, Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Cantoni-Harvey, 1987; Crandall, 1987; Mohan, 1986; and Short, 1991. Student textbooks include, among others, Chamot, O’Malley, & Kupper, 1992; Crandall, Dale, Rhodes, & Spanos, 1989; Fathman & Quinn, 1989; Johnston & Johnston, 1990; and Short, Seufert-Bosco, & Grognet, 1991.
unable to demonstrate knowledge because of a language barrier or whether, indeed, the student does not know the content material being assessed. Yet, a distinction needs to be drawn, especially if a student is not succeeding in a course. This article will address the second barrier by providing a framework for teachers to use as they measure students’ content mastery and language skill and seek to determine whether content objectives have not been mastered or whether language is interfering with a student’s acquisition and application of information.

**ASSESSMENT REFORM**

At present, assessment dominates the educational reform dialogue. Inadequacies in current practices have led many educators and observers of educational progress in the U.S. to call for changes in assessment procedures. (See, e.g., Linn & Baker, 1992; NCEST, 1992; NCRMSE, 1991.) The emphasis on assessment reform comes from many fronts: teachers, administrators, government officials and politicians, researchers, education consultants, and business leaders. At the local level, it is tied to accountability, program evaluation, programmatic support, community support, student achievement, student promotion, and credibility. Beyond the school district boundaries, it is linked to college entrance requirements, the national standards movement, and workplace skills. It affects teacher and administrator careers, public funding of programs, school choice, and more.

There are several reasons to assess student learning in the classroom: to place students in classes, to measure student progress and achievement, to guide and improve instruction, and to diagnose student knowledge of a topic before it is taught. Such assessment must be carried out carefully. Educators now acknowledge that standardized tests with short answer or multiple-choice items do not provide an accurate picture of student knowledge as a whole (Ascher, 1990; CCSSO, 1992; MSEB, 1991); therefore, it is inappropriate to base placement, achievement levels, and instructional plans solely on standardized test results. In addition, a task force commissioned by the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (NCREST, 1992) has recognized that student diversity and educational equity play a role in test performance. In the monograph it is preparing, the task force plans to recommend nonstandardized, alternative assessment approaches for measuring student ability. Although school systems will continue to use standardized tests to measure and compare student progress, alternative assessment must also become part of the student evaluation package.
The demand for assessment alternatives to paper-and-pen multiple-choice tests has grown among language and content educators who want more accurate measures of their students' knowledge. For some educators, alternative measures may simply entail incorporating open-ended questions and essays into existing tests. For others, alternative assessment would be organized to permit students to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities over a long period of time, as through portfolios. Still others look at authentic assessment as the solution—requiring students to conduct tasks that mirror the use of the concept or operation or manipulative (e.g., microscopes, geoboards, or fraction bars) in the real world.

The charge to revise curriculum and evaluation practices in the U.S. began with the publication of Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 1989). In these standards, NCTM recommended that students be taught to communicate mathematically and called for a new way of thinking about assessing mathematics, including making assessment integral to instruction and using multiple measures to evaluate student learning. Lajoie (1991) offered several ideas and principles for designing authentic assessment tasks that conform to the new standards. In 1992, NCTM devoted an issue of Arithmetic Teacher (NCTM, 1992b) and Mathematics Teacher (NCTM, 1992a) to alternative assessment with articles describing assessment trends, classroom strategies, and grading procedures. In addition, NCTM has recently begun developing assessment standards to be published in a separate volume to accompany the organization’s standards publications.

Other subject-area professional organizations have taken up the charge and are in the process of revising their assessment practices, many calling for more performance-based measures. A case in point is the National Science Teachers Association’s (NSTA) Scope, Sequence and Coordination of Secondary School Science project. As the informational brochure explains:

The assessment will require students to demonstrate why they believe something, how they know something is correct, and what terms mean, using real objects and phenomena. (NSTA, no date)

The National Research Council is also looking at science assessment and has established the National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment to work on national standards for science that “guide judgements about and the development of science curriculum, teaching and assessment” (NSTA, 1992, p. 3).

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), like NCTM, devoted a special section of its journal, Social Education (NCSS, 1992), to assessment. Articles addressed issues of testing and teacher involve-
ment with alternative measures such as performance tasks and portfolios. In his book, Parker (1991) advocated authentic assessment in social studies education that corresponds to instructional activities, requires higher order thinking, and sets out performance-based criteria that define the levels of student knowledge.

Assessment reform has not been unheralded among language educators either. With the introduction of a whole language perspective into elementary classrooms, assessment of student progress has been reconsidered. No longer could traditional spelling tests, for example, serve their familiar function in a classroom where intended spelling was the norm. In fact, the use of portfolio assessment in K–12 language arts classes has its origins in the whole language movement (Harp, 1991; Tierney, 1991). With portfolios (as this article discusses below), students exhibit their writing progress and proficiency through meaningful and contextual activities that they have selected and compiled.

ESL and bilingual educators have had to attend to a wider range of assessment practices than most other classroom teachers. Besides measuring student achievement within the course, assessment has always played a gatekeeping role in deciding which students would be placed in which class and, later, when a student would exit from that class. In the not too distant past, students frequently entered and exited ESL/bilingual (BE) education programs on the basis of their oral language proficiency test scores. Over time, however, we have learned that these tests are imprecise measures of students’ ability to do grade-level subject-matter work in a nonnative language (see Cummins, 1980b). Many former ESL/BE students who passed these tests were not ready for the academic language tasks (e.g., expository reading and writing assignments) required in mainstream classes, and they did not succeed. One common solution was to place these students in the lowest track courses. Some students’ solution was to drop out. Neither solution solved the problem of students being underprepared for the academic rigors of the mainstream curriculum. This realization gave impetus to ESL and bilingual teachers to use content-based language instruction and subsequently to recognize the need for additional assessment instruments more commensurate with the academic demands of the mainstream curricula.

Further support for assessment reform has come from U.S. business and industry reports of deficiencies in the skills of the workforce (see

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2In a whole language classroom, children who are learning to read and write are encouraged to write before they have mastered spelling. They often write words based on the sounds they hear and, through pictures and reading aloud, they share their intent with the audience. Some educators refer to this process as invented spelling. I prefer the expression intended spelling to acknowledge that students are not just combining letters in any order but rather are making progress toward the actual spelling.
Johnston & Packer, 1987). Once students move into the workplace, they discover the need for communication skills in the context of writing, reading, and social tasks and for document and quantitative literacy skills such as interpreting graphs and schedules, or performing accounting procedures and balancing budgets, respectively. The instructional and assessment practices many of these students experienced in school have not corresponded well to the application of their knowledge in the work setting. Seeking to employ a better prepared workforce, the business sector has called for educational improvements including the incorporation of alternative or authentic assessment into an overall policy (Berryman & Bailey, 1992; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991). In one response, the American College Testing program is working on a “skills assessment tool to link school instruction with workplace needs” (AAAS, 1991, p. 1). This assessment tool considers the academic skills of reading, writing, and computation along with workplace skills such as problem solving, reasoning, teamwork, and oral communication.

ASSESSING THE INTEGRATION OF LANGUAGE AND CONTENT

Government, school, and business sectors in the U.S. have joined in their support for assessment reform. Alternative assessment, in its diverse formats, has become the trend. Most educators are experimenting with it in some form in their classrooms. Some states, such as Vermont and California, are mandating it for all students. (See Blank & Dalkilic, 1992, for a review of state policies.) Parents are becoming informed about alternative assessment; students are responding positively to it. As assessment increasingly reflects instruction that is occurring in the classroom, teaching to the test has been deemphasized. Good assessment is recognized as that which reflects actual classroom practices, not a one-time standardized exam.

The many varieties of alternative assessment include performance-based tests, portfolios, journals, projects, and observation checklists. Although these measures allow better demonstration of student knowledge, they can nonetheless confound teachers of language minority students. Complications arise first because teachers must determine whether the language or the content is being assessed in these alternative measures. Then teachers must distinguish between the language and content knowledge of the students and decide if one is interfering with the demonstration of the other.

For instance, students who can solve math computation problems correctly and thereby demonstrate mastery of mathematical operations...
may be unable to solve a math word problem requiring the same computations if their English proficiency is not at a level capable of understanding the words and assumptions in the problem. Conversely, students who can write a well-constructed essay about their country's agricultural practices and thereby demonstrate mastery of paragraph development with topic sentences and supporting details may be unable to write an essay on the decline of the U.S. automobile industry if the topic, its relevant vocabulary, and notable people and events are unfamiliar.

Clearly, educators of language minority students grapple with this dilemma every day. As a result, one strong recommendation has emerged: Objectives should be defined before designing or choosing any instructional procedure, ranging from a lesson plan to an exam. Although it is not uncommon to find teachers assigning two grades to a writing sample such as an essay—one for form (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, spelling, topic sentences) and one for content (e.g., topical, accurate, interesting)—this practice does not work for all subject areas or testing situations. Instead, it is more advisable to focus on a single objective, be it content or language specific. Some assessment tools can be used exclusively for checking content comprehension, whereas others can be designated as language development measures. A word of caution is in order: Even within a language assessment instrument, teachers must make a choice whether to measure fluency or accuracy.

A second recommendation from field experience concerns flexibility. School systems should include both formal and informal measures in their overall assessment plan and must support teachers who develop and implement a diverse repertoire of assessment tools. Although all students can benefit from a wide range of assessment procedures, variety is particularly important for language minority students because they (a) are often unfamiliar with the type of standardized tests usually required in U.S. schools, (b) may have different learning and testing styles, and (c) may be unable to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge at a single sitting on one designated testing day. Further, particularly in the case of standardized tests, language minority students should be given more time for completion because they must process both language and content information embedded in the test.

The remainder of this paper proposes an assessment framework with the underlying philosophy that alternative measures should be incorporated into lesson planning frequently and informally as a significant part of instruction. Successful implementation of the framework requires that (a) students be given frequent opportunities to demonstrate the growth of their knowledge base; (b) assessment tools be varied to meet individual learning styles, needs, and current skill levels; and (c) students be made aware of the assessment objectives in
AN ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Overall, assessment should be viewed holistically but in an integrated language and content course, where students are asked to demonstrate knowledge and ability in several areas, it is important to separate language issues from subject-area concepts. The following matrix (Figure 1) is offered to language and content educators as a guide for selecting their assessment tool and for determining in advance their assessment objective: language or content. (Some of the categories have been derived from work conducted by the author and colleagues at the Center for Applied Linguistics, from Griffiths & Clyne, and from work by Kessler & Quinn, 1992.) This matrix examines what might be assessed and how the assessment might be done. It is a first step in distinguishing between these two categories of learning for a language minority student.

The objectives of an integrated language and content course can be divided into the following categories: problem solving, content-area skills, concept comprehension, language use, communication skills, individual behavior, group behavior, and attitude. These areas can then be assessed through some of the following alternative measures: skill checklists and reading/writing inventories, anecdotal records and teacher observations, student self-evaluations, portfolios, performance-based tasks, essay writing, oral reports, and interviews.

Some overlap will occur between the language and content distinctions when some of the objectives, such as certain problem-solving activities, require that language (oral or written) be demonstrated. If students solve a mixture problem in algebra but are asked to explain and justify the steps taken, language is required to do so. They must recall the vocabulary terms, articulate coherent sentences, and make use of transition markers such as then and next. The overlap can be clarified, however, by varying the assessment alternatives and categorizing the objective areas for assessment, as the divisions in Figure 1 show. The key is to select the type or types of assessment carefully and to focus consistently on the objective. For instance, by looking at the process a student undertakes when solving a problem through anecdotal records kept during class, a teacher can note that the student made estimations before seeking a solution and checked the work.
### Figure 1

Integrated Language and Content Assessment: What and How

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Checklist, inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content-area skills</td>
<td>Anecdotal record, teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept comprehension</td>
<td>Student self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language use</td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>Performance, manipulative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual behavior</td>
<td>Written essays, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group behavior</td>
<td>Oral reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Student interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Anecdotal record, teacher observation
- Student self-evaluation
- Portfolios
- Performance, manipulative
- Written essays, reports
- Oral reports
- Student interviews
before turning it in. When checking on language use, the teacher may have the student report orally on a solved problem and listen for appropriate use of technical terms.

The matrix also distinguishes between individual and group work. As indicated earlier, content and language teachers often engage students in cooperative activities, and this practice benefits language minority students. However, all students must also be able to complete tasks individually. When language minority students are placed in mainstream classes, they will be expected to work on group and individual assignments; thus, assessing their preparation in these areas is important.

The final category of the matrix considers student attitude toward content subjects. Determining a student’s attitude toward a subject can be enlightening for a teacher in terms of selecting curricula and promoting student participation. There is ample anecdotal evidence that if students like a subject and/or recognize its importance, they will be motivated to work hard and perhaps be more successful in that course.

**SKILLS ASSESSED**

The skill categories shown in the matrix in Figure 1 are as follows.

**Problem Solving**

Within this category, students show the ability to solve problems. Examples include drawing diagrams, sorting and classifying, using manipulative as models, explaining to other students, finding/accepting alternate solutions, designing one’s own problems, checking one’s work.

**Content-Area Skills**

Here, students demonstrate content skills. Examples include adding mixed numerals, graphing points on x- and y-axes, simplifying algebraic expressions, creating a timeline, following directions on a map, balancing a chemical reaction equation, identifying elements of a cell.

**Concept Comprehension**

Students show understanding of content concepts and when and where to apply this knowledge. Examples include determining whether to use multiplication or addition, distinguishing between area and
perimeter, representing information graphically, recognizing patterns, comparing the monetary systems of two ancient civilizations, arranging organisms into a food chain.

**Language Use**

Students are assessed on their ability to use academic language appropriately. Examples include using correct technical vocabulary; recognizing similar terms such as decrease, diminish, and minus; writing a paragraph with a topic sentence and supporting details.

**Communication Skills**

Students must convey information or opinions about the work done or the subject area studied. Examples include the ability to explain steps taken in an experiment, sharing ideas, discussing math concepts, debating health issues, giving and justifying opinions.

**Individual Behavior**

Students conduct and complete work individually. Examples include planning and carrying through an assignment, researching a topic and preparing a report on it, exhibiting self-motivation, discipline, and independence.

**Group Behavior**

Students demonstrate successful communicative and social skills and complete group tasks. Examples include working collaboratively with other students in a group, contributing to the discussion, explaining to others, using social skills.

**Attitude**

Teachers can assess student attitude toward the subject. Examples include being comfortable doing content work, exhibiting confidence, showing a willingness to take risks, recognizing the relevance of a content area in one's life. If the attitude is negative, teachers may want to modify their instructional approach.

**ASSESSMENT MEASURES**

Many of the alternative assessment measures of this matrix have been described in detail elsewhere. (See ASCD, 1992; Hamayan &
Pfleger, 1987; Pierce & O’Malley, 1992, and Short, 1991) In this article, they will be briefly explained, noting some advantages and disadvantages. It is important to recognize that this list is not exhaustive but representative of teacher options that take into account student skill levels, learning styles, and presentation modes.

**Skill and Concept Checklist, Reading and Writing Inventories**

A teacher can use a checklist or an inventory during the lesson as students are working and mark off skills students demonstrate. The checklist could also be used after the lesson, upon reflection, or based on student work that has been turned in.

**Advantages**

This quick measure can be completed while walking around during individual or cooperative learning activities. It helps meet some curricular objectives, such as covering grammar items, within the context of a communicative, content-based lesson where items appear in context, not as discrete variables.

**Disadvantages**

Because this is often a yes-or-no measure, the student demonstrates the skill or doesn’t; it is hard to show student progress for a specific skill. This limitation could be overcome by defining three increments such as unable, making progress, and mastery of a skill or concept.

**Anecdotal Record, Teacher Observations**

A teacher may reflect on a student’s work or behavior during the day or over a short period of time and record impressions and anecdotes that pertain to the student’s learning progress.

**Advantages**

Such records and observations help capture the learning process vividly; they can be an insightful commentary on student progress.

**Disadvantages**

This measure may not satisfy the requirements of accountability. Anecdotal records are not always considered valid evidence of student
progress and achievement. Moreover, such observational records take
time but need to done regularly.

**Student Self-Evaluation**

Students may evaluate a specific piece of their own work or judge their learning progress using a checklist, scale, or written description.

**Advantages**

Self-evaluations offer students opportunities for reflection. Moreover, they encourage students to take responsibility for assessment.

**Disadvantages**

Once again, the question of accountability is raised. Self-report data are not always considered valid measures. Also, students may need to be trained to judge their own work and that of classmates.

**Portfolios**

Students, sometimes with teacher, peer, or parental assistance, are given the responsibility to select a variety of work products and arrange them in a portfolio that demonstrates their knowledge growth. Students are often asked to justify their selections.

**Advantages**

Portfolios allow students to demonstrate progress over time. As such, they encourage student participation and accountability. An additional advantage is that they can be assembled according to specifications such as “include a first draft and final copy of a report” and “include something you think was not done well and explain how you could improve it.”

**Disadvantages**

Developing and evaluating portfolios is time-consuming; they do not provide a quick picture of student knowledge. Another drawback for some is that scoring is subjective and teachers need training in how to score consistently.
Performance-Based Tasks, Manipulative

It should be noted that some educators use the term performance assessment to include all activities that assess skills contextually. Some also use performance interchangeably with authentic and alternative assessment. For the purposes of this article, performance has this more limited, task-based definition. In this measure, students must perform an assigned task, such as setting up equipment for a science experiment, miming the events in a story, following oral or written directions. This type of assessment often involves physical movement and manipulatives.

Advantages

These tasks help students with low literacy skills. As well, they meet the needs of tactile and kinesthetic learners; assessment is process oriented.

Disadvantages

This kind of assessment is time-consuming; students must be assessed individually or in small groups, and scoring may be subjective.

Written Essays, Reports, and Projects

Students present their knowledge pictorially or in writing through essays, research reports, or long-term projects.

Advantages

These measures give students time to prepare. They may also allow for different modes of presentation (written or pictorial). Essays, reports, and projects are suitable for group work.

Disadvantages

Research may require high literacy skills in reading and writing. It is also time-consuming.

Oral Reports and Presentations

Students report and present orally knowledge they have acquired.
Advantages

Oral presentations give students time to prepare in advance. They allow low-literacy-level students to participate in assessment and are suitable for group work.

Disadvantages

Some students are uncomfortable with public speaking. Again, oral assessment is time-consuming.

Interviews

A teacher may conduct an individual or group interview to ascertain student knowledge or attitude.

Advantages

Interviews give teachers opportunities to probe student knowledge or rephrase questions; they provide students with a chance to ask and clarify questions. Interviews do not require high literacy skills.

Disadvantages

It is time-consuming to interview each student individually. As well, interviews require oral comprehension and production skills.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

At this point, it may be useful to demonstrate the use of this matrix by describing some activities that might occur in several cells. For illustrative purposes, various subject areas and classes found in the U.S. school system are represented. Figure 2 indicates which cells will be discussed.

1. Problem Solving: Anecdotal Record

Objective: To determine if students make use of problem-solving techniques. In an integrated language and mathematics class, the teacher has asked students to solve some word problems. As the teacher walks around the room, s/he notes that some of the students are drawing diagrams as they work out their solutions. The teacher records in
## FIGURE 2
Integrated Language and Content Assessment What and How

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **W** (What) represent the content areas:
  - Individual Behavior
  - Communication
  - Language Use
  - Content Skills Area
- **H** (How) represent the assessment methods:
  - Problem solving
  - Checklist: inventory
  - Anecdotal record, teacher observation
  - Student self-evaluation
  - Portfolios: manipulatives
  - Performance: essays, reports
  - Oral: Student interviews

**Note:** The table lists various activities and methods for assessing language and content skills.
a notebook students who try several diagrams, those who compare diagrams with others, and those who do not draw diagrams.

2. Problem Solving: Essays, Reports

Objective: To evaluate student ability to analyze and describe problem-solving processes

Students are shown an algebraic word problem and two correct but different solutions written by other students. They are asked to write an essay describing the steps each student took to generate their solution to the problem. Then they are shown a third student’s solution which resulted in an incorrect solution and are asked to explain where and how that student erred.

3. Problem Solving: Interview

Objective: To have students reflect metacognitively on steps taken to solve a health problem

In an integrated language and health class, the teacher has set up the following scenario.

A village in India uses a common well as its source of drinking water. The water has become polluted and villagers are getting sick. You students are the scientists given the task of determining the source of the pollution.

The teacher allows students to discuss the problem in groups and then interviews several students individually. During the interview, the teacher asks the students what hypotheses they have generated, what steps they will take to solve the problem, and why they chose those steps.

4. Content Skills: Skill Checklist

Objective: To determine if students are able to use science equipment properly

In the first quarter of the year, the physical science teacher introduces the class to various scientific instruments that will be used in experiments throughout the year. During this time, the teacher maintains a skills checklist for each student. (See Figure 3 for some sample items.) As the students use the equipment in class, the teacher records the date and his/her evaluation of the student’s ability.

5. Content Skills: Student Self-Evaluation

Objective: To measure the ability to perform mathematical computations
At the beginning of the school year, the teacher in an ESL math class decides to give students a checklist to report their computation skills. (See Figure 4 for some sample items.) The teacher plans to use this checklist as a diagnostic assessment tool along with other measures, such as a placement test, to guide whole class, small-group, and individual instruction for the first quarter. To help some students, the teacher reads the checklist aloud as the students fill it out.

6. Concept Comprehension: Portfolios

Objective: To assess student knowledge of ways protest has influenced social change

One objective of a U.S. history class is to recognize the role of protest in engendering change in society, such as legislation or revolution. In the third quarter of the year, the teacher asks students to prepare a portfolio that demonstrates their awareness of different types of protest and their subsequent results. Students are required to collect newspaper clippings of current events and comment on the protests described. They are encouraged to analyze the motives behind the
protests and make predictions about resulting future change, drawing on historical comparisons. To accommodate different language abilities, the teacher allows the students to write their comments or record them on audiotape to include in the portfolio. At the end of the quarter, the teacher will review the portfolios, looking for student historical knowledge and conceptual comprehension.

7. Concept Comprehension: Performance

Objective: To measure student ability to distinguish between regular and irregular polygons

In a geometry class, the teacher distributes paper, scissors, yarn, and several geoboards. Because the teacher wants to minimize the language barrier that might interfere with the students’ performance, the teacher provides written and oral instructions for each task. Beginning with the paper and scissors, students are instructed to cutout geometric shapes, such as an isosceles triangle, an irregular pentagon, and a circle. Next, they are told to create a square, a rectangle, and an irregular six-sided figure with their geoboards and yarn. Scanning the room, the teacher can quickly assess the students’ comprehension of these polygons.

8. Language Use: Checklist

Objective: To determine student familiarity with synonymous terms for mathematical operations

The pre-algebra teacher has drawn up a checklist of terms that s/he would like the class to know for the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. To determine if they can link the terms to the symbols, the teacher designs a paired activity based on a technique in the Pre-Algebra Lexicon (Hayden & Cuevas, 1990). One partner receives a sheet with the operational symbols, the other the terms in verbal mathematical expressions (see Figure 5). The partner with the expressions reads them aloud. The other partner circles the correct symbol for the operation. In reviewing the worksheets, the teacher indicates on her checklist the terms students know and do not know.

9. Language Use: Oral Presentation

Objective: To measure student knowledge of key vocabulary terms, question formation, and sentence structure

In an elementary-level family life course, students have been studying hygiene. Their assignment has been to interview family members and neighbors about their dental hygiene habits and prepare an oral
FIGURE 5
Vocabulary in Mathematics Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thirty minus eleven</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sixty-five times two</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The quotient of sixty-four and eight</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. One less than ninety-six</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Four increased by eighteen</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. One third of twenty seven</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentation of their findings. The teacher has encouraged them to prepare some charts or graphs to share. During the presentation, the students are expected to relate their interview questions, the subjects' responses, and their conclusions about dental hygiene habits. While they present, the teacher listens for key terms and grammatical questions and answers.

10. Communication: Portfolios

Objective: To evaluate student knowledge of genetics through several modes of communication

The high school biology class began a unit on genetics recently. On the first day, the teacher distributes a K-W-L chart and had the students fill in the What I Know about genetics and the What I Want to Learn sections. (The final section, What I Learned, will be part of a portfolio.) Based on what students put in their charts, the teacher generates a list of objectives for the portfolio. Three days later the teacher explains the portfolio procedure that would be used over the next 4 weeks and the list of items to include. (See Figure 6.) The teacher explains that students should begin working on the items and emphasizes that the objective is to see if students can create a portfolio that communicates the knowledge they have acquired about genetics.

11. Communication: Written Essays

Objective: To determine student ability to write a persuasive letter about a community issue

In a civics class, students read a hypothetical newspaper article about the county government's decision to allow a local developer to raze some old apartment buildings and build expensive, single family homes
A. For your Genetics Portfolio, please include the following six items.

1. Design a tree diagram tracing the genetic history of eye color in your family for three generations.
2. Write a prediction and explanation for your child's eye color if your spouse has gray eyes.
3. Explain the difference between fraternal and identical twins. Draw pictures to illustrate the difference.
4. Select one lab report from the genetics experiments we conduct in class. Explain how the experiment increased your knowledge of genetics.
5. Write a dialogue between two or three people discussing a genetic disease.
6. Complete the What I Learned section on your K-W-L chart for the genetics unit and include it in your portfolio.

B. Choose two additional items to show me what you know about genetics.

and a small shopping center. The article explains that the low-income building housed poor families but was in disrepair. Students are then instructed to take a position for or against the development plan and write a letter to the county government or to the newspaper outlining their position and making recommendations.

12. Individual Behavior: Anecdotal Record

Objective: To measure student ability to conduct research

The middle school language arts teacher has been focusing on research study skills in class. The teacher has introduced students to the library and reviewed the process for conducting research, including generating a research question. Each student has reflected on a piece of literature previously read in class and comes up with a question he or she would like to answer, perhaps about the historical background of the story. While the students conduct their research, the teacher records vignettes of student actions. The teacher notes if students use the card catalogue, if they consult with the librarian for additional sources, if they make note cards, and so forth. At the end of the research activity, the teacher will have some insight into which individuals are able to conduct research and which need more practice in the process.

13. Individual Behavior: Performance

Objective: To determine student knowledge of the scientific observation process
At the conclusion of a unit on the senses, during which groups of students conducted several experiments, students work individually on a lab practical to demonstrate their observation skills. Each student is given water, clear plastic or glass cups, and colored, nontoxic fizzy tablets. They are told to place the tablets in water, observe what happens, and then write down their observations. The teacher will give credit for observations that were accurate and used sensory methods such as sight, taste, smell, and hearing.

14. Group Behavior: Student Evaluation

Objective: To use social skills during group tasks

After a week-long social studies project that resulted in a group presentation on several inventions designed during the Industrial Revolution and their impact on the students' lives today, the teacher distributes a group evaluation sheet to the students. (See sample items in Figure 7.) They are asked to complete it individually at first and then meet with the group to resolve any differences among group members.

15. Group Behavior: Reports

Objective: To evaluate students' abilities to work in a group to prepare an oral presentation

In the second semester of the year, small groups of elementary

FIGURE 7
Group Evaluation Form
(Sample)

Please respond to the following statements, Circle A for All, M for Most, S for Some, and N for None

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many members brainstormed ideas for the report?</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many members followed his/her assigned role?</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many members prepared the final report?</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many members praised the ideas of the others?</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many members stayed on task during class most of the time?</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This example is derived from an item on the international performance assessment conducted by the Center for Assessment of Educational Progress. See Semple, 1992.
school students are assigned the task of studying one class of animal (e.g., reptile, fish, bird) and preparing an oral report. These students had participated in cooperative learning activities previously. To facilitate the first phase of the process, the teacher asks each student to research a different representative animal and share that knowledge with group mates. In the second phase, the teacher suggests the students choose roles such as illustrator, recorder, reporter, and so forth. The students are expected to prepare and present the report collaboratively. During the class time devoted to the project, the teacher evaluates the group process and notes whether (a) all the students participated, (b) they stayed on task, (c) they pooled their information, (d) they selected roles and followed them, and (e) their final report was a balanced representation of their work.

16. Attitude: Reading Inventory

Objective: To determine student attitude toward an instructional technique that promotes reading.

In a language arts class with LEP students, the teacher uses sustained silent reading (SSR) twice a week. To determine student attitude towards this reading activity, the teacher may use a reading inventory such as the REACH scale in Figure 8. (See Hamayan & Pfleger, 1987, for a full discussion.)

The dimensions most revealing about student attitudes are E (Enthusiastic about SSR), A (Attentive and on task during the activity), and C (easily Choosing books to read).

17. Attitude: Interview

Objective: To assess student recognition of the role of geography in society.

World geography has been an elective course in one high school but became required for graduation this year. Anticipating discontent among the seniors forced to take the course, the teacher decides to conduct group interviews. Within the first 2 weeks of school, the teacher asks small groups of students their feelings about the geography course, their knowledge of other countries’ natural resources and land features, and geography’s importance in their lives now and in the future. At the end of the course, the teacher asks the students similar questions to determine if their attitudes have changed and whether the teaching has been successful in helping students gain an appreciation of geography.
### Figure 8
Evaluating SSR Performance
(The REACH² Scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Week of:</th>
<th>Week of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dimensions:
R = Reading orally
E = Enthusiastic
A = Attentive
C = Choosing books easily
H = How many books read

*Rate the REACH dimensions along the following scale:
1 = Not able to/not at all
2 = Adequate
3 = Very well/very much so
NA = Not applicable
DISCUSSION

It is unlikely (and unnecessary) for all cells of the matrix to be filled during any one curricular unit or course. The matrix should be used to display the distribution of alternative assessment practices and the objectives teachers have measured. By keeping track of the filled-in cells, teachers can gauge their efforts at meeting the learning and testing styles of students and make adjustments if the choice of assessment measures has been unbalanced—all content skill measures or all written reports, for example.

The suggested assessment tools allow for oral, written, pictorial, and physical demonstrations of knowledge on the part of the students. They also balance control and responsibility for assessment outcomes between teachers and students. The checklists and observations are informal and teacher controlled; students need not know they are being assessed. The interview process incorporates opportunities for clarification and probing by both the teacher and the students. The other tools are student controlled. Students make their own decisions about the amount of effort they expend to complete the tasks.

Teachers may want to use measures for assessing students beyond those described in the matrix. Journals, profiles, reading logs, and simulations, for instance, may be substituted in the columns or added to the matrix. The increasing use of multimedia technology in the language classroom offers additional avenues for assessment. Video- and audiocassette tapes, which may be made at regular intervals and preserved, can capture student oral language development as well as growth of content knowledge. Computers, with tracking and branching capabilities, can individualize student assessment and monitor student progress. Computer simulations with interactive screen and audio components can engender assessment designs that measure all four language skills, problem solving, mastery of content objectives, and more.

The framework recommended in this article involves a time-consuming process. In setting up and implementing the matrix, teachers have to plan ahead and delineate their assessment objectives as they teach because assessment should be linked closely to instruction. Flexibility is important and insight into student learning styles is crucial. In some instances, teachers will need guidance in evaluating some of the measures. Scoring a portfolio or performance-based task, for example, often requires listing criteria and developing a rating scale in advance. Furthermore, because some administrators and funding authorities prefer quantitative data when making program decisions, teachers should be aware that these individuals may need some training in interpreting the information some of these qualitative assessment tools reveal.
CONCLUSIONS

We must always remember that in integrated language and content courses we are doubly burdening our students. We are demanding that they learn enough English—academic English—to be mainstreamed and that they receive, process, and retain content information, much of which will be unfamiliar in terms of their prior schooling and life experiences. But, we have little choice. Time and interest take their toll on our students’ educational careers: time because many students do not have 5–7 years to master English before approaching a content course in the U.S. educational system; interest because a grammar-based curriculum is not particularly appealing to a student who wants to fit into the school environment.

Our profession, therefore, has accepted the integration of language and content as an approach to assisting students with limited English proficiency. No approach is without drawbacks, and even if assessment is the weak link in the integrated language and content approach, the framework offered in this paper aims to strengthen that aspect of instructional practice. Clearly, some standardized tests and paper-and-pencil chapter tests will continue to be used, but they are no longer satisfactory as the sole measures of student achievement.

After all, at the heart of instruction is the desire to help our language minority students learn, and at the heart of assessment is the need to determine whether our students have learned. We must assist them in that process by trying new alternatives that are not so language bound, time restrictive, or autonomous. Further, we must advocate assessment practices that mirror instructional practices. Let us focus on our students’ strengths and give them opportunities to demonstrate ability, skill, and knowledge through the medium that suits them best, whether oral or written or even, in the case of beginner students, pictorial. Let us familiarize them in advance with the assessment measures and give them adequate time to complete the tasks. Let us help them take some responsibility for their own evaluation, especially through tools such as student checklists, reports, and portfolios. Let us become alternative assessment advocates for our language minority students.

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REFERENCES


Dealing effectively with L2 writers requires a clear understanding of the nature of L2 writing. In an attempt to develop such an understanding, 72 reports of empirical research comparing L1 and L2 writing were examined. The findings of this research indicate a number of salient differences between L1 and L2 writing with regard to both composing processes (and subprocesses: planning, transcribing, and reviewing) and features of written texts (fluency, accuracy, quality, and structure, i.e., discoursal, morphosyntactic, and lexicosemantic). Implications of the findings for L2 and L1 writing theory; future comparative writing research; and the practical concerns of assessment, placement, staffing, and instruction are discussed.

In recent years, ESL writing practitioners have frequently been advised to adopt practices from L1 writing. Underlying this advice, there would seem to be an assumption that L1 and L2 writing are practically identical or at least very similar. On a superficial level, such an assumption seems warranted. There is evidence to suggest that L1 and L2 writing are similar in their broad outlines; that is, it has been shown that both L1 and L2 writers employ a recursive composing process, involving planning, writing, and revising, to develop their ideas and find the appropriate rhetorical and linguistic means to express them. However, a closer examination of L1 and L2 writing will reveal salient and important differences drawn from the intuition of ESL writers (Silva, 1992), and ESL writing practitioners (Raimes, 1985), and from the results of the relevant comparative empirical research (the focus of this paper).

If such differences exist, then to make intelligent decisions about adopting and/or adapting L1 practices, ESL writing practitioners need to have a clear understanding of the unique nature of L2 writing, of how and to what extent it differs from L1 writing. One route to such
an understanding is the consideration of the findings of empirical research comparing ESL and native-English-speaking writers (ESL/NES studies) and that comparing the L1 and L2 writing of ESL subjects (L1/L2 studies). (See Silva, in press, 1993, respectively, for separate treatments of the ESL/NES and the L1/L2 research.) Consequently, in this paper, I will review and synthesize the findings of this body of research in order to develop a coherent description of the differences between L1 and L2 writing, and I will draw implications from these findings for L2 writing theory, research, and practice. A comprehensive understanding of the distinct nature of L2 writing will require inquiry into writing in many L2s in addition to ESL. However, at the present time, ESL writing is by far the most developed area of scholarship in L2 writing; I expect that the findings of this analysis will be subject to revision in light of those from research on writing in other L2s.

METHOD

Procedures

For this study, all seemingly relevant reports of research that could be located were carefully screened. Included in this study were reports of empirical research involving a direct comparison of ESL and NES writing and/or the L1 and L2 writing of ESL subjects. Excluded were (a) ESL/NES studies that did not actually involve both ESL and NES writers and those which included ESL and NES writing that could not be fairly compared (e.g., impromptu writing by ESL students compared with the published work of professional NES writers) and (b) L1/L2 studies in which one group of nonnative English speakers wrote only in English and another group wrote only in their L1 (that is, only studies in which the same individuals produced written texts in their L1 and in English were included).

The chosen reports were then reread and analyzed. Noted especially were such features as research design, study focus, sample size, subject characteristics (L1, age, educational level, English proficiency, writing ability), writing tasks (number of tasks, genre, time constraints, writing context), methodological concerns (reporting of subject characteristics, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings), and most important, the studies’ findings with regard to ESL/NES and L1/ESL comparisons.
Studies

Overall, 72 research reports met the criteria for inclusion mentioned above and were included in this examination. Forty-one involved ESL/NES comparisons. Twenty-seven compared L1 and L2 writing. Four dealt with comparisons of both types (Appendix A lists ESL/NES reports; Appendix B, L1/L2 reports; Appendix C, reports involving both types of comparisons). A look at the publication dates of these reports indicates that comparative research of this kind is a fairly recent and ongoing phenomenon: More than 90% of all the reports examined were published in the past 10 years; 50% within the past 5. With regard to focus, reports looking at written texts outnumbered those dealing with composing processes by a ratio of more than 3:1. Of these text-based studies, more focused on rhetorical (discourse level) than on linguistic (sentence level and below) features. These differences were also reflected in the research design in which quantitative studies (typically text based) greatly outnumbered the qualitative (typically process based). Finally, with regard to subjects, the studies, in total, dealt with more than 4,000, with sample sizes ranging from 1 to more than 300.

Subjects

The subjects involved in this research came from a variety of language backgrounds. At least 27 different L1s were represented in the studies, with Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish dominant. (See Appendices A, B, and C for the L1 backgrounds of the L2 subjects in the studies examined here.) Subjects were predominantly undergraduate college students in their late teens and early twenties, though educational levels ranged from high school to postgraduate. They had fairly advanced levels of English proficiency and exhibited a wide range of levels of writing ability. However, the statements here regarding the subjects’ ages and levels of English proficiency and writing ability should be seen as tentative because these characteristics were not reported in a fairly large number of studies.

Writing Tasks

In this research, typically one (in the ESL/NES studies) or two (in the L1/L2 studies—one in English and one in the L1) writing tasks were assigned, though some used more. With regard to genre, most studies called for expository essays; argumentative and narrative tasks ran a far second and third. Subjects were normally given a range of from 20 min to as much time as they chose to take to complete their
writing tasks; however, most studies allowed 30-60 min. Finally, with regard to contexts for writing, the majority of subjects in the studies did their writing in class; about half as many, under test conditions; a handful, under laboratory conditions.

Caveats

Before moving to a presentation of the findings of this research and a consideration of the implications of these findings, it is necessary to offer a few caveats with regard to this enterprise. First, as with any body of empirical research, the studies examined here, although generally sound, exhibit some limitations. These include some small samples (resulting in a low level of generalizability); some inadequate description (missing, partial, or imprecise reports) of subject characteristics, writing task features, and conditions for writing; some cases in which reliability estimates for data analyses and statistical tests of significance were not done where appropriate; and some overinterpretation of results (e.g., overgeneralization, unwarranted causal claims).

A second caveat relates to the focus of this paper: differences. This focus does not represent an attempt to ignore, deny, or trivialize the many important similarities between L1 and L2 writing; it stems from the belief that understanding these differences is crucial to comprehending and addressing ESL writers’ special needs. Furthermore, the emphasis on differences should not be seen as an attempt to portray ESL writers in negative terms. My attempts at writing in an L2 and my experiences in teaching ESL writers have given me nothing but respect for ESL writers; I am frequently amazed and humbled by their efforts and abilities.

A third caveat has to do with the limitations of would-be synthesizers of research. Their constructions of the meaning of the findings are a function of their reading of the studies, their interests, their biases, and the limits of their knowledge and analytic and expressive abilities. It should also be recognized that any synthesis is reductive in nature; rough spots are smoothed over and details left out in order to present a coherent account of the data under examination. Consequently, it is not claimed that what follows is objective or disinterested. However, a serious attempt has been made to provide an account that is honest, fair, useful, and accessible. Furthermore, the conclusions that will be presented should not be seen as definitive; rather, they should be viewed as tentative, as a set of hypotheses in need of careful consideration and testing.
FINDINGS

In this section, the findings of the studies examined will be presented. To enhance readability, in most cases, ESL/NESS and L1/L2 studies (in all cases, the L2 was English) will not be distinguished, and the L1 backgrounds of the L2 writers will not always be provided. This information is available in Appendices A, B, and C. Further, the term L2 will be used to refer to the ESL writers and their writing in both types of studies. These findings, which will form the basis for generalizations made and implications drawn later in the paper, will be reported in two main categories: composing processes and written text features.

Composing Processes

A number of studies (Chelala, 1981; Krapels, 1990; Moragne e Silva, 1991; Schiller, 1989; Skibniewski, 1988; Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986; Whalen, 1988) reported that, in general terms, composing process patterns (sequences of writing behaviors) were similar in L1s and L2s. However, L2 composing was clearly more difficult and less effective; a closer look turns up some salient differences in the subprocesses of planning, transcribing, and reviewing.

Planning

It was reported that, overall, L2 writers did less planning, at the global and local levels (Campbell, 1987b; Dennett, 1985; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Skibniewski, 1988; Whalen 1988; Yau, 1989). Whereas they devoted more attention to generating material (Hall, 1990; Moragne e Silva, 1989), this generation was more difficult (Hildenbrand, 1985) and less successful in that more time was spent on figuring out the topic, less useful material was generated, and more of the generated ideas never found their way into the written text (Moragne e Silva, 1989). L2 writers did less goal setting, global and local (Skibniewski, 1988), and had more difficulty achieving these goals (Moragne e Silva, 1989). It was also reported that organizing generated material in the L2 was more difficult (Moragne e Silva, 1989; Whalen, 1988).

Transcribing

Transcribing (producing written text) in the L2 was more laborious, less fluent, and less productive. It was reported that L2 writers spent more time referring back to an outline or prompt (Moragne e Silva,
1989, 1991) and consulting a dictionary (Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986) and exhibited more concern and difficulty with vocabulary (Arndt, 1987; Dennett, 1985; Krapels, 1990; Moragne e Silva, 1991; Skibniewski, 1988; Yau, 1989). Findings indicated that, in L2 writing, pauses were more frequent (Hall, 1990; Hildenbrand, 1985; Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986), longer (Hildenbrand, 1985), and consumed more writing time (Hall, 1990). Furthermore, it was found that L2 writers wrote at a slower rate (Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986) and produced fewer words of written text (Moragne e Silva, 1989).

Reviewing

In general, L2 writing reportedly involved less reviewing (Silva, 1990; Skibniewski, 1988). There was evidence of less rereading of and reflecting on written texts (Chelala, 1981; Dennett, 1985; Gaskill, 1986; Silva, 1990; Skibniewski, 1988); however, Schiller (1989) found no difference in rereading in L1 and L2. With regard to revision, similar general patterns, systems, and/or strategies were reported in L1 and L2 writing (Gaskill, 1986; Hall, 1987, 1990; Tagong, 1991); however, differences in the frequency of revision were found. It was reported that L2 writing involved more revision (Gaskill, 1986; Hall, 1987, 1990; Schiller, 1989; Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986; Tagong, 1991)—though Skibniewski (1988) found that L2 writers revised less—more before drafting, during drafting, and between drafts (Hall, 1987). However, this revision was more difficult (Hall, 1987) and more of a preoccupation (Whalen, 1988). There was less “revising by ear,” that is, making changes on the basis of what “sounds” good (Silva, 1990; Yau, 1989). Moreover, L2 revision seemed to focus more on grammar (Dennett, 1990; Hall, 1987, 1990) and lesson mechanics, particularly spelling (Hall, 1990; Skibniewski, 1988).

Written Text Features

In this section, differences in the features of L1 and L2 written texts will be considered in terms of fluency, accuracy, quality, and structure.

Fluency

There is fairly strong evidence to suggest that L2 writing is a less fluent process. Sixteen studies (Benson, Deming, Denzer, & Valerigold, 1992; Cummings, 1990; Hall, 1990; Hirokawa, 1986; Kamel, 1989; Lin, 1989; Linnarud, 1986; Lux, 1991; Mahmoud, 1982; Moragne e Silva, 1991; Ragan, 1989; Reid, 1988; Silva, 1990; Tagong, 1991; Yau, 1989; Yu & Atkinson, 1988) found that L2 texts were shorter.
(i.e., contained fewer words). Four (Benson, 1980; Dennett, 1985, 1990; Hu, Brown, & Brown, 1982; Santiago, 1970) reported longer L2 texts; two (Frodesen, 1991; Skibniewski & Skibniewska, 1986) reported similar lengths in L1 and L2 texts.

**Accuracy**


**Quality**

A number of studies (Campbell, 1987a, 1987b, 1990; Carlson, 1988; Connor, 1984; Hafernik, 1990; Park, 1988; Reid, 1988; Santiago, 1970, Xu, 1990; Yu & Atkinson, 1988) reported that (at least in terms of the judgments of native English speakers) L2 texts were less effective (i.e., received lower holistic scores).

**Structure**

**General textual patterns.** The studies that look at general textual patterns, typically in expository texts, can be fairly described as following from Kaplan’s (1966) groundbreaking study, in which the “thought patterns” of the written English texts of NES and ESL writers are characterized and contrasted. Though Kaplan’s study does not meet the criteria set forth for inclusion in this discussion, it is addressed here because it provides the theoretical basis for later studies which do. Kaplan described thought patterns as linear (for NESs), parallel (for native speakers of Semitic languages), indirect (for native speakers of “Oriental” languages), and digressive (for native speakers of Romance languages and Russian).

Norment’s (1982, 1984) work corroborated Kaplan’s claims, reporting distinct organizational patterns in the written English texts of NESs (linear), Chinese (centrifugal—symbolized by an inverted cone),
and Spanish (linear with tangential breaks). Burtoff (1983) also reported distinct patterns of logical relations (which she described as culturally preferred rather than linguistically determined) in the written English texts of NESs (theme-rheme), Arabic (arguments of equal weight), and Japanese (causal chain), which she saw as corresponding in part to Kaplan’s characterizations.

Kobayashi (1984a, 1984b) and Oi (1984) reported a tendency in written English texts toward a general-to-specific (deductive) rhetorical pattern for NES subjects and an inclination toward a specific-to-general (inductive) pattern for native Japanese speakers. Xu (1990), who reported no significant differences in the structure of expository paragraphs of ESL and NES subjects, provides a counterpoint to the foregoing studies.

Three studies (Norment, 1984, 1986; Santiago, 1970) comparing the L1 and L2 language writing of ESL subjects reported strong similarities in the patterns of logical relations between sentences (e.g., explanation, addition, illustration) across languages (suggesting transfer of rhetorical patterns). Cook (1988), however, reported that her (native-Spanish-speaking) subjects wrote significantly more disunified (digressive, in Kaplan’s terms) paragraphs in English than in Spanish (suggesting a possible L2 proficiency effect on L2 rhetorical patterns).

**Argument structure.** A number of studies addressed the structure of L2 arguments. Mahmoud (1983) reported that his L2 subjects (native speakers of Arabic) did less reporting of conditions, less defining, and less exemplifying, but used more warning and phatic communion than their NES peers. He indicated that the L2 writers less often stated and supported their position fully and were inclined to develop their arguments by restating their position—NES subjects preferred to develop their arguments by stating a rationale for their position. Mahmoud also reported that the L2 writers’ arguments exhibited less paragraphing, less rhetorical connectedness (position statements interrupted the flow of their texts), a looser segmental (introduction, discussion, conclusion) structure, less variety and more errors in the use of conjunctive elements, and less explicit formal closure.

Connor (1984) reported that her ESL subjects’ texts had less adequate justifying support for claim statements and less linking of concluding inductive statements to the preceding subtopics of the problem. Oi (1984) found that her ESL writers (native speakers of Japanese) used more mixed arguments (arguing both for and against), more argument alternations (for-against-for-against), and more often ended their argument in a different direction (for or against) than it began. She also reported that her ESL subjects were inclined to be more tentative and less hyperbolic than their NES peers. Ouaouicha (1986),
in the part of his study where the English arguments of L2 (native Arabic speakers) and NES writers were compared, reported that the L2 subjects provided more data but fewer claims, warrants, backings, and rebuttals. He also claimed that they less often fulfilled the task, used less ethos (ethical appeal), addressed the audience less often, and used more pathos (emotional appeal) in their texts.

Choi (1988a) reported that whereas all his NES subjects’ texts included the elements of claim, justification, and conclusion, some elements were missing in the L2 subjects’ (native speakers of Korean) texts. It was also found that the L2 subjects more often used indirect (inductive) strategies—going from evidence to conclusion (this corroborates the findings of Kobayashi, 1984a, 1984b; and Oi, 1984, with native speakers of Japanese). Choi (1988b) reports that his L2 subjects (again, native speakers of Korean) preferred a situation + problem + solution + conclusion pattern to that of the NES subjects (i.e., claim + justification + conclusion).

In two studies comparing L1 and L2 arguments, Kamel (1989) found fewer audience adaptation units, a lower percentage of claims, a higher percentage of data units, and a higher percentage of warrants in the L2 texts; Yu and Atkinson (1988) reported less effective linking of arguments in texts written in English.

**Narrative structure.** The features of L1 and L2 narratives were also compared. Harris (1983) asked his subjects to produce an account of a short cartoon film. He reported that the accounts written by L2 subjects had less to say on most of the narrative points, more often began in the middle of the story, less often referred explicitly to the film, and more often omitted essential scene setting elements than those of their NES counterparts. Indrasuta (1987, 1988) compared her native-Thai–speaking subjects’ English narratives with those of their NES peers and with their L1 narratives. In the first comparison, she reported that the L2 subjects’ texts exhibited more use of the first person singular, more backdrop setting (i.e., in which time and place are not important)—as opposed to the integral setting (i.e., in which characters, action, and theme are closely interwoven and thus setting is essential), less action, and more focus on mental states. In the second comparison, Indrasuta found more use of the pronoun I, more implicit (as opposed to explicit) themes, more real (as opposed to projected) scenes, and less description of mental states in the L2 texts. Overall, she found that her L2 subjects’ narrative patterns in English were closer to those in their L1 than they were to those used by NES subjects. Lin (1989) reported that the English narratives of her L2 writers (native speakers of Chinese) contained fewer complete episodes and fewer
mentions of entities in episodes (the latter presumed to reflect a smaller lexical repertoire in English) than their L1 versions.

**Features of essay exam responses.** Comparing the responses to essay questions on a final exam for a graduate course on L2 acquisition, Hirokawa (1986) reported that her L2 writers used more undefined terms, were less able to paraphrase concepts and less cognizant of expected essay answer forms, had more difficulty identifying the topic in the exam question and an appropriate discourse function for framing an answer, had a harder time presenting a reasoned argument and strong support, and had more unnecessary or irrelevant detail, information, and repetition of points.

**Textual manifestations of the use of a background reading text.** A couple of studies looked at background text use. Campbell (1987a, 1987b, 1990) reported that her L2 subjects' texts had fewer examples of information copied from the reading text, less backgrounding and foregrounding of examples, less use of information from the reading text in their first paragraphs and more use in their last, more documentation in footnotes and less in phrases acknowledging the author or text, more acknowledgment of quotations and paraphrases, and less smooth incorporation of material from the reading text. Frodesen (1991) found that her L2 writers had more difficulty in interpreting the background reading text and made less reference to the background text in their introductions.

**Reader orientation.** Focusing on reader orientations (i.e., material preceding the introduction of a thesis statement), Scarcella (1984b) reported that her L2 subjects' orientations were longer and contained fewer and a smaller range of attention-getting devices. L2 writers also played down the importance of their themes more, used fewer sentences that signaled a following theme, used more clarifying devices to help readers understand their themes, and more often overspecified their themes and thus underestimated their readers' knowledge by introducing information readers considered obvious. In a similar vein, Atari (1983) reported that his L2 subjects (native Arabic speakers) more often preceded their topic sentences with a broad statement about a general state of affairs.

**Morphosyntactic/stylistic features.** Numerous stylistic differences were reported. In general terms, L2 writing was found to be less complex (Park, 1988), less mature and stylistically appropriate (Yu, 1988), and less consistent and academic with regard to language, style, and tone (Campbell, 1987a, 1987b, 1990). In more specific terms, Hu et al.
(1992) found their L2 subjects’ writing to be more direct, explicit, and authoritative in tone and to involve more warning and admonition, less personal comparison, and more use of strong modals (will, should, must). Oi (1984) reported that her L2 subjects used more hedges and superlatives. Dunkelblau (1990) found that the L2 writing in her study exhibited less variety in stylistic device use, that it contained fewer set phrases, fewer interrogative sentences (rhetorical/lead questions), less analogy, less ornate language, less vocative exhortation (addressing the reader directly), less parallel structure, and more repetition of ideas.

A fairly large number of more strictly linguistic differences was reported. It was found that L2 writers produced sentences that had more (Gates, 1978; Silva, 1990) but shorter (Cummings, 1990; Dennett, 1985, 1990; Gates, 1978; Kamel, 1989) T units. These sentences also contained fewer (Gates, 1978, Hu et al., 1982) but longer (Gates, 1978; Hu et al., 1982; Silva, 1990) clauses. In terms of connections, they used more coordination (Silva, 1990) and simple coordinate conjunctions (Cummings, 1990; Reid, 1992) and less subordination (Hu et al., 1982; Park, 1988; Silva, 1990) and fewer subordinate conjunction openers (Reid, 1992). With regard to modification, it was claimed that L2 writers used fewer modifiers overall (Gates, 1978), more unmodified nouns and pronouns (Gates, 1978), fewer noncausal/single word modifiers per T unit (Dennett, 1985, 1990; Gates, 1978), fewer adjectives (Gates, 1978), fewer possessives (Gates, 1978), fewer verb forms used as noun modifiers (Gates, 1978), fewer prepositions and prepositional phrases (Cummings, 1990; Gates, 1978; Reid, 1988, 1992), fewer definite articles (Oi, 1984), and fewer free modifiers (nonrestrictive phrasal and clausal elements) (Park, 1988). Additionally, L2 writers reportedly used more pronouns (Oi, 1984; Reid, 1988), more conjunctions (Oi, 1984; Reid, 1988), less passive voice (Carlson, 1988; Lux, 1991; Reid, 1988), and more initial and fewer medial transitional devices (Mann, 1988).

**Lexicosemantic features.** The use of cohesive devices was one area of lexicosemantic difference. There was evidence that L2 writers used more conjunctive ties (Hafernik, 1990; Hu et al., 1982; Oi, 1984)—though Almeida (1984) found that they used fewer—and fewer lexical ties (Hu et al., 1982; Indrasuta, 1987, 1988; Mahmoud, 1983). They also reportedly used fewer synonyms (Almeida, 1984; Connor, 1984; Oi, 1984) and collocations (Connor, 1984; Mahmoud, 1983) and exhibited less variety in their use of lexical cohesion (Connor, 1984; Oi, 1984) and less control of over L2 cohesion resources overall (Almeida, 1984).

Another area of distinction was the subjects’ lexical repertoire. It was reported that L2 writers used shorter (Reid, 1988) and vaguer (Carlson, 1988) words and that their texts exhibited less lexical variety and sophistication (Hu et al., 1982; Linnarud, 1986). Also, Webb’s
(1988) findings suggest the possibility of L2 effects of increased awareness of the metaphorical qualities of language and of reduced imagery but no L2 effect of metaphors used for catechresis (i.e., to fill gaps in the vocabulary caused by incomplete knowledge of the L2).

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The findings from this body of research suggest that, in general terms, adult L2 writing is distinct from and simpler and less effective (in the eyes of L1 readers) than L1 writing. Though general composing process patterns are similar in L1 and L2, it is clear that L2 composing is more constrained, more difficult, and less effective. L2 writers did less planning (global and local) and had more difficulty with setting goals and generating and organizing material. Their transcribing was more laborious, less fluent, and less productive—perhaps reflecting a lack of lexical resources. They reviewed, reread, and reflected on their written texts less, revised more—but with more difficulty and were less able to revise intuitively (i.e., “by ear”).

In general, L2 writers’ texts were less fluent (fewer words), less accurate (more errors), and less effective (lower holistic scores). At the discourse level, their texts often exhibited distinct patterns of exposition, argumentation, and narration; their responses to two particular types of academic writing tasks—answering essay exam questions and using background reading texts—were different and less effective. Their orientation of readers was deemed less appropriate and acceptable. In terms of lower level linguistic concerns, L2 writers’ texts were stylistically distinct and simpler in structure. Their sentences included more but shorter T units, fewer but longer clauses, more coordination, less subordination, less noun modification, and less passivization. They evidenced distinct patterns in the use of cohesive devices, especially conjunctive (more) and lexical (fewer) ties, and exhibited less lexical control, variety, and sophistication overall.

IMPLICATIONS

Theory

There exists, at present, no coherent, comprehensive theory of L2 writing. This can be explained in part by the newness of L2 writing as an area of inquiry, but an equally important reason is the prevalent
assumption that L1 and L2 writing are, for all intents and purposes, the same. This, largely unexamined assumption has led L2 writing specialists to rely for direction almost exclusively on L1 composition theories, theories which are, incidentally, largely monolingual, monocultural, ethnocentric, and fixated on the writing of NES undergraduates in North American colleges and universities. The findings of the research discussed above, however, make this assumption untenable. Clearly, L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically, and linguistically different in important ways from L1 writing. Therefore, L2 writing specialists need to look beyond L1 writing theories, to better describe the unique nature of L2 writing, to look into the potential sources (e.g., cognitive, developmental, social, cultural, educational, linguistic) of this uniqueness, to develop theories that adequately explain the phenomenon of L2 writing. Such theories would not only serve L2 writing practitioners but could also inform and enhance L1 theories of writing by providing them with a true multilingual/multicultural perspective, by making them more inclusive, more sensitive, and ultimately, more valid.

Research

The foregoing review of studies suggests a need for more, more balanced, and more rigorous research in this area. More comparative research is necessary to corroborate and enhance present findings and to fill in gaps. This research needs to be more balanced, that is, more evenly distributed in its treatment of strategic, rhetorical, and linguistic concerns; in its use of qualitative and quantitative designs; and in its consideration of subjects of different ages and levels of education, language proficiency, and writing ability. It is also important for future comparative researchers to continue to improve design, reporting, and interpretation by using larger samples to enhance generalizability; by including more writing tasks and making these tasks and the conditions under which they are done more realistic; by reporting on subject characteristics, writing task features, and writing conditions more fully; by providing reliability estimates for data analyses and information on statistical significance of findings, where appropriate; and by being reasonable and responsible when making generalizations and/or cause and effect claims based on their findings.

In addition to being more abundant, more balanced and more rigorous, research comparing L1 and L2 writing needs to be more accessible. As the bibliography of this paper indicates, most of the existing comparative research is available in the form of unpublished dissertations, ERIC documents, and articles in periodicals that are often difficult to locate. What are needed are more outlets for publication of research
on L2 writing. Although some efforts have been made to increase the number of outlets, (e.g., the creation of the new Journal of Second Language Writing), more needs to be done if significant progress is to be made. Mainstream (L1) writing publishers need to be more receptive to L2 writing scholarship, and generalist publications in L2 studies need to allow for a greater focus on writing.

**Practice**

If these findings are valid, they have important implications for assessment, placement, staffing, and instructional procedures and strategies. First, these findings cast doubt on the reasonableness of the expectation that L2 writers (even those with advanced levels of L2 proficiency) will perform as well as L1 writers on writing tests, that L2 writers will be able to meet standards developed for L1 writers. This suggests a need for different evaluation criteria for L2 writing and raises such difficult but necessary questions as, When does different become incorrect or inappropriate? and What is good enough?

Second, the findings suggest that L2 writers, because they have special needs (distinct from those of L1 writers, whether they be basic or skilled) might be best served by being given the option of taking (credit-bearing, requirement-fulfilling) writing classes designed especially for them, that is, not being forced, in sink-or-swim fashion, into “mainstream” (i.e., native-speaker-dominated) writing classes which may be inappropriate, and perhaps even counterproductive, for them.

Third, the findings support the notion that whether or not L2 writers find themselves in L2 writing classrooms, they should be taught by teachers who are cognizant of, sensitive to, and able to deal positively and effectively with sociocultural, rhetorical, and linguistic differences of their students. That is, they should be taught by teachers with special theoretical and practical preparation for teaching L2 writers. Significant levels of cooperation and collaboration between graduate programs in composition studies and those in second language studies will be required to graduate such teachers in needed quantities.

Fourth, the findings have numerous implications for instructional practices in the L2 writing classroom. In the most general terms, L2 writers may need, as Raimes (1985) suggests, “more of everything” (p. 250). (However, more of everything should not necessarily entail more work for L2 writing teachers at the same rate of compensation; lowering class sizes and/or having fewer writing assignments completed over longer periods of time are called for). In particular, it is likely that L2 writing teachers will need to devote more time and attention across the board to strategic, rhetorical, and linguistic concerns. They
may need to include more work on planning—to generate ideas, text structure, and language—so as to make the actual writing more manageable. They may need to have their students draft in stages, for example, to focus on content and organization in one draft and on linguistic concerns in a subsequent draft or to separate their treatments of revising (rhetorical) and editing (grammatical). In essence, teachers need to provide realistic strategies for planning, transcribing, and reviewing that take into account their L2 students’ rhetorical and linguistic resources.

There also seems to be a clear need for more extensive treatment of textual concerns. At the discourse level, L2 writing teachers may need to familiarize their students with L1 audience expectations and provide them with strategies for dealing with potentially unfamiliar textual patterns and task types they are likely to have to produce. It may also be necessary for L2 writing teachers to work to enhance their L2 writers’ grammatical and lexical resources. Teachers might do this on a global level by using a set of assignments that look at one (student-chosen) theme or topic area from a variety of perspectives, thereby allowing students to build a syntactic and lexical repertoire in this area through repeated use (see Leki, 1991). On a more local level, teachers can provide individual L2 writers with syntactic and lexical options in the contexts of their own written texts.

In conclusion, the research comparing L1 and L2 writing, in my view, strongly suggests that, whereas they are similar in their broad outlines, they are different in numerous and important ways. This difference needs to be acknowledged and addressed by those who deal with L2 writers if these writers are to be treated fairly, taught effectively, and thus, given an equal chance to succeed in their writing-related personal and academic endeavors.

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Appendix A

ESL/NES Studies: Native Languages of the ESL Subjects

Atari (1983): Arabic
Benson (1980): Arabic, Farsi, Ga, Japanese, Spanish, Thai
Benson et al. (1992): Amharic, Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, French, Gola, Gujartic, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Tigingga, Vietnamese
Burtoff (1983): Arabic, Japanese
Campbell (1990): Chinese, Farsi, Hebrew, Indonesian, Korean, Lao, Spanish, Vietnamese
Carlson (1988): Arabic, Chinese, Spanish
Choi (1988a): Korean
Choi (1988b): Korean
Cummins (1990): Spanish
Dennett (1985): Japanese
Dennett (1990): Japanese
Frodesen (1991): Chinese, Korean, Spanish
Gates (1978): Farsi, Spanish, Thai
Hafnerik (1990): Chinese, Japanese, Norwegian
Harris (1983): not specified
Hirokawa (1986): Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Thai
Hu et al. (1982): Chinese
Intaraprawat (1988): Bengali, Chinese, French, Japanese, Thai
Kobayashi (1985a): Japanese
Kobayashi (1985b): Japanese
Linnarud (1986): Swedish
Lux (1991): Spanish
Mahmoud (1983): Arabic
Mann (1986): Arabic, Chinese, Spanish
Norment (1982): Arabic, Chinese, Spanish
Oh (1984): Japanese
Ouououcha (1986): Arabic
Park (1988): Chinese
Reid (1988): Arabic, Chinese, Spanish
Reid (1992): Arabic, Chinese, Spanish
Silva (1990): Chinese, Spanish
Stalker & Stalker (1988): not specified
Webb (1988): Spanish
Xu (1990): not specified
Yau (1989): Chinese
Appendix B
L1/L2 Studies: Native Languages of the Subjects

Almeida (1984): Portuguese
Arndt (1987): Chinese
Carson et al. (1990): Chinese, Japanese
Carson & Kuehn (1992): Chinese
Chelala (1981): Spanish
Cook (1988): Spanish
DeJesus (1984): Spanish
Dunkelblau (1990): Chinese
Gaskill (1986): Spanish
Hall (1987): Chinese, French, Norwegian, Polish
Hall (1990): Chinese, French, Norwegian, Polish
Hildenbrand (1985): Spanish
Jones & Tetroe (1987): Spanish
Kamel (1989): Arabic
Krapels (1990): Arabic, Chinese, Spanish
Lin (1989): Chinese
Moragne e Silva (1989): Portuguese
Moragne e Silva (1991): Portuguese
Norment (1986): Chinese
Santiago (1970): Spanish
Schiller (1989): Arabic
Skibniewski (1988): Polish
Skibniewski & Skibniewska (1986): Polish
Tagong (1991): Thai
Terdal (1985): Hmong, Vietnamese
Whalen (1988): French

Appendix C
ESL/NES and L1/L2 Comparisons: Native Languages of the L2 Subjects

Indrasuta (1987): Thai
Indrasuta (1988): Thai
Norment (1984): Chinese, Spanish
Watabe et al. (1991): Japanese
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A Critical Appraisal of Learner Training: Theoretical Bases and Teaching Implications

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In recent years, characteristics of the good language learner have been identified and classified. It has been proposed that learning strategies based on these characteristics can be taught to students, and a number of resource materials for learner training are available. However, published data indicate that success in language learning may be more complex than such an approach would suggest. Attempts to translate the theory behind learner training into practice have produced only qualified success. Among some of the factors complicating implementation of learner training are cultural differences, age, educational background of students, students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning, and varying cognitive styles. Until empirical data, particularly in the form of longitudinal studies, are gathered to answer questions about the usefulness of learner training, teachers should approach the implementation of learner training in the classroom with caution.

Since Rubin's (1975) characterization of the good language learner, substantial research in the field of second language acquisition has been devoted to discovering what good language learners do and how their learning strategies can be taught to less successful learners to improve their learning efficiency. However, a critical assessment of the theoretical bases of learner training and the relationship between training, strategy use, and language learning success indicates that a number of factors need to be considered before learner training is implemented in a given classroom.

BASES OF LEARNER TRAINING

A number of writers working from informal observation, interviews, and surveys in the 1970s and 1980s sought to define the characteristics
of a good language learner and to classify these characteristics into groups of learning strategies. Although each writer defined the characteristics somewhat differently, all share common observations. In the area of cognitive strategies, the good language learner is believed to seek clarification, verification, and meaning; ask questions; make inferences; and use deduction (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Marizanares, Russo, & Kupper, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1980). Furthermore, good language learners see the target language as a system amenable to understanding through analysis and reasoning (Naiman et al., 1978; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1980). They use their memories efficiently, practice and self-evaluate in order to achieve accuracy (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Naiman et al., 1978; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1980). In the realm of metacognition, good language learners organize their learning around preferred learning techniques and choose, prioritize, and plan their learning (Brown, 1991; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1980). Good language learners do not neglect socioaffective factors that contribute indirectly to learning. Because good language learners know that language is communicative, they will seek ways of practicing the language and maintaining conversation (Naiman et al., 1978; O’Malley et al., 1985; Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1980). Additionally, they will be aware of affective factors that may undermine learning and have a tolerant and empathic attitude towards native speakers of the target language (Naiman et al., 1978; Oxford, 1990; Stern, 1980).

Above all, according to these writers, the good language learner is an active participant in the learning process (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Naiman et al., 1978; Stern, 1980; Wenden, 1985). Conversely, “ineffective learners are inactive learners” because they lack an “appropriate repertoire of learning strategies” (Wenden, 1985, p. 5). Work on learning strategies is seen as a key for facilitating learner autonomy and a source of insight into the causes of unsuccessful learning (Wenden, 1985).

It is a fundamental tenet of learner training that learning strategies of successful learners can be codified and taught to poor language learners with a resulting increase in their learning efficiency (Rubin, 1987; Wenden, 1987a). To this end, learner training textbooks for students (e.g., Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Rubin & Thompson, 1982; Willing, 1989) and resource books for teachers (e.g., Cohen, 1990; Oxford, 1990) are beginning to appear throughout the English-speaking world (see Cohen, 1990, for a review of literature in this area). In addition, learner training exercises are being incorporated into coursebooks, and teacher-produced supplementary materials are used in classrooms (Sturbridge, 1989).
CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

Before any theoretical model of learner training becomes firmly entrenched as a methodological cornerstone of classroom teaching, it would be wise to examine the bases on which the model is constructed, the way in which the model has been put into practice, and its potential pitfalls as well as successes.

Although empirical evidence does indicate a correlation between number and variety of strategies used and greater proficiency in an L2 (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), the theoretical model is based on a number of assumptions as yet unsupported by empirical evidence (Rubin, 1987). For example, one of the basic assumptions underlying learner training is that students profit from being aware of their personal learning styles and conscious of how they can modify techniques to suit changing circumstances (Cohen, 1990; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Rubin, 1987). Although this seems intuitively correct, there is no empirical evidence to show that awareness of strategies is a causal factor in L2 learning success. When some learner training books recommend that 20% or more of class time be devoted to learner training (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989), it is worthwhile questioning whether class time spent in awareness raising is more profitable than devoting the same time to more overt language work.

Furthermore, even allowing for variations among writers, the definitions of what constitute characteristics and strategies of good language learning behavior are imprecise (Chaudron, 1988). Characteristics, such as being active in the learning process or seeing the target language as a system, are not the same as strategies, and learning strategies in order to be teachable and their results replicable must be defined in terms of specific behaviors. There is even some disagreement over whether communicative strategies can be classified as learning strategies at all (Tarone, 1980). Even the cognitive learning strategies, such as seeking meaning, using deduction, inferencing, or monitoring, are defined so broadly that it is questionable whether they can be specified in terms of observable, specific, universal behaviors that could be taught to or assessed in students. Classroom teachers who wish to institute learner training must specify what technique students will use as a result of being trained in a particular learning strategy. They must know that the technique they are teaching is in fact exemplary of the learning strategy they wish to teach. Furthermore, in order to know whether teaching has been successful, teachers must be able to observe students performing the technique and know that the behavior observed indicates that students, from whatever culture, are practicing the target strategy.

Even if students practice strategies used by good language learners,
the strategies in and of themselves may not be sufficient to lead to success in learning tasks, as shown by case studies and interviews of unsuccessful language learners (Porte, 1988; Vann & Abraham, 1990). In a case study of two unsuccessful language learners, Vann and Abraham used a think-aloud procedure coupled with product analysis on three language tasks (a verb exercise, cloze passage, and composition) to discover what strategies, if any, the learners used. The researchers discovered that the two unsuccessful learners employed an extensive repertoire of strategies characteristic of successful learners, such as engagement in the task, risk taking, monitoring errors, and paying attention to overall meaning. Another study (Porte, 1988), carried out in England with unsuccessful students of EFL, revealed that the 15 students interviewed used many good language learning strategies, although in some cases, with less sophistication or sense of appropriateness than their more successful classmates.

Conversely, successful learners may use strategies not approved by the good language learner model or may prove successful without using recommended strategies. For example, Naiman et al. (1978) provided examples of techniques that successful language learners had found helpful, including reading aloud, reading a dictionary, following rules given in grammar books, word-for-word translation—all of which are techniques which have been, at one time or another, strongly disapproved of by ESL teachers. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) found that out of a total of 51 supposed good language learning behaviors, 80% did not correlate with higher gains in proficiency in grammar and communicative competence. In a self-report questionnaire administered to Spanish-speaking and Asian-language ESL students, the Spanish speakers scored higher than the Asian-language speakers on all behaviors associated with the good language learner. However, comparison of pre- and postcourse tests of grammar and oral skills revealed that the Asian-language speakers had made greater gains in these two areas. In her longitudinal study of children learning ESL, Wong Fillmore’s (1983) objectives were to discover which language learning and social styles were associated with success in language learning. Although, as predicted, some of the good language learners were outgoing and eager to communicate, others were very quiet and introverted. After 2 years of extensive data collection, Wong Fillmore concluded, “there is no single way to characterize either the good or the poor learners” (p. 161).

Some attempts to teach learning strategies have met with mixed success. In an experiment conducted with 70 Spanish-speaking high school students in beginning- and intermediate-level ESL programs, O’Malley et al. (1985) gave 8 days of training in listening and speaking strategies. Pre- and postinstruction results proved not to be statistically
significant for training students to listen for specific details, take notes, and ask each other for help. However, instructions on how to organize and rehearse a 2-min taped speech proved significantly useful. It must be noted here, however, that the strategies taught for listening were general skills that could be applied to any listening activity, whereas the strategies for speaking, although generalizable, were specific to the assignment, which was partially assessed on the extent to which students followed the prescribed outline.

In another setting, Wenden (1987c) sought to institute a learner-training program for 2 hr/week in a 7-week, 20-hr/week intensive English course for two groups of very advanced adults. The program included discussions on language learning, minilectures, and readings with the goal of increasing students’ metacognitive awareness of language learning. The program was so unsuccessful that it had to be abandoned for one of the two groups halfway through the course. In the remaining group of 23 students, an end-of-course questionnaire revealed that more than half the students did not find the tasks useful and only 5 out of 23 reported learning something they did not know.

Although another trial of learner training proved successful in one area, it was counterproductive in another. O’Malley (1987) reported on an experiment with learner training in listening, speaking, and vocabulary conducted with Spanish-speaking and East Asian–language high school students. As in the previous experiment by O’Malley et al. (1985), the successful learner training in speaking involved training students to prepare and rehearse speeches on specific topics. The learner training in listening involved more general skills of selective attention, note-taking, and consultation with classmates. The results of listening tests conducted before, during, and after training were not statistically significant, although scores fell in the predicted direction. However, in the vocabulary training, students were taught to use imagery and grouping techniques. In this case, the experimental group who received training performed less successfully on tests of recall than the control group without training; this result was noted especially for Asian-language speakers, who had their own well-developed strategies for rote memorization.

**TEACHING IMPLICATIONS**

The lack of unqualified success reported by proponents of learner training suggests that implementation of learner training in the classroom should be approached with caution. Why has learner training not always been successful? There are a number of factors to be considered by classroom teachers who wish to facilitate independent learning on the part of their students.
First, the behaviors defined as exemplary of successful learning strategies practiced by good language learners may be based on cultural models that are not universal. Politzer and McGroarty (1985) observed that Asian-language students did not report highly visible verbal behavior in and out of class, yet these students made greater gains in their course of study than did Spanish-speaking students, who scored higher on these good language learner behaviors. If it is indeed true that good language learners are active participants in their learning (and this certainly makes some sense intuitively), then what behavior constitutes being active? Can it be said that a student who does not ask questions in class or correct his peers is inactive? EFL students in China, for example, might appear inactive and dependent on the teacher as they silently take notes in class, yet a large-scale study revealed that many were actively engaged outside the class in their own independent study (Dirksen, 1990). As Politzer and McGroarty concluded in their study, “many of the good language learning behaviors currently discussed in the literature may be based on highly ethnocentric assumptions about language learning and teaching” (p. 14).

Similarly, attempts at learner training must take into account a student’s age, educational background, and life experience. Particularly for adult learners, terms such as learner training or learning to learn have the unfortunate implication that students are inadequate at learning. It seems obvious that adults must be treated as adults; attempts to impose particular learning techniques on adults who have achieved success in their educational, professional, or personal lives may be viewed as patronizing. Even less prescriptive learner training activities may be inappropriate for adults. For example, awareness activities that ask students to agree or disagree with statements which, to some teachers, have right and wrong answers (e.g., “Playing games in English is a waste of time”) can irritate adult learners and thus prove counterproductive (Sturtridge, 1989; for examples, see the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning in Oxford, 1990). If techniques prove too unfamiliar or are perceived as a waste of time, they will be resisted (Bialystok, 1985). This is particularly true of older adult learners or very advanced students (see Bruton, 1984; Wenden, 1987c).

Based on their own past experiences of learning, students will use strategies and techniques that have proved personally successful in the past (Porte, 1988), and these chosen strategies will be influenced by the educational environment from which they come. For example, Oxford and Nyikos’ (1989) survey of more than 1,200 U.S. students taking foreign language courses revealed that students chose to use formal rule-related practice strategies and general study strategies that would lead to success in a curriculum influenced by discrete-point testing.

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Affective factors also need to be taken into account, as noted by Naiman et al. (1978) and Oxford (1990). Language learning activities, including learner training, would seem to have a greater chance of success if students are a selective group of highly motivated individuals with homogeneous goals, such as missionaries, foreign service personnel, or Peace Corps volunteers (as described, e.g., in Cohen, 1990; Oxford, 1990). However, with a less motivated group, if students are feeling the effects of culture shock, language shock, or culture stress (Schumann, 1975), they are less likely to be amenable to learner training. In my experience, these are the very times when students will be most resistant to trying new or unfamiliar learning techniques.

Another reason for potential failure of learner training schemes is the lack of fit between teachers' beliefs about how to learn a language and those of their students. Research in the form of interviews, retrospective accounts, and questionnaires (Horwitz, 1987; Wenden, 1986, 1987c) indicates that both students and teachers hold quite strong beliefs about the nature of language learning and how best to approach the task of learning another language. Based on interviews with 25 advanced-level adults studying ESL, Wenden (1987b) grouped students into three general categories according to their beliefs about language learning: (a) those who believed in the importance of using the language in natural environments and were thus most interested in speaking and listening, (b) those who believed in the importance of learning about the language and thus stressed grammar and vocabulary, and (c) those who believed that personal factors such as aptitude and feelings about language learning were influential.

According to Horwitz (1987), when teachers perceive a student's beliefs about language learning to be erroneous and a hindrance to productive learning, they should “confront the erroneous beliefs with new information” in an attempt to modify the belief. The examples Horwitz gives (e.g., a belief that all speakers of an L2 mentally translate before speaking) are clear-cut cases where verifiable facts contradict the belief. However, in a field given to changing instruction methods based on current theory, teachers might also censor beliefs such as those documented by Wenden. The language teacher who is convinced that a communicative approach or grammar-translation or audiolingualism is the most effective way to learn will assuredly come into conflict with students who hold different beliefs. Neither side can call upon unimpeachable empirical evidence to prove that one or another method of learning is best for a particular individual learner. As shown in interviews and diary studies, this conflict of beliefs may result in the student's continued clandestine use of techniques of which the teacher disapproves (Porte, 1988) or withdrawal from the course altogether (e.g., as reported in Bailey, 1983).
Students may hold beliefs about language learning based on cultural or educational background (Horwitz, 1987), but their beliefs may also be based on personal cognitive style. Thus a further consideration for the classroom teacher who wishes to train students in the use of particular techniques associated with good language learning strategies is the extent to which a particular technique or strategy suits one or another cognitive style. Cognitive styles have been classified in a number of ways based on left or right hemisphere dominance, field dependence or independence, impulsiveness or reflectiveness, among others (summarized in Hartnett, 1985; Hatch, 1983; also see Brown 1991). Another way in which learning styles have been classified is according to whether individuals process language by means of visual imagery, spelling visualization, sound, large motor movement (Griffin, 1990) or kinesthetic (Reinert, 1976). Reid’s (1987) survey of more than 1,200 ESL university students in the U.S. confirmed the wide variety of individual learning styles, as did Dirksen’s (1990) study of the learning styles of EFL students in China. This research is relevant for classroom application of learner training. For example, training students to use visual imagery to learn new vocabulary (as in, e.g., O’Malley 1987) may prove successful for those individuals who process language visually but much less successful for those who are more auditory or kinesthetic.

It should be noted here that some of the proponents of learner training do advise learners to become aware of their own cognitive styles and experiment with techniques accordingly (e.g., Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Rubin & Thompson, 1982). In selecting techniques in which to train learners, the classroom teacher should take into account individual differences in students’ cognitive styles and how effective a particular technique will be for different modes of language processing.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Among the questions that the work on learning strategies and learner training has not answered are the fundamental ones of whether conscious awareness of strategy use correlates with and causes greater gains in language learning. Empirical evidence that awareness at least correlates with greater proficiency would provide the classroom teacher with more than intuition for spending class time on consciousness-raising.

If students are presented with a variety of techniques assumed to promote good learning strategies, is this beneficial to the class generally and to individuals specifically? In what ways is it beneficial, and are the effects long-lasting? Also, once introduced to a technique that seems unfamiliar, how long will it take a student to try the technique?
spontaneously, if at all? A longitudinal study would be needed to answer these questions adequately.

If learner training is found to be successful, at what levels is it most useful? Is learner training equally useful for children and adults? Is it more (or less) appropriate for beginning students than for advanced students? Intuition and experience suggest answers to these questions, but in order to make causal claims, the suggested answers in the form of hypotheses would need to be tested through longitudinal empirical studies using experimental and control groups.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, although the characteristics of a good language learner and learning strategies are intuitively appealing, the classroom teacher should exercise caution in instituting learner training based on these characteristics and strategies. Questions to consider include:

1. What is the evidence that use of a particular strategy causes more efficient learning than not using that strategy?
2. How can a particular strategy be translated into a specific teachable behavior?
3. Will that behavior prove useful for all language learners or only for some?
4. Are the students ready and willing to try the behavior?
5. What factors will influence the effectiveness of learner training in general and in specific instances, and have these factors been taken into account in planning the training?

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Number/Person Errors in an Information-Processing Perspective: Implications for Form-Focused Instruction

JAN P. ZALEWSKI
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Errors in inflectional morphology have usually been called local on the assumption that they do not interfere with comprehension. Such errors have been considered to be the cause of negative emotional reactions rather than comprehension problems. However, the ESL data presented in this paper show that the grammatical categories of number and person can play an important role in establishing cognitive continuity of textual occurrences (i.e., can have discourse-cohesive functions). In such cases, the number/person errors are not local but global, as they do affect text comprehension. Such global problems point to the cognitive salience of the number/person inflections in some contexts. Because incomplete acquisition of these inflections can be attributed to their being not salient enough on most occasions to capture the selective attention of adult learners, it is likely that we can facilitate their learning by increasing their occurrence in language input contexts that raise their cognitive salience. Doing this will ensure that the feature is noticed and processed for meaning more often, thereby made easier to learn.

The morpheme acquisition studies of the 1970s might have led one to believe that inflectional morphology is acquired not only early but also once and for all. The numerous follow-ups on those emergence studies (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Bofman, 1987; VanPatten, 1984) attempted to come to grips with what ESL teachers knew all along—that even advanced ESL learners continue to make errors in inflectional morphology. Such morphological errors have been called low-level, surface, and local, as they apparently tend not to interfere with comprehension. They constitute violations of usually redundant and so communicatively less important linguistic features.

Burt and Kiparsky (1972, 1974), who introduced the local/global
error distinction, included person/number errors in the local category because their sentence-level data showed that such errors did not affect the comprehensibility of a message. The distinction between local and global errors (i.e., errors which do not affect comprehensibility vs. those which do) led Burt (1975) to a related distinction between local and global grammar. Burt's decision was to reemphasize local grammar in form-focused instruction and shift pedagogical attention to global grammar instead. As she explained: “Global grammar must be controlled by students in order to be easily understood by native speakers of English, while local grammar need not be controlled by the learner to communicate successfully” (p. 58). A similar conclusion was reached by Rutherford (1988). He argued that the rules of “low-level syntax, that is, rules having to do, for example, with subject-verb agreement, plural markers, possessive markers, questions, tense formation, and so forth” did not deserve pedagogical attention because “their makeup can easily be observed at the level of surface syntax” (p. 174). To draw support for his position, he pointed out that “Wilga Rivers, for example, has argued for paying less attention to such [surface] rules which, as we know, are continually broken even by advanced learners who can use the rest of the language quite correctly” (p. 174). However, grammar instruction which ignores the really persistent problems because they are just “surface problems” which can “be left to take care of themselves” (p. 174) has to be questioned when such problems evidently do not take care of themselves, at least not for a long time and, in some cases, never.

Celce-Murcia (1985) has observed that when evaluating the writing of ESL students, trained judges are “put off” by such “minor but frequent errors in surface grammar” (p. 5). Consequently, she claims that this negative emotional reaction prevents trained judges of ESL papers from properly evaluating the writers’ ideas and organization and makes them rate such compositions as unacceptable. However, as I will show here, these may not be merely negative emotional reactions but real comprehension problems that such judges experience. This paper focuses on the inflectional categories of number and person and their discourse-pragmatic functions. As my discourse analysis of number/person errors will indicate, these two categories are not just local. On the contrary, the information they provide may be crucial to the successful construction of a coherent mental representation of a whole text or of significant portions of it. Using examples from ESL compositions written by students at all levels of proficiency at the English Language Institute at Illinois State University, I will show how authentic materials such as these can be used by ESL teachers to make the number/person inflections both cognitively and communicatively more salient and so easier to learn for the adult ESL student. In other
words, the paper attempts to show an effective way of focusing the learner’s attention on those formal features which need to be learned.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

Whereas pronominal reference and ellipsis have become standard topics in discussions of cohesion (e.g., de Beaugrande, 1984; de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981; Halliday & Hasan, 1976; McCarthy, 1991), direct repetitions of full explicit reference (where the original occurrence merely happens again) seem to have been of less interest. However, a look at ESL data will prove such simple repetitions to be equally interesting. This kind of repetition is dubbed recurrence by de Beaugrande and Dressier (1981). In their discussion, however, they limit themselves to lexical recurrence. Here is one of their examples taken from the Declaration of Independence:

1. . . . mankind are disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable . . . Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies. (p. 57)

Confining themselves to derivational morphology, de Beaugrande and Dressier leave aside inflectional morphology, which is an important carrier of grammatical categories. They only briefly mention Harris’s (1952) finding that in discourse, grammatical categories tend to recur rather than shift. In this section, I will focus on (a) how the recurrence of the grammatical categories of number and person contributes to the cognitive continuity of textual occurrences (this cognitive continuity being essential to successful text processing) and (b) how errors affecting the recurrence of the morphological categories of number and person (errors usually labeled local) can actually result in serious textual breakdowns, that is, can prevent successful and/or efficient text comprehension.

From studies of pronominal reference and ellipsis (like those in Chafe, 1980), we know that when pronominal reference is preferred to ellipsis, it is because it provides the additional grammatical clues of number, person, and definiteness to facilitate referential tracking, which points to the cognitive importance of these grammatical categories in text processing (basically, as effort-saving devices). A problem which illustrates the importance of the above three grammatical categories to efficient processing is shown in Example 2, where a pronoun that can be marked for number is made to refer to a semantically uncountable noun:

2. When I saw the news about democratization in Russia first time, I thought it was great thing. Because I always felt sorry about the people in Russia. But, I didn’t see any good news about Russia after the first one.
Pronouns have sometimes been referred to as empty placeholders, but obviously they are not completely washed out of all meaning. Number, person, and definiteness seem to be the high-level meanings used to trace continuous identity through nominal phrases, which appear only intermittently in discourse.

Simple recurrence of explicit nominal reference without the appropriate grammatical markers does not guarantee continuity of reference throughout discourse. The problem is manifest in the following passage:

3. About Marriage Through a Go-Between

In Japan there are two way which young women and men find their partners for their marriages. I want to explain what the arranged marriage is and what advantages or bad points it has.

There is a go-between who take care of between a boy and a girl. Before they meet, they can get personal histories of each other. Then, a go-between gives them a meeting. In a meeting, a go-between introduces a boy and a girl to each other. In almost case, meetings are dinner parties. Their parents often go with them to a meeting. If they are interested in each other, they go out together for a while. And then they decide if they get married or not.

As illustrated by the example, the failure to use definite reference with each repeated occurrence of the nouns go-between, boy, girl, meeting(s) results in the text being choppy. Although definitely not serious, this lack of continuity appears to bring about some slowdown in text processing, as the reader must make a conscious effort to establish the requisite identity links. The use of articles to establish continuity of identity in discourse has been fairly well researched (see, e.g., Du Bois, 1980). Here I am going to focus on the grammatical categories of number and person, whose role in establishing textual continuity has by and large been ignored; accordingly, errors affecting these categories have been referred to as local. We can find some number/person problems in the above example (e.g., two way, a go-between who take care). These are typical local errors where the missing grammatical information is clearly redundant and apparently has no significant effect on text processing. However, this is not always so, as we discover when dealing with ESL compositions. Consider Example 4:

4. Recently, I really like to read essay. Especially I like essay written by Mori. She's always fighting her realities of life and also creating something. Her essay always gives me some hints to live my life.

The theme concept of this paragraph is rendered by the recurring noun essay, which consistently lacks any grammatical markers (an essay or essays?) In the first sentence, the plural hypothesis seems to receive
some support from the linguistic context: The tense-aspect value of the predicate like to read implies a generic nature of the unspecified object and so calls for the plural to indicate this. In the second sentence, neither of the two competing hypotheses seems to be sufficiently strengthened to exclude the other, so there may be a preference on the part of the reader to stick to the plural-generic interpretation established by the first reading of the theme concept. The third sentence (always fighting/creating) seems to support the plural interpretation, the generic reading being supported by the temporal universality of always. Beginning the fourth sentence, the reader most likely starts out with the already fairly well-established plural reading of the theme concept only to run into the third-person singular marker, which weights the interpretation in favor of the already substantially weakened singular hypothesis. This unexpected shift in favor of the singular hypothesis constitutes a fairly serious textual breakdown, forcing the reader to go back and check/revise previous interpretations. Two competing readings of the last sentence are sanctioned: (a) one essay constantly reflected on; (b) many essays reflected on in repeated/separate episodes. The example shows that the so-called local morphology may be the source of information which is crucial not simply to efficient but to successful text processing. In the absence of such morphological information, the reader will use all other available information (textual and extratextual) to makeup for such morphological deficiencies of the surface text (see Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986, on parallel distributed processing). However, as we shall see, information thus lost may be unrecoverable for the reader.

The number/person information is frequently duplicated in the co-occurring determiners (i.e., whenever the determiners are possessive pronouns). The reader can easily make up for the deficiencies in inflectional morphology in such cases. Thus consider Example 5:

5. Actually we also pray with some words before eating. The difference between America and my country is mainly the pray style and the praying time. American pray crossing their own fingers and praying takes longer.

The point is, however, that for many ESL writers, English determiners seem to be even more of a problem than inflectional morphology. Here is an example showing how in the absence of possessive pronouns (or possibly determiners altogether), the problem with number/person inflections becomes unsolvable for the reader:

6. Most gestures of Americans are more exaggerated than ones of Japanese in general. For example, Americans shrug the shoulders and lifts both hands to mean "I don't know." On the other hand, Japanese shakes the head from side to side.
The lack of a formal singular/plural distinction in the noun Japanese may have triggered the whole problem for the learner here and thus also a problem for the reader (notice a similar lack of such a singular/plural distinction in the Japanese language—the learner’s L1). The reader’s problem could be solved had possessive pronouns (not articles) been used as required. The textual breakdown consists here in the virtual impossibility for the reader to decide between the competing singular and plural hypothesis. Confusing as this may be, the breakdown is of no serious consequence to the comprehensibility of the passage as a whole, which is in clear contrast to the problem in Example 4. There the noun essay represented the theme concept (a recurrent topic) of the entire paragraph, so its grammatical marking was crucial to our understanding of the whole paragraph, because it represented the central concept in the mental representation of that paragraph. In Example 6, the nouns Americans and Japanese (although they are the respective topics of the last two sentences of the paragraph) do not represent the theme concept of the entire paragraph but actually only stand in an attributive relation to the noun gestures, which is the theme. Accordingly, they occupy a less central place in the mental representation of this paragraph.

Considering this difference between Examples 4 and 6, it seems reasonable to conclude that the more central the place of a nominal concept in the mental representation of a text or, in other words, the more thematic the noun (phrase) is, the more global/serious the error(s) affecting the noun (phrase) will be. The scalarity of the notion of typicality is convincingly argued in Givón (1989). I use the terms topic and theme to refer to different points on the typicality scale. Let us turn to another example that illustrates this contention that the more thematic a noun phrase is (i.e., the longer it persists as topic), the more serious the problems affecting the noun phrase become. This time the passage consists of two excerpts from a longer composition, giving us an opportunity to see how serious the problem of number/person can become in the case of more persistent topics. The noun phrase thrift store is the theme of the whole composition.

7. This article is about a thrift store in the United States that has become a way of life for many college students. This reminds me about this kind of store in my country. In Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, we have a used clothing store that sells clothes, shoes, and sometimes a musical instrument for a very cheap price.

Givón (1989) uses the term theme in a different sense, and his topic covers my notions of topic and theme—a distinction I draw from de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981).
However, a thrift store in Bangkok is different from a thrift store in this article in the aim of establishment. In Bangkok, a thrift store is owned by the Council of Bangkok and managed by a governor. The aim of establishment is for charity. All benefits they have were contributed to many poor school in many long distance provinces. Therefore, goods in this store were donated by many group of people.

Moreover, Bangkok thrift store is different from American thrift store in the idea that in the article, many students said thrift store allowed them to express their individuality. But in Bangkok, people wanted to go to the thrift store because they wanted to dress up in the clothes that once were used by their favorite person.

The conflicting morphological information relative to the theme concept of the composition (number/person inflections and determiners, or lack thereof) makes the construction of a coherent mental representation of the entire composition impossible. We never know for sure whether the student is talking about a specific store or whether the phrase thrift store is in fact used in a nonspecific, generic sense. Already the first sentence of the composition is ambiguous in that the reader cannot tell whether the theme concept is used there in a referential or nonreferential sense. Thus we have no way of knowing whether the first occurrence of the noun store is referential (i.e., specific) or nonreferential (i.e., generic), unless of course we have read the article the student is referring to. The second occurrence of the noun store is clearly nonreferential; however, another problem emerges and becomes evident as soon as we get to the third occurrence of the noun and the agreement problem. Is the student talking about a chain of stores or just one such store in Bangkok? Either hypothesis can get equal support in the following text, and the problem cannot be solved without recourse to relevant world knowledge. Any reader who does not happen to know Bangkok well enough will be torn between the singular and plural hypotheses concerning Bangkok thrift store; and any reader who has not read the article will be torn between the specific and generic hypotheses concerning American thrift store, never being able to decide either way. These ambiguities constitute a serious textual breakdown not only because trying to solve them costs the reader a lot of processing effort but also because ultimately their disambiguation turns out to be impossible. All these problems are largely due to the deficiencies in the use of the grammatical categories of number and person, which have all too often been viewed as local and thus de-emphasized in form-focused instruction.

\[\text{My usage of the term referential follows Du Bois (1980), who explains: "A noun phrase is referential when it is used to speak about an object as an object, with continuous identity over time" (p. 208).}\]

NUMBER/PERSON ERRORS 697
Burt and Kiparsky (1972, 1974) categorized number/person errors as local. It appears, however, that by limiting themselves to sentence-level data, they misrepresented as a local-global dichotomy what appears to be a continuum. The only global errors they were able to identify were at the clause and sentence levels because they considered errors in their syntactic context only. However, the above discussion on the recurrence of the categories of number and person shows that errors considered local at the sentence level may become global at the discourse level. As my ESL data indicate, the grammatical categories of number and person can have discourse-cohesive functions, that is, they can be responsible for establishing cognitive continuity of textual occurrences (see the discourse-pragmatic function of “referential tracking” in Givón, 1989). The errors Burt and Kiparsky identified as global were, in Burt’s (1975) own words, “the most systematic global errors” (p. 56). Put another way, those were the central/prototypical representatives of the global category, whose periphery includes the global number/person errors discussed above. If we view the most systematic global features as prototypes, then Burt’s (1975) decision to make them the focus of instruction (and so to reemphasize what she called local grammar) turns out to be questionable.

In her research, Rosch (1973) has found that “category membership of central instances was learned before membership of peripheral instances” (p. 142). She has shown that prototypes are perceptually and cognitively salient, which facilitates their learning. Rosch’s findings seem to find support in L2 learning data. Consider, for instance, the SVO word order—one of the most central global features of English, whose global character was pointed out by Burt (1975). Severe problems due to the violation of this feature seem to disappear relatively early in the acquisition process. On the other hand, problems with inflectional morphology (categorized by Burt and Kiparsky as local) are probably the best recognized most persistent errors made by ESL learners. Thus, in accordance with the learning implications of Rosch’s prototype theory, the global (prototypical) SVO feature appears to be easier to learn than some local (peripheral) morphological inflection. Accordingly, it would seem that the kind of global grammar instruction proposed by Burt, which focuses on the most systematic global features (i.e., prototypical ones), does not provide help where learners appear to need it most, that is, with the peripheral (i.e., local) features.

As Bolinger (1972) once pointed out, “every contrast a language permits to survive is relevant, some time or other” (p. 71). In other words, every language feature is potentially important to communica-
tion. Of course, some are important more often than others, but there are no features which are never important. Burt and Kiparsky identified as global those features which tend to be communicatively important on most occasions. However, this does not mean that the features they identified as local will not be communicatively important on some occasions (as my above analysis has shown). Thus, what Burt and Kiparsky identified as two distinct categories (either a local feature or a global one) can better be described as a continuum whose one end constitutes the center of the category (made up of features which are communicatively important most of the time—like the SVO feature in English, for example), and the other end constitutes the category’s periphery (made up of features which are communicatively important only some of the time—like the number/person inflections, for example). The global grammar that I would accordingly like to propose here is based on the prototype category model. It is called global not by virtue of being limited to the presentation of “the most systematic global features” (as Burt’s global grammar was) but by virtue of presenting any language feature in a context which renders the feature communicatively important because of its cognitive salience in that context.

The learning implications of Rosch’s prototype theory cited above (i.e., central instances are easier to learn) are in accord with the conclusions reached by cognitive researchers like Anderson (1985), Ericsson and Simon (1984), and Schmidt (1990), who claim that there is strong evidence that what is learned is what must be noticed in order to carry out a task. Whether we intend to learn and even what we intend to learn is not as important as how the task forces us to process the linguistic input. It appears that task demands force us to notice relevant, that is, cognitively salient, information. What we learn then is what we notice, but what we notice is not always controlled by us (at least, not in the sense that we can notice whatever we want, whenever we want) but rather by the communicative demands of language processing. Noticeability then depends in a crucial way on feature salience and task demands. It appears that a feature which is global most of the time (i.e., the communicative demands of language processing make it salient in most instances of its occurrence) will be noticed more often and so will be learned faster than a feature which is local most of the time and only rarely becomes cognitively/communicatively salient.

The term global, which figures so prominently in the above statement on learning, is the one which underlies the notion of global grammar as proposed in this paper. It is claimed here that global grammar can provide a solution to the problem of incomplete L2 learning. According to Schmidt (1990), incomplete L2 learning by adults can be attributed to their high control of cognitive processing (ability to focus...
attention on information relevant to the task at hand, see Bialystok & Ryan, 1985) which results in limited noticing, that is, limited linguistic intake. Limited noticing means that adult L2 learners focus only on communicatively salient (global) features when processing language input for meaning. Accordingly, features which are usually local will be much harder to learn. Following VanPatten (1984), it can be observed that because in processing input, L2 learners must normally focus on meaning, communicatively less informative features of the linguistic input can be noticed only after processing for meaning has been automatized. When thus freed, attentional resources can be turned over to communicatively less important tasks. The problem is that when L2 learners can process language for meaning, they lose the primary incentive to go on learning, which results in incomplete learning. The solution offered by global grammar is to increase in language input the occurrence of usually local features in contexts which raise their communicative salience, thus making them global. This would increase the frequency with which the features which are local on most occasions have to be processed for meaning. The advantage of global grammar lies in the fact that it presents features in precisely those contexts which render those features communicatively salient and so more noticeable to adult L2 learners, thus making them easier to learn. The kind of discourse error analysis presented above (where a specific language feature is identified in contexts which make it crucial to successful communication) could become the basis of a pedagogically oriented description of English morphosyntax called global grammar.

To illustrate global grammar's potential, to address the problem of incomplete L2 learning, let me demonstrate how it can deal with the number/person errors. Discussing such errors in my data, I argued that the longer a noun phrase persists as topic, the more serious the grammatical problems affecting this phrase become. When discussing Example 7, I pointed out that any reader who does not happen to know Bangkok well enough will be torn between the singular and plural hypotheses concerning the phrase (Bangkok) thrift store, and any reader who has not read the article mentioned in the text will be torn between the specific and generic hypotheses concerning the phrase (American) thrift store, never being able to decide either way. These ambiguities constitute a serious textual breakdown not only because trying to solve them costs the reader a lot of processing effort but mostly because their disambiguation turns out to be impossible. These problems are largely due to the deficiencies in the use of the morphological categories of number and person and so point to their communicative importance in this context. This is what makes the text useful in teaching the number/person inflections.
A text such as Example 7 offers various possibilities for the teacher. For example, we could turn the text into a problem-solving exercise and discuss the ambiguities with students who experience similar problems with number/person inflections. Alternatively, we could present the students with a corrected text, having arbitrarily removed the ambiguities ourselves. What is important in both cases is that the students be asked before reading if the text is about one American/Bangkok thrift store or perhaps a chain of thrift stores. This would specify the task so as to ensure that the students pay attention to the relevant linguistic features. In this case, the students would have to pay attention to the presence or absence of the number/person inflections. Because in the text, these inflections occur in semantically nonredundant contexts, the students will be forced to rely on them exclusively for crucial information. As has been pointed out, there is strong evidence that what is learned is what must be noticed in order to carry out a task. What matters here is that the task forces the reader to process the relevant aspects of linguistic input.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

As I pointed out, following Schmidt (1990), incomplete adult L2 learning is the result of limited noticing. Accordingly, most affected by such incomplete learning are those language features which are peripheral to the global category, that is, only rarely become communicatively salient. I observed that ESL researchers like Burt (1975), Rutherford (1988), and Rivers (cited in Rutherford, 1988) have decided to reemphasize such local formal features in grammar instruction—with Rutherford arguing that such features do not deserve pedagogical attention because “their makeup can easily be observed at the level of surface syntax” (p. 174). However, grammar instruction which wants to explain to L2 learners the global features (which can be learned successfully anyway) and turns its back on the local ones (which are the really persistent problems) has to be questioned. The value of the global grammar proposed here can be appreciated especially in the case of such “surface problems” because it offers what promises to be a successful solution. Namely, it increases the noticeability of such usually local features by presenting them in global contexts (i.e., contexts rendering those features cognitively salient). This, however, does not mean that global grammar cannot facilitate the learning of other features, that is, those which are usually global. Whatever problems are experienced by an L2 learner at a particular stage of linguistic development, global grammar can help by exposing the learner to those particular features in global contexts. Such contexts will make
the relevant feature cognitively and communicatively salient, and so easier to notice in processing the language. The noticeability of such a feature can be further increased by specifying the learners’ task so that they will have to pay attention to specific aspects of the linguistic input.

The problem with form-focused instruction seems to be that when we teach specific language features, we tend to present them in highly redundant contexts. It seems that what such an approach facilitates is conscious understanding rather than learning. With respect to learning, such a strategy is self-defeating. It is a basic cognitive principle (called by Givón, 1989, the code-quantity principle) that more coding attracts more attention and so is lodged more firmly in memory. Confronted with redundancies like *many* stores, the learner spends more effort decoding *many* than decoding the plural inflection. This results in less attention being paid to the inflection in real language processing. Additionally, because in real language processing so many linguistic features compete for the learners limited attention, the cognitively redundant and perceptually nonsalient inflection will likely be passed over unnoticed. A text like Example 7, with little or no such redundancy, makes the number/person inflections not only more meaningful by spotlighting their importance to the construction of a coherent textual world but also more salient because it poses a task which makes the learner dependent on these inflections for crucial information.

There is a need for effective materials and procedures that can focus learners attention on relevant language features. It is the central characteristic of the global grammar proposed here that it can present language features which are to be learned in contexts which render those features cognitively and communicatively salient. This gives global grammar its potential to effectively facilitate L2 acquisition of features that are known to be difficult to learn.

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ESL, Ideology, and the Politics of Pragmatism

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This article discusses how all forms of ESL instruction are ideological, whether or not educators are conscious of the political implications of their instructional choices. Those choices can encourage students to think critically about their education and about society, or they can discourage questioning the status quo in and out of school. This article asserts that ideology is unavoidable, a position supported by various L1 and L2 scholars whose work is surveyed here. Finally, the “accommodationist” politics of apparently neutral pragmatism in English for academic purposes is discussed.

In the premier issue of the Journal of Second Language Writing, Santos (1992) contrasts L1 and L2 composition. L1 composition theory, she argues, is based on the “political orientation of social constructionist” (p. 6), which “sees itself ideologically” (p. 2), while ESL composition “sees itself pragmatically,” thus “avoiding ideology” (p. 8). According to Santos, social constructionist regards “as exclusively social what has long been thought of as individual—denying in essence the very notion of individuality” and is “allied with a political ideology which is left-wing or Marxist in nature” (p. 4). ESL composition, Santos explains, as a branch of applied linguistics, sees its research as primarily descriptive and quantitative. By descriptive, Santos means “unprejudiced by value judgments about the linguistic system, its speakers, and by easy extension, the sociopolitical circumstances attached to the system” (p. 8). ESL composition researchers are not likely to become interested in the sociopolitical context of ESL writing, in Santos’s view, given their pragmatic goal of preparing “students for the types of academic writing assignments they will be expected to carry out in other classes” (p. 9) and a “scientific orientation in research” (p. 11).
In this article, I will try to show that far from being “aloof from ideology,” L2 composition, like all teaching and research, is ideological whether or not we are conscious of the political implications. Educators who do not acknowledge or discuss their ideology are not politically neutral; they simply do not highlight their ideology. I will also show that there is already a substantial body of ESL literature, not cited by Santos, that foregrounds ideology by studying the sociopolitical context, including L2 composition. That research, summarized in the second section of this article, aims to broaden the scope of investigation beyond the classroom, to include economic and social influences. Finally, to further demonstrate that ideology is unavoidable, I will discuss the accommodationist politics of pragmatism in English for academic purposes, an area of ESL instruction which Santos features as particularly “pragmatic.”

EDUCATION IS IDEOLOGICAL

The Myth of Neutrality

The notion that some kinds of teaching are ideological while others are not has been challenged by a considerable number of L1 and L2 educators, for example Apple (1990), Auerbach (1991), Berlin (1988), Cummins (1989), Peirce (1989), Pennycook (1989), Raimes (1991a), Shor (1992), and Simon (1992). According to Berlin (1988), “a way of teaching is never innocent. Every pedagogy is imbricated in ideology” (p. 492). Agreeing with this position, Shor asserts that there can be no neutrality in education because it is a “contested terrain where people are socialized and the future of society is at stake” (Shor, 1992, p. 13). Which books are read, ignored, or banned; which topics are highlighted or omitted; how school monies are allocated; who is hired, fired, or promoted; how students and teachers talk in the classroom are all areas of debate and contention, according to Shor (p. 15). Simon (1992) also discusses education as the expression of a society’s vision of the future and explains that the visions “are never neutral; they are always someone’s dream and to the degree that they are implicated in organizing the future for others, they always have a moral and political dimension” (p. 141). Apple (1990) points out that although teachers make curricular and pedagogical choices, “the knowledge that now gets into schools . . . often reflects the perspectives and beliefs of powerful segments of our social collectivity” (p. 8). This can be seen, for example, in debates about the canon in various academic departments: Women and minorities who argue for inclusion of noncanonical authors in the curriculum often face opposition by their colleagues who want to maintain the status quo, which has not included
the contributions of nontraditional authors. The politics of education is also revealed in stratification: “offering different kinds of education to different groups of people” (Auerbach, 1991, p. 3). Some students are tracked into high-level, challenging classes while others are prepared in vocational classes for low-skill, low-pay jobs (Oakes, 1985).

The writers cited above explain that teachers’ decisions about subject matter, teaching methods, and assessment reflect a range of political positions, from wholehearted endorsement of the status quo in school and society, to tacit approval, to critical dissent. Being unaware of the political implications of one’s choices, or claiming that those choices are neutral, does not mean that one’s pedagogy is free of ideology. Rather, it means that one has chosen to “deny the political nature of schooling” which is akin to “articulating an ideological position in favor of the status quo” (Pennycook, 1989, p. 591).

The Politics of Pedagogy

Even if the politics are invisible to us, “all forms of education are political because they can enable or inhibit the questioning habits of students, thus developing or disabling their critical relation to knowledge, schooling and society” (Shor, 1992, p. 13). We can present subject matter as facts to be memorized, information to be absorbed, and skills to be practiced without critical questioning of the material or society. Or we can invite students to participate actively in the production of knowledge, to study their learning and social conditions. We can present knowledge as “an eternal and invariable phenomenon located in some uncomplicated repository,” or as “an historically bound social fabrication” (Berlin, 1988, p. 489). Knowledge is socially constructed, “an arena of ideological conflict,” not a function of “‘natural laws’ or ‘universal truths’” (p. 489).

Critical education, explains Shor, opposes the concept that “knowledge and the world are fixed and are fine the way they are with no role for students to play in transforming them” (p. 12). Critical teaching is susceptible to the label ideological because it announces its intention to critically examine canonical knowledge and current social conditions. By refusing to ignore social issues and by bringing them into the classroom for critical scrutiny, it proclaims its goal of effecting social change. On the other hand, traditional teaching that presents knowledge as facts, interpretations, or skills delivered to students is also ideological but its politics are less obvious because it fits into the normative status quo. It does not call for changes in teacher/student relationships, in the way knowledge is produced and disseminated, or in social and economic conditions affecting students’ lives.
Ideology and ESL

Howard and Dedo (1989) warn of the dangers of ignoring ideology in ESL teaching. They argue that by failing to acknowledge the politics of textbooks, teaching approaches, and educational institutions, ESL composition teachers have relinquished power, accepting the role of gatekeepers and second-class citizens in the academic community: “By telling ourselves that the choices we make between pedagogues are based on objective, scientific, rational grounds rather than on political or ideological ones, we have promoted our own disempowerment, allowing larger government or academic institutions to determine the pedagogies we will choose and develop” (p. 3). They recommend that ESL professionals “recognize the ideological forces at work in our institutional sites and our pedagogies” (p. 3) in order to gain full membership for ourselves and our students in the academy. Ashworth (1984) makes similar recommendations about future research in ESL. She explains that social, economic, and political forces influence ESL teachers’ choices and should therefore be examined to determine whether those forces are beneficial or harmful to teachers and their students. Some of the external influences she lists are immigration policy, national attitudes toward non-English-speaking people, funding, commercial textbooks, and the status of ESL in a particular institution. Research that examines the influence on ESL teaching of some of these external forces is presented in the next section. This research aims to uncover the implicit ideology of the curricula studied.

MAKING IDEOLOGY VISIBLE: STUDYING THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF ESL

Raimes (1991a) points out in her summary of 25 years of ESL composition that “recognition of the politics of pedagogy” (p. 422) is an emerging tradition in the field. This recognition invites critical analysis of the underlying sociopolitical assumptions of all L2 composition teaching approaches, including the following questions: “Who learns to do what? Why? Who benefits?” (p. 422). Indeed there is a growing body of literature that takes into account the sociopolitical context of ESL teaching and learning. Contributors to this literature believe that in order to understand classroom events, we must analyze the relationship of social and economic factors to the classroom (Moriarty, 1992). They acknowledge that teachers, classrooms, and curricula are part of a complex web of social, economic, and political influences (Edelsky & Hudelson, 1991).

Auerbach and Tolledson have taken into account the larger context of particular types of instruction to discover where the curricula came
from and what outcomes they might lead to. Their studies of survival ESL, competency-based ESL (Auerbach, 1986; Auerbach & Burgess, 1985), and of the functional curriculum of U.S. Refugee Processing Centers (Tollefson, 1986) include analyses of funding, curriculum decision making, and assessment procedures. The motivation for such research is to “to lay the foundation for debate about the theoretical assumptions and social implications” (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985, p. 476) and to counter the “one-sided and relatively uncritical acceptance” (Auerbach, 1986, p. 476) of these well-funded programs. An assumption of these studies is that every curriculum “reflects a particular view of the social order, whether implicitly or explicitly” (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985, p. 476). The values underlying curricula, though not explicitly stated, can be ferreted out. For example, by analyzing a list of “competencies” from Refugee Processing Center curricula, Tollefson (1986) found that students are encouraged to “consider themselves fortunate to find minimum-wage employment, regardless of their previous education” (p. 656), and on the whole, the competencies “attempt to inculcate attitudes and values that will make refugees passive citizens who comply rather than complain, accept rather than resist, and apologize rather than disagree” (p. 657). Auerbach (1986) found that competency-based adult ESL “socializes students for a limited range of working-class roles” (p. 417) and “often explicitly teach[es] those behaviors required in menial jobs” (p. 418). Each of the studies, then, found that the curricula oriented students toward modest goals, as cheap labor, compliant workers, and passive citizens in U.S. society. Auerbach (1991) calls for further discussion of the implicit roles of various ESL curricula, including academic ESL.

In addition, at the level of educational policy, there are political factors influencing ESL composition in higher education, such as placement procedures, assessment, academic credit, and access to content courses (Benesch, 1991; Haas, Smoke, & Hernandez, 1991; Martino, 1992; Raimes, 1990). Standardized reading and writing tests, for instance, which are often mandated at the state or institutional levels, sort students into different groups: those who may enroll in credit-bearing courses and those who must take non- or partial-credit ESL courses. Critics of these tests object to their intrusion into the curriculum and question reliance on mass testing to make pedagogical decisions about individual students. They challenge claims that these tests give valid information about students’ linguistic needs and wonder if the tests actually function to shrink the pool of ESL students entering credit-bearing courses, denying to many equal access to mainstream college education (Benesch, 1991; Raimes, 1990). This research raises questions about the exclusionary nature of some types of testing, and implies a need for more democratic practices to provide quality educa-
tion to the broadest spectrum of ESL students. It also shows that testing, like all aspects of education, is political because it determines who will have access to academic credentials and who will be denied them.

THE IDEOLOGY OF PRAGMATISM: ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

The kind of sociopolitical analysis carried out by Tollefson, Auerbach, and others has not yet been applied to English for academic purposes (EAP). Despite the prominence of EAP in the profession, no significant discussion of its ideology has been offered although Johns (1990) has called for a redress of this situation. Some have opposed EAP's preoccupation with academic discourse conventions and its lack of attention to ESL students' composing processes and rhetorical knowledge (Raimes, 1991b; Spack, 1988), but they have not examined the ideology of these pedagogical choices. This analysis is important because, as I will show below, EAP theorists also have not dealt with the question of ideology. As it is often described, “English for Academic Purposes . . . courses are designed to prepare ESL/EFL and native-speaking students for the literacy demands at the secondary or college/university level” (Johns, 1993, p. 274). These literacy demands are not problematized in the EAP literature but are instead presented as positive artifacts of a normative academic culture into which ESL students should be assimilated.

Foregrounding the ideology of EAP can help us see that pragmatism is indeed political, reflecting an endorsement of current relations and conditions in school and society. For those who are comfortable with the status quo, EAP may be an appropriate pedagogy. However, we must recognize that a pragmatic stance is as political as one that questions the status quo. In attempting the following analysis of EAP's ideology, I offer another challenge to the notion that ideology is avoidable in L2 education. The question guiding the discussion is, What are the epistemological and social assumptions underlying this research? (Note that the focus of analysis here is EAP in North American and British universities. EAP in developing countries is not considered as it raises a different set of political issues.)

Pragmatism

An examination of the EAP literature reveals that, in fact, as reported by Santos, “pragmatism” and “realism” often appear as rationales for this type of instruction. Reid (1989), for example, believes that ESL composition teachers should be “pragmatists.” They should “discover what will be expected in the academic contexts their students
will encounter, and they must provide their students with the writing skills and the cultural information that will allow their students to perform successfully” (p. 232). In doing this, the teachers “will enable [their students] to understand 'what the professor wants' and feel secure about being able to fulfill those expectations” (p. 233). Johns (1990) contrasts the notion that “it is the academy that must change to adapt to the many cultures that the students represent” (a notion she seems to reject) with the approach of “other, seemingly more realistic [emphasis added], teachers and researchers [who] attempt to understand both what academic literacy means, and how best to introduce it into English for Academic Purposes . . . classes” (p. 29). Swales (1990) also mentions the dissonance that may occur between students’ precollege world views and the world views they encounter in the academy but chooses not to consider “differences that arise as a result of differing ideological perspectives” (p. 9). His reason for leaving out these questions “rests on a pragmatic concern to help people, both nonnative and native speakers, to develop their academic communicative competence” (p. 9). That is, while acknowledging possible ideological conflict between students’ linguistic/cultural backgrounds and academic demands, he chooses to set aside these issues and instead look for ways to help students succeed under current conditions. Horowitz (1986b), in recommending that ESL composition move away from process writing, urges that we give students “realistic advice” about appropriate discourse structures for specific tasks (p. 447). For Santos, the self-professed pragmatism of many EAP advocates indicates an avoidance of ideology. However, I believe it actually indicates an accommodationist ideology, an endorsement of traditional academic teaching and of current power relations in academia and in society.

Epistemological Assumptions of Pragmatism

The above rationales, drawn from major EAP theorists, share an accommodationist ideology. All assume that it is unrealistic to expect the university to adapt itself to the cultures, world views, and languages of nonnative-speaking students and that it is realistic to accommodate students to the content and pedagogy of mainstream academic classes. Reality and authenticity, according to the above-cited and other EAP advocates, are located in current academic institutions, departments, lectures, discourse, genres, texts, and tasks. These academic structures are givens in the EAP literature, not areas of debate or resistance. EAP researchers study the syllabi, assignments, and discourse of content classes and devise ways to make lecture and textbook material comprehensible to students (Brinton, Snow, & Weshe, 1989). The didactic tradition which authorizes faculty to lecture and assign text-
books and requires students to take notes, ask an occasional question, and take exams is not challenged in the EAP literature. Instead, exercises are proposed to improve students’ listening, note-taking, and “appropriate” questioning techniques (Anderson-Mejias, 1986; DeCarrico & Nattinger, 1988; Lebauer, 1984; McKenna, 1987). There are very few examples in the EAP literature of a critical orientation to academic content or challenges to the information-processing model of the traditional lecture class, exceptions being Benesch (1992), Haas, Smoke, and Hernandez (1991), and Raimes (1991a). The dominant goal is to adapt students to the existing curriculum, whether or not the type of instruction offered in their non-ESL classes is deemed appropriate or beneficial (Johns, 1992). Horowitz (1986a), for example, advises against offering ESL students a choice of writing topics, based on a survey showing that faculty at one institution did not usually offer choices:

Students rarely have a free choice of topics in their university writing assignments. Teaching students to write intelligently on topics they do not care about seems to be a more useful goal than having them pick topics which interest them. (p. 143)

Even when students in EAP classes are invited to be more active participants in their education, by becoming ethnographers in their non-ESL classes, it is to promote their awareness of current ways of teaching and testing, not to encourage challenges to the status quo (Johns, 1988).

**Social Assumptions of Pragmatism**

Although EAP researchers claim to be realists, we might question the version of reality being offered. Given conditions often faced by nonnative-speaking students in and out of school, is the approach realistic? Do EAP curricula help ESL students, especially immigrants, understand and confront social and economic problems, such as looking for work during a recession, finding decent housing, or dealing with prejudice? Do they give nonnative speakers tools to assert their legal rights as employees, or do they instead lead to passive acceptance of conditions at school and work? Will exclusive attention to texts assigned in engineering, computer science, or business classes help students make sense of the reality of their current and future daily lives?

Interestingly, the question about what is “real,” and what should therefore be the content of college writing courses, is also being debated in the field of L1 composition. Concurring with the EAP position
that authenticity resides in the texts and pedagogy of “colleagues across the curriculum,” Lindemann (1993) argues:

Freshman English does what no high school writing course can do: provide opportunities to master the genres, styles, audiences, and purposes of the academy and the professions. That is what our colleagues across the curriculum want it to do; that is what it should do if we are going to drag every first-year student through the requirement. (p. 312)

Responding to Lindemann, Tate (1993) claims that “nonfiction prose and the discourse of various disciplines” have been elevated to “sacred heights” (p. 321). He envisions first-year composition as a literature/writing course which focuses on students’ personal, political, economic, and cultural lives:

The ‘conversations’ I want to help my students join are not the conversations going on in the academy. These are often restricted, artificial, irrelevant, and—let’s be frank—boring. I refuse to look at my students as primarily history majors, accounting majors, nursing majors. I much prefer to think of them and treat them as people whose most important conversations will take place outside the academy, as they struggle to figure out how to live their lives—that is, how to vote and love and survive, how to respond to change and diversity and death and oppression and freedom. (p. 320)

While expressing his preference for the conversations taking place outside the academy, Tate also asserts that first-year composition students should explore all texts, including the “discourses of the various disciplines” (p. 321). That is, first-year English (and EAP) can take into account the reality of students’ lives both within and outside the academy, and the relationship between them (Benesch, 1992; Mlynarczyk, 1991; Raimes, 1991; Zamel, 1992). This balance can be achieved through a pedagogy of critical EAP.

Critical EAP

EAP researchers display an admirable devotion to the academic success of ESL students. They carefully study the demands of content courses and develop materials to make lectures and textbooks more accessible. However, the good intentions and hard work of EAP researchers may actually make life harder for both ESL faculty and students because of EAP’s accommodation to traditional academic practices which limit the participation of nonnative-speaking students in academic culture. The politics of pragmatism leads to a neglect of more inclusive and democratic practices, such as negotiating the
curriculum and collaborative learning because these are rarely practiced in non-ESL classes.

Why has EAP adopted an accommodationist ideology instead of an ideology of opposition and change? It is, I believe, because of the marginal position of ESL faculty and students in the academy (Auerbach, 1991). If ESL had greater academic status, with tenure-bearing lines, full-credit courses, and representation on important faculty committees, it would not need to justify its existence by serving other departments. Freed from the responsibility of making our colleagues’ textbooks and lectures comprehensible, EAP could develop a critical ESL curriculum whose impact would be felt across the campus. We could, as Boyer (1990) suggests, negotiate academic curricula responsive to urgent social, economic, and political issues, rather than serving one that is so narrowly focused on career preparation:

The aim of education is not only to prepare students for productive careers, but also to enable them to live lives of dignity and purpose; not only to generate new knowledge, but to channel the knowledge to humane ends; not merely to study government, but to help shape citizenry that can promote public good. Thus, higher education’s vision must be widened if the nation is to be rescued from problems that threaten to diminish permanently the quality of life. (p. 78)

ESL classes can offer this type of critical education but most EAP classes, which accept traditional academic teaching as a given, do not. By arguing that they are pragmatists, EAP advocates do not “avoid ideology,” as described by Santos. Rather they embrace an accommodationist ideology that aims to assimilate ESL students uncritically into academic life and U. S. society (Auerbach, 1991, p. 7).

CONCLUSIONS

English for academic purposes, which attempts to adapt students to the status quo, demonstrates that L2 education is ideological. Notwithstanding Santos’s acceptance of the dichotomy between ideology and pragmatism, L1 composition is not more political than L2. Both are political because all educators make choices, influenced by their political understandings of school and society, that affect the development of students. Those choices can encourage or discourage critical thought about school and society. Whether L1 or L2 teachers enable or inhibit critical thinking, they are taking a political stance toward learning and society.

An alternative to accepting an ideology of accommodation, that excludes important aspects of our students’ lives and of our profes-
sional growth, is to embrace an ideology of resistance (Howard & Dedo, 1989) and a pedagogy of critical academic ESL (Auerbach, 1991). There already exists in ESL a tradition of critical education and of studying the implicit or explicit ideology of various curricula. This tradition is likely to expand out of a growing realization that education is political and ideology is unavoidable.

REFERENCES


Comments on Stephen D. Krashen’s “Teaching Issues: Formal Grammar Instruction”

Two Readers React . . .

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In Steven Krashen’s Teaching Issues contribution (Vol. 26, No. 2), he responds to the question, Under what circumstances, if any, should formal grammar instruction take place? He reiterates his position that the only role for formal instruction is to permit learners to “monitor” their L2 production. In his view, when teachers and students focus on the form of the language, they may succeed in changing some superficial aspects of a learner’s performance, but they do nothing to change the learner’s underlying competence. According to Krashen, the only way to bring about changes in that competence is through exposure to comprehensible input.

A number of researchers and theorists (e.g., Gregg, 1984; McLaughlin, 1978; White, 1987) have questioned Krashen’s hypothesis and expressed their reservations about the research findings which are cited as support for it. It is not our intention to review such general issues here. We wish instead to focus on the pedagogical implications which Krashen draws from the comprehensible input hypothesis.

Time and again, language teachers have seen new methods introduced and old ones rejected out of hand. More recently, it seemed that teachers and researchers were moving toward an agreement that we need far more information about the processes involved in language learning and that many questions need to be approached with an open mind rather than answered in a dogmatic fashion (see, e.g., Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Lightbown, 1985; and articles in Hyltenstam
& Pienemann, 1985). In light of this, it is frustrating to see pronounce-
ments in Krashen’s Teaching Issues contribution such as: “Research
and theory show that the best way of increasing grammatical accuracy
is comprehensible input” (p. 411). Stating this in response to a pedagog-
ical question is quite different from presenting it as a hypothesis in a
research context. Our hypothesis is that while comprehensible input
is an essential part of the learning environment, it will not always be
sufficient to bring about developmental change or increased accuracy,
even when learners are in supportive environments. We have seen
evidence in our research that form-focused instruction can bring about
changes in interlanguage and, furthermore, that there may be situa-
tions in which learners not only benefit from but require focused
instruction to further their language acquisition.

In one series of studies, we found that form-focused instruction
had a lasting effect on interrogative structures (Lightbown & Spada,
these findings by suggesting that the tasks used to assess learners’
development were “monitored” tasks and that learners were focused
on form. ‘It is true that some of the tasks in the interrogative study
quite explicitly required learners to manipulate the word order of the
sentences. However, the learners displayed the same changes in their
interlanguage in an oral task, showing no evidence of hesitation, mental
searching, or distraction from the guessing game they were engaged
in (Spada & Lightbown, 1993).’ Nor was it the case, as Krashen implies,
that the learners’ focus had been overwhelmingly on the targeted
features during the 2 weeks preceding the posttest. The instructional
component of the experiment had occupied, at most, some 9 hours
out of a total of nearly 50 hours of classroom activities over that
period.

Krashen also comments on another study (Lightbown, 1991), in
which students achieved high accuracy in using be rather than have in
presentational phrases (There’s a book on the table instead of, e.g., It has
a book on the table). The teacher is quoted as saying she “drummed it
into their little heads,” and Krashen concludes that the students had

1 One of the problems in dealing with Krashen’s distinction between learning and acquisition
and between monitored and spontaneous language production, of course, is that it is
virtually impossible to define these terms in ways which permit them to be observed or
measured. For example, the Second Language Oral Proficiency-English (SLOPE) test (Fath-
man, 1975) essentially requires subjects to fill in the blanks in oral substitution drills. But
Krashen has accepted it as a “communicative” task, apparently on the grounds that the
relative accuracy of use of the grammatical morphemes by learners doing this test is com-
parable to that of learners using English in other, less structured environments (see Dulay,
Burt, & Krashen, 1982).

2 Although it is true that Krashen will not have had access to the paper in which the oral
performance results are reported in full, the paper to which he does refer (White et al.,
1991) mentions these findings in the concluding section (p. 429).
been “drilled” on a single point until they had learned this one thing, which they were then able to monitor. This explanation seems implausible in light of the fact that, 1 year later, the students were still highly accurate in the use of this form in spontaneous communication. This was not true of another group of students whose high accuracy on this structure had, in fact, been achieved through decontextualized drill (Lightbown, 1987). This difference was emphasized in the article. The “drumming” was often done with humour, was always in the context of ongoing communicative interaction, and was never framed as drill. It seems quite plausible that the teacher was actually drawing the learners’ attention to a language feature such that they understood that what they were saying was not what they meant to say. Seen in this way, the form focus may have helped make that particular phrase genuinely comprehensible in the input. It seems odd that Krashen is so determined to rule out a role for instruction that he does not propose this interpretation himself. Our interpretation of these findings was that contextualized form-focused instruction may be not only beneficial but essential under certain conditions and for certain features of the second language (see also Swain, 1985; White, 1991).

Krashen’s dismissal of Pienemann’s research is even more puzzling. In the first place, while Pienemann’s “teachability hypothesis” makes reference to possible effects of instruction, its primary objective is to define the limits of such effects. Pienemann tested the prediction made by the teachability hypothesis (that instruction is effective only if timed to match the learner’s developmental stage) in two experimental studies in which L2 structures which were taught to children (Pienemann, 1984, 1989), and university students at different stages of L2 acquisition (Pienemann, 1988), and in a longitudinal study of the formal acquisition of an L2 by university students (Pienemann, 1988, 1989).

Pienemann’s first experimental study tested the prediction that learners who are developmentally “ready” to learn a structure (in this case, inversion) can learn it through formal teaching, while those who are not ready will not learn it, even if they are exposed to the same instruction. The study is based on pretests and posttests for 5 Italian children learning German as a second language. Some 20 hours of naturalistic conversational data confirmed Pienemann’s hypotheses: The 2 learners whose interlanguage had reached the stage immediately prior to inversion did learn it, while the 3 whose interlanguage was at an earlier stage did not. Krashen argues that Pienemann’s claim for the effectiveness of well-timed instruction is “based on very little data” (p. 410). He suggests specifically that it is based largely on the data from only 1 of the 5 children whose German L2 acquisition was examined in this study. In claiming that the whole case for the effect of teaching is based on 1 informant, Krashen overlooks the fact that, because
German inversion is a highly frequent structure, within the several hours of speech observed and recorded in this study, each learner had hundreds of opportunities to produce utterances which would contradict the predictions made by the teachability hypothesis. In fact, they did not deviate from the predictions even once.

Krashen does not mention an extended replication of the experimental study (Pienemann, 1988). Pre- and posttests were carried out for 12 university students of German as a second language. Thirty minutes of conversational data were elicited from each subject and analyzed in terms of five different structures. In this case the objective was to synchronize the teaching of grammar as well as possible with the learners' interlanguage grammar. This study confirmed for most of the informants and structures that their interlanguage grammar did progress in response to form-focused teaching if the interlanguage was developmentally ready for the structures taught.

Krashen also overlooks another study of adult learners of German as a foreign language in a formal classroom setting. Although the study is reported in one of the papers Krashen refers to (Pienemann, 1989), it is reported more fully in Pienemann (1988), which displays data from spontaneous language samples produced by 3 informants over a period of 1 year (some 30 hours of recorded speech). The study systematically compares the teaching objectives and the classroom input the students received with the language produced by the students themselves. The main finding was that the order of acquisition in students’ interlanguage did not coincide with the objectives, the sequence, or the frequency of structures in the input. Instead, their production of German sentences proceeded along the lines predicted by the teachability hypothesis. That is, formal instruction which was not appropriate to learners’ developmental stage did not change their spontaneous language performance.

We feel that second language acquisition (SLA) researchers are just beginning to make real progress in understanding how instruction affects the development of linguistic skills and knowledge. Krashen, on the other hand, seems ready to make strong claims about pedagogical implications of his hypotheses. Although we are optimistic that SLA research has the potential to provide insights into the successes and shortcomings of teaching methods, it is our view that we must avoid suggesting that we have found final answers.

We are not in agreement with Krashen that “the effect [of grammar learning] is peripheral and fragile” (p. 409). Nor would we claim that the opposite has been demonstrated for a wide variety of language structures. We argue, however, that in view of the limitations of the existing research, the effect of instruction must be explored further. Declarations about the sufficiency of any single source for successful
language learning (whether it be comprehensible input or the memorisation of grammar rules) are not likely to be borne out in teachers’ experience. Statements of absolutes which contradict their observations will make teachers more sceptical of the possible importance of SLA research for their practical concerns. If researchers acknowledge the developmental status of our understanding of SLA and continue to carry out research in cooperation with teachers, we may hope that teachers will still be listening to us as our recommendations about pedagogical practice become more precise and more complete.

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THE FORUM 721
The Effect of Formal Grammar Teaching: Still Peripheral

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Lightbown and Pienemann raise three issues: (a) They argue that the oral test in White, Spada, Lightbown, and Ranta (1991) did not focus students on form, (b) they question my interpretation that children in Lightbown (1991) overlearned (rather than acquired) the there is construction, and (c) they accuse me of “dismissing” Pienemann’s research and the teachability hypothesis.

A TEST OF ACQUISITION OR LEARNING?

In my view, the data from White et al. does not tell us whether direct instruction resulted in acquired or learned competence. To show that learned knowledge “becomes” acquired or underlying competence, one must demonstrate an impact on tests that tap only acquired competence.

Lightbown and Pienemann maintain that evidence from Spada and Lightbown (1993) shows that the oral test was indeed a test of acquired competence because children showed “no evidence of hesitation, mental searching, or distraction.”

This apparent fluency is indeed suggestive, and I have utilized similar observations in discussing monitor use (Krashen, 1991). But these observations are just that, observations, and are only suggestive. No comparison was made with the spontaneous speech of these subjects, nor was a comparison made between fluency in asking questions (the target structure) and using different kinds of sentences.

Lightbown and Pienemann also maintain that the focus on form in class had not been excessive. In my view, 9 hours of direct instruction on questions in only 2 weeks is a lot of focusing on form, even if it was less than 20% of the total class time. In addition, after just completing 2 weeks of instruction on questions, and taking other tests that clearly focused the students on questions (White et al., 1991), and being prompted when they failed to produce wh questions (“When students did not spontaneously produce a wh question after two questions, the interviewer prompted them [e.g., Can you ask me a question with what?]” [Spada & Lightbown, 1993, p. 211]), it is reasonable to suggest
that students interpreted the oral test not as a simple guessing game, but as another test on question formation.

I thus hold to my view that the oral test may have satisfied conditions for monitor use (focus on form, know the rule, time).

An interesting finding in Spada and Lightbown (1993) is a long-term effect for direct instruction, extremely rare in second language acquisition literature for any kind of test. In fact, their subjects continued to improve in question formation, albeit at a slower pace, after all English instruction stopped. We need to know if these children had any exposure to English during this time: the there is/are issue.

Lightbown (1991) is the only other study I know of that finds a long-term effect for focusing on form. Lightbown and Pienemann respond to my claim that subjects, after so much drill on the there is form, “specialized” in it and monitored it all the time by stating that another group had “decontextualized drill” and did not exhibit such sustained accuracy.

But no group had so much work on there is. There was so much emphasis placed on there is in the class in question that “it had become a kind of joke in the classroom” (Lightbown & Spada, 1990, p. 435). The teacher not only “drummed it into their little heads” but “got so tired of hearing ‘you have a this’ and ‘you have a that’ that every time [emphasis added] somebody said ‘you have . . . ’ I said, ‘I do? Where?’” (Lightbown, 1991, p. 207).

Lightbown’s data also bears on the question of whether form focus is necessary. Although the other classes she studied were not as accurate in the there is form, Lightbown notes that in these classes, students who were the most accurate were those who were in general the most advanced in English. This suggests that this construction is typically acquired a bit later. In fact, 5 out of 10 high-scoring students one year older appear to have fully acquired it (see her Table 15.2, p. 208); low-scoring sixth graders, however, did not appear to be moving toward mastery of this structure (see also her Table 15.3, p. 210).

TEACHABILITY

Crucial to Pienemann’s research is his teachability hypothesis. As I understand it, the teachability hypothesis has two parts:

T1: Form-focused instruction will not work if the acquirer is not ready for it, in other words, if it is not at the acquirer’s i + 1.

T2: Form-focused instruction will work if it is at i + 1.

In my Teaching Issues contribution, I noted that White et al. (1991) do not indicate whether there was any time pressure on the test. Lightbown and Pienemann do not provide any information on this point, nor is it mentioned in Spada & Lightbown (1993).
In my view, Pienemann’s studies fully support T1 and confirm earlier research results that also show that direct teaching does not affect the “natural order” of acquisition (see Krashen, 1985, p. 19). The issue is whether there is evidence to support T2.

In Pienemann (1984), the evidence for T2 rests nearly entirely on the case of Giovanni’s supposed acquisition of one grammatical structure. Pienemann (1989) adds the performance of three acquirers on the English copula. Two of these subjects show some evidence of backsliding: increases in accuracy after instruction followed by subsequent declines (pp. 61–63). As I stated in my Teaching Issues contribution, Pienemann only provides us with percentages and no raw data: We have no idea how many obligatory occasions of the target structure were produced. Lightbown and Pienemann do not supply any additional details in their response.2

Nearly all the data in Pienemann (1988) address (and support) T1. I present here the entire portion of the text that addresses T2: “The second point is that it was possible to add the morphemes -er and -bar to the interlanguages at the predicted points in time, if the interlanguage was sufficiently developed” (pp. 61-62).

The results of teaching the -er and -bar morphemes to 12 university students of German as a foreign language are given in Pienemann’s Table 10, which does not present any raw data, percentages, or acquisition criteria. It only indicates whether or not the target structure was acquired.

The pattern in Table 10 is consistent with T2, but the data is sparse and open to other interpretations. According to Pienemann, acquisition of the principles underlying verb separation (SEP) and passive needs to take place before it is possible to acquire -er and -bar, respectively. Of 7 subjects who had acquired SEP, there were only 4 cases in which direct instruction resulted in the apparent mastery of -er. In several other cases, -er was acquired later, which may or may not have been a result of formal instruction. Only 1 subject acquired the passive, and this subject was the only one who appeared to have mastered -bar. Five clearly did not acquire -bar, 3 apparently did not produce enough obligatory occasions for it, and in 3 other cases -bar was present after instruction, but was not present 3 months later.3

Finally, in none of Pienemann’s studies does he inform us how the target structures were taught (see also Ellis, 1990, p. 158). This is

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2 If Pienemann followed the procedure used in Meisel, Clahsen, & Pienemann (1981), there were at least four contexts for each structure. This is a very low figure; one “performance” error can change a subject’s score by 25%.

3 Five out of 12 subjects showed evidence of having mastered verb separation, 4 of 12 inversion, and only 2 out of 12 mastered the passive after direct instruction on these structures. Some subjects acquired verb separation and inversion before instruction.
crucial. When instruction “works,” it may be because target structures are presented as part of an interesting message, as comprehensible input at i + 1. It is theoretically possible to teach language this way, but it is inefficient, as noted by Ellis (1990). I have argued (e.g., Krashen, 1981) that it is much more efficient to supply large amounts of comprehensible input, both aural and written, and i + 1 will be automatically covered.

I remain unrepentant. In my view, the research says that the effects of direct instruction are typically short lasting and do not become part of acquired competence. The effects of grammar teaching still appear to be peripheral and fragile.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I thank Patsy Lightbown for making a prepublication version of Spada and Lightbown (1993) available to me.

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In their TESOL Quarterly article (Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 1992), Long and Crookes display a profound misunderstanding of the lexical syllabus as realised in Willis and Willis (1988). Long and Crookes argue that a syllabus based on lexical and collocational frequency counts is likely to expose the learner to nonauthentic samples of the target language overall if whole dialogues or passages are written to conform to word frequency data, given that while people demonstrably use (say) 600 words and collocations more frequently than others, it is unlikely that any single stretch of authentic discourse will happen to be lexically graded in this way. (pp. 32–33)

They are right to point to the dangers of artificially controlled and contrived language, but they are wholly wrong in their implication that this is how Willis and Willis (1988) is constructed. Sinclair’s Foreword to that work explicitly rejects the notion of invented or adapted texts:

Because of the difficulty of analysing language that occurs in everyday contexts, teachers have got in the way of accepting all sorts of invented or adapted texts. These are grimly defended by some, but there is no virtue in them; they were only made up because it was not practicable to harness real language.

Willis (1990), describing the rationale behind the lexical syllabus and its associated methodology, is equally explicit:

Our task (as materials writers) was made much more difficult, but also much more meaningful, by our decision to use as far as possible only authentic or spontaneously produced texts. (p. 74)

Perhaps Long and Crookes have been misled by the declared aim of Willis and Willis (1988) to cover the meanings, uses, and collocations of the 700 most frequent words of English. But it is of course possible to focus on the most frequent 700 words without even attempting to
restrict oneself to those words. Again Willis (1990) is quite explicit. Having asserted the intention to provide coverage of the most frequent 700 words, Willis goes on:

Inevitably a number of other words occurred in the texts, some of them, like cat, banana, Psychiatrist and lining, of low frequency and utility. We had no intention of highlighting these. The fact that they occurred was a consequence of our decision to work only with authentic and spontaneously produced text. (p. 77)

The second problem Long and Crookes identify in their analysis of the lexical syllabus and other “synthetic” syllabuses is that of learnability. They point out, again correctly, that “the learnability problems for lexical syllabuses are the same as those for any syllabus using linguistic elements . . . as the organizational units . . . . That is, they [learners] can quickly learn new lexical forms, but need time to understand their precise meaning(s) and selectional restrictions” (p. 33). But again, this is a misrepresentation. Willis (1990) acknowledges exactly this difficulty and explains how the task-based methodology which realizes the lexical syllabus is designed to meet the problem.

Tasks of various kinds constitute the core of each pedagogical cycle. Recordings of the tasks, carried out spontaneously by native speakers and then transcribed, form part of the “learners’ corpus.” Written texts from authentic sources complement the spoken corpus. Because the most frequent words and phrases are so frequent, they occur and recur naturally—and in typical contexts—throughout the corpus. The final component in each pedagogical cycle, following the completion and reporting of the task, involves language-focused, analytic activities (or metacommunicative tasks [Breen, 1987]) requiring learners to examine the particular words and patterns from the text and/or recording transcript that have been carefully selected on the basis of the lexical syllabus. As learners progress through the sequence of tasks, texts, and analytic activities, they gradually build up a picture of how the most common (and therefore most useful) words and their patterns are used in English. This approach has a good deal in common with the sort of consciousness-raising described by Rutherford (1987) and the data-driven learning approach advocated in Johns (1991).

The rationale behind this methodology is described in Willis (1990) as follows:

There is no way of knowing for sure what language items will be assimilated by the learner at a given stage of his or her language development. We are therefore obliged to recycle the typical patterns of the language so that learners will be exposed to them time and time again. At the same time
we help learners develop a curiosity about language so that they will gain maximum benefit from exposure. Finally we recycle language items not only by offering them to learners in new contexts, but also by retrieving earlier occurrences so that we can exploit the learners' corpus, their experience of the language in use. (p. 79)

This notion of the learners' corpus is central to the approach:

The aim throughout was to develop familiarity with a carefully selected and weighted corpus of language and to enable learners to exploit that corpus to good effect. While the basic methodology was task-based with a focus very much on outcome, the language associated with those tasks was examined in great detail in the light of a precisely specified syllabus. (pp. 84–85)

This does not involve an assertion, or even an implication, that everything specified will be learned. It does suggest, however, that if we are to expose learners to language and expect them to work with language, then we have a responsibility to see that the language used is as relevant as we can make it.

If this is indeed the case, then it argues for some form of linguistic specification of the syllabus—possibly in line with what Long and Crookes call a synthetic approach. Certainly an approach of this kind carries penalties if it is naively undertaken. What I am pointing out is that the lexical syllabus is not naively undertaken and that a more careful reading would reveal this.

As a parting shot I might suggest that a naive rejection of a linguistic specification in what is after all a language learning venture, also carries penalties. It is one thing to say that “Given [emphasis added] an adequate needs analysis, selection of tasks is relatively straightforward” (p. 46). But an adequate needs analysis is not “given”; it is extremely hard to come by, especially in the case of heterogeneous groups of learners whose needs are difficult to predict. With the huge growth in computer corpora, it is probable that a linguistic, and in particular a lexical analysis, is much more feasible than a more abstract needs analysis, both for “general” English and for ESP. The problem does not seem to me to be one of choosing between a linguistic and a task-based syllabus, but rather one of marrying a linguistic syllabus and a task-based methodology.

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The Authors Respond... 

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In our TESOL Quarterly article, we criticised synthetic (including lexical) syllabuses on several grounds. Such syllabuses and the pedagogic materials that embody them value linguistic analysis over analysis of learners’ needs; they ignore psycholinguistic constraints on learners’ input-processing abilities, and hence on learnability and teachability; and they pose learners the task of trying to learn a new language from contrived language samples—samples which may conform to the linguistic parameters, lexical and/or syntactic, of a given syllabus stage but which as a result rarely exemplify authentic target language use. We proceeded to argue for analytic syllabuses of various kinds, particularly for task-based language teaching with a focus on form, as a potential solution to some of these and other problems.

Our brief section on lexical syllabuses (pp. 32–33) cited empirical evidence from studies of L2 lexical development to support our critique. Willis and Willis (1988) was mentioned (positively) as an example of pedagogic materials which in our view had benefited from at least one result of the computer-assisted analysis of a large corpus of modern (in this case, British) English which typically underlies the lexical approach, namely, the writers’ use of authentic examples of native-speaker performance to illustrate vocabulary items and collocations. We then went on to warn of the potential threat to the authenticity of any such materials, however, if dialogues or passages were written to conform to word frequency data, another often-touted advantage of lexically based language teaching. The latter (negative) comments referred to all such materials, with no mention of Willis and Willis (1988) or any other texts, because we are interested in the issues, not personalities or specific textbooks. Willis ignores the wider focus on general principles in our article and instead accuses us of displaying "a profound misunderstanding of the lexical syllabus as realised in Willis
and Willis (1988) [emphasis added].” His concern, in other words, is far narrower and more personal than ours, indeed with what he describes as “an implication” (he perceived), not with what we actually wrote.

Willis says he agrees about the dangers of artificially controlled and contrived language but denies that Willis and Willis (1988) was constructed that way. We are happy to hear that and, of course, had not suggested otherwise. Because Willis is so clearly concerned that people be aware of the lack of artificial linguistic control or contrived language in his materials, however, we would suggest that such potentially misleading statements as the following (from the Foreword by Sinclair and the Introduction by Willis and Willis to the Teacher’s Book 1) might be reworded in future editions:

A good course is a remarkable balancing act, and also a miracle of compression. Each activity has to take up only a small amount of space, the vocabulary, grammar, phonology and everything else has to be kept under control, and the whole thing has to vary constantly to keep up the level of interest and excitement. (Foreword, p. i)

The syllabus for Level One consists of 700 of the commonest words in today’s English. These words, with their most important meanings and uses, have been identified by the COBUILD project. (Introduction, p. iii)

There is a lot of natural recycling throughout all units, and students are repeatedly exposed to the same high frequency words and phrases. (Introduction, p. iii)

The authors have selected and graded according to the simplicity of the material and its centrality within the language. Grading the input and tasks in this way has ensured that the very frequent words occur early on in the Course, in their most useful senses. (Introduction, p. iv)

Having clarified his views on linguistic selection and grading, Willis’s commentary then turns to the learnability problem, on which his position seems to vary, because in rapid succession he first accepts and then rejects our critique:

They point out, again correctly, that “the learnability problems for lexical syllabuses are the same as those for any syllabus using linguistic elements ... as the organizational units ... That is, they [learners] can quickly learn new lexical forms, but need time to understand their exact meaning(s) and selectional restrictions.” But again this is a misrepresentation [emphases added].
Serious confusion is revealed when he then goes on to claim that he has acknowledged the problem elsewhere and has explained how “the task-based methodology [emphasis added] which realizes the lexical syllabus is designed to meet the problem.” Exactly our point, or at least, close to it. For reasons detailed in our original article, we think task-based language teaching does indeed (partially) solve the learnability problem; what Willis is supposed to be defending, however, is the ability of the lexical syllabus to do so, or if he prefers, explaining how teaching can be simultaneously task-based and lexically based, other than by decree.

In fact, this failure to grasp the implications of Wilkins's analytic/synthetic distinction seems to us to be the fundamental flaw in his position. In addition to advocating the lexical syllabus, Willis pays lip-service to the task-based syllabus, mostly on the same grounds outlined in our TESOL Quarterly article. For reasons that remain obscure, however, he wishes—and more to the point, imagines it is possible—simply to graft one onto the other:

While the basic methodology was task-based with a focus very much on outcome, the language associated with those tasks was examined in great detail in the light of a precisely specified syllabus. (Willis, 1990, p. 85)

In our article, we stressed the need for a focus on form in task-based language teaching and outlined procedures for accomplishing this without abandoning a task-based methodology. There is a vast difference, however, between a focus on form, which we advocate, and a focus on forms, which Willis's adherence to a lexical syllabus entails. The former involves treatment of language as object in context as an incidental feature of task accomplishment, the timing of treatment being triggered by learners' linguistic interaction with the task and governed by learnability considerations. The latter means treatment of language as object, as the content of the syllabus and primary focus of instruction, the timing, of treatment being prespecified by the materials writer's or teacher's selection and grading of target language features, ignoring learnability considerations (see Long, 1988, 1991, in press). What Willis, along with advocates of all such hybrid syllabuses we are aware of, fails to explain is how a learner-driven analytic syllabus can be combined with a prespecified synthetic linguistic syllabus, let alone several such syllabuses, without violating the principles underlying both. In Willis and Willis (1988), for example, on what basis are subject pronouns and the forms of the verb to be among the items listed in the verb and noun phrase columns for Unit 1 of Book 1? Is it pure coincidence that such items traditionally figure in the first lesson of materials based on a structural syllabus? Are they items that arose...
naturally as grammatical correlates of some unstated properties of the lexical syllabus? Are they items the writers know will always arise naturally, be needed and be learnable by any learners, whatever the task, in their first lesson? Of course not: Willis reveals his true stance when he (mistakenly) claims that if we expect learners to work with “relevant” language, “then it argues for some form of linguistic specification of the syllabus—possibly in line with what Long and Crookes call a synthetic approach.”

Willis and Willis (1988) extol the virtues of the lexical syllabus (described as “A New Approach to Language Teaching” in the subtitle of Willis, 1990), but seem unwilling or unable to base pedagogic materials upon it. Instead, the Map of Level 1 (Willis & Willis, 1988, pp. vii-ix) lists entries for each unit under seven headings: Tasks and Topics; Writing; Social Language; Verbs/Tenses and Clause Patterns; Noun Phrases, Pronouns, Adjectives, Prepositions and Adverbial Phrases; Sounds, Intonation and Stress; and Stories, Features and Games.

1 Similarly, they recognize, as Willis again does here, that rapid targetlike mastery of new form-meaning relationships is an unrealistic aim. Despite this, they list “A focus on accuracy is vital” (p. ii) as one of five basic principles underlying the methodology of their materials and propose linguistically focused activities of various kinds, for example, controlled repetition, as means of achieving (short-term) accuracy and fluency. (Space limitations preclude further discussion. For a more detailed analysis of these issues, see Long & Crookes, 1993.)

Willis’s “parting shot” is a claim that linguistic syllabuses are justified by the existence of groups of learners with heterogeneous or unpredictable needs and because an adequate needs analysis is not “given” and is “hard to come by.” Linguistic, particularly lexical, analyses are more “feasible.” The problem, he says, is not to choose between a linguistic or task-based syllabus, but to marry the former with a task-based methodology.

We do not deny the existence of groups of learners with heterogeneous or unpredictable needs, and we have explicitly discussed our approach to dealing with that problem elsewhere (see Long, 1985, in press). Task-based needs analyses often are at least partly given, as we explained and documented in our original article (and again in Long, 1985, in press), especially in occupational and vocational settings and, to a lesser extent, in the academic domain. Where they are lacking, in our view, they simply must be done. In any case, to claim that the use of a linguis-

1 A number of other current commercial textbook series present “multistrand” syllabuses of this kind, which presumably appeal to the widest range of potential customers. Without going into detail here, most seem to be providing nothing more (or less) than checklists of the books’ contents in varying categories. Lists are not to be confused with a syllabus, however, and those we have seen lack any explanation of how such a mix of linguistic and non-linguistic items could simultaneously serve as the organizing unit(s) for either syllabus or materials.
tic syllabus is justified in either situation, student heterogeneity/unpredictability or absence of a “free” learner needs analysis, is a non sequitur. Would Willis accept a physician prescribing the same irrelevant remedy for a heterogeneous group of patients with different medical needs, or a drug because it was easily available when a medical diagnosis simply had not been done or was difficult? Ethics and professionalism aside, his argument misses the point: New technology may make certain kinds of synthetic syllabuses more “feasible” or easier to come by, but it does not make them anymore relevant to learners’ target communicative needs or any more justified on psycholinguistic grounds.

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Research Issues
The TESOL Quarterly publishes brief comments on aspects of qualitative and quantitative research. For this issue, we asked two researchers to discuss the use of Likert scales in L2 research.

Edited by ANNE LAZARATON
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Using Likert Scales in L2 Research
A Researcher Comments . . .

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• Likert scales were first developed as strict 5-point scales by University of Michigan psychologist Rensis Likert (1932) in order to assess sub-
jects' attitudes toward social issues. Since their inception, Likert-type scales have been widely used in the behavioral sciences. They have also been the topic of more than 50 years of journal articles as researchers have investigated their psychometric properties, particularly in regard to optimum scale length and reliability. Second language teachers and researchers make use of Likert-type scales when conducting surveys of opinions, beliefs, and attitudes (DeVellis, 1991) in needs analyses, teacher/student evaluation, beliefs about language learning, and so forth. The following article discusses basic item-writing considerations in creating survey instruments using Likert-type scales.

Likert-type scales may be described as consisting of three or more ordinal (ranked) scale categories placed along a continuum. The item stem uses either a question or statement which respondents judge in terms of evaluation, agreement, or frequency. The scale categories, also known as steps or response choices, may be labeled explicitly, left without any labeling so that respondents mark the scale itself (graphic continuous scales), or most commonly, labeled but only at the end points (bipolar anchors). Numerous studies indicate that the kind of scale format (explicit, graphic, or bipolar) has little effect on the outcome, although respondents report a preference for explicit labeling of some kind (Armstrong, 1987). Hubbard, Little, and Allen (1989) report respondents preferred graphic scale lines to those without graphics. Nunnally (1978), however, has suggested using a numbered scale because people tend to think in terms of degrees.

A second consideration in item writing concerns the semantics of labeling response choices. Category labels should be chosen so as to give the appearance of equal intervals. Because Likert-type scales are ordinal in nature, the distance between each response choice is not precisely equal. For example, if an item writer decides to use explicit labels such as never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always, these labels appear to represent intervals along a continuum; however, treating their true value as equidistant is untenable because the relative intensity of these category labels is ambiguous. How much greater is sometimes when compared to often? Item writers need to create the illusion that semantic labels are uniformly ranked in order to ensure respondents interpret category labels in a meaningful and consistent way. Other problems with labeling that have the potential to become exacerbated in language learning contexts include poor translations of survey instruments and respondents not understanding the semantic subtleties of each category label (Spector, 1980).

Another item-writing consideration, subject to vigorous debate, deals with the proper number of response categories. McKelvie (1978), in an extensive review of the issue, states, “a number of authors have concluded that there is no single optimal number of categories” (p. 185).
Scale length is not a matter of using a prescribed number of responses, but rather a function of the object or idea being rated, respondents' familiarity with the object or idea, and the respondents' educational and socioeconomic background. Respondents who are asked unusual questions concerning unfamiliar topics may feel uncomfortable in responding to a large number of scale categories. Apparently, those with below a university education may not discriminate well and tend to choose extreme categories. Because each research situation is unique, pilot testing of items should be conducted to determine optimum scale length. In addition, measures such as item reliability, standard error of measurement, and standard deviation should be checked before conducting a full-scale administration. McKelvie (1978) reports that scales with fewer than 5 categories tend to have decreased reliability, and scales with more than 11 categories show no improvement in reliability. In practice, Likert-type scales in language learning could safely operate with a range of 59 categories (Cox, 1980). From a statistical viewpoint, longer scale lengths of 7 or more categories are more desirable because of the gain in score variability. Hatch and Lazaraton (1991) also contend that when the magnitude of ordinal-scale length increases, the scale begins to acquire interval-scalelike characteristics. Whatever number of categories a researcher chooses to use, Likert-type scales will ultimately yield information concerning the general direction and intensity of respondents' opinions (Matell & Jacoby, 1971).

A final consideration concerning item writing is whether to provide an odd or even number of categories. An odd number offers a neutral response, whereas an even number would require respondents to choose one direction. The decision to use neutral categories will be determined by the nature of the task and the researchers' intentions. However, neutrality can lead to indecisive data, particularly among those ethnic groups whose cultures value indirect responses (Reid, 1990). Thus, a short scale of odd-numbered category responses could lead to muddled survey results.

Ultimately, Likert-type scales are a form of psychometric scaling which place subjects along a psychological continuum according to a particular attribute (Nunnely, 1978). The effectiveness of the scale to rank subjects will depend in part on item format, category labeling, the number of possible responses offered, and whether a neutral response possibility is included. Although Likert-type scales are frequently employed in language learning research, few researchers actually address the above item-writing considerations.

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Another Researcher Comments ...

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Likert-scale questionnaires have frequently been used by L2 researchers to measure learners’ characteristics, attitudes, and opinions. Despite their frequent use, the complexity of establishing their validity and the problems encountered in analyzing and interpreting the ordinal data that they yield suggest a need for greater awareness of the issues that must be addressed when using Likert-scale questionnaires (Luppescu & Day, 1990; Reid, 1990).

The problems regarding the use of Likert-scale questionnaires in L2 research fall into three areas, the first and second common to the use of all types of questionnaires and tests. The first includes problems related to the fact that the respondents in L2 research are usually language learners, often from various cultural groups. When questionnaires are presented in a language that respondents are engaged in learning, limitations in their language ability may prevent them from responding in a manner that accurately reflects their true opinion or attitude. Translation of a questionnaire into the L1 of the respondents
is usually not feasible, especially when the respondents in a study are from several language backgrounds. Aside from the practical issue of finding skilled translators, it is necessary to establish the statistical equivalence of the various forms of the questionnaire before using them.

The cultural background of the language learners is an important issue even when the language ability issue is resolved. For example, subject expectancy might have a more powerful effect for some cultural groups than others; that is, respondents from some cultural groups might be more likely than others to report what they think the researcher wants to hear. Additionally, the response task itself is likely to be approached differently by members of various cultural groups, whether the respondents place themselves on a scale, write answers to a question, or talk with an interviewer. It has not been established that familiarity with a response task entirely alleviates this problem; therefore, before a questionnaire is used, piloting with learners similar to those in the specific study is essential. The pilot information forms the basis for comparison groups, or norms, for the various cultural groups represented in the study.

The second area of concern arises from the time, effort, and expertise necessary to develop valid, reliable questionnaires. Their construction requires careful planning, piloting with respondents similar to the learners, and some statistical analysis (Nunan, 1992; Reid, 1990; Sax, 1989; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). Using an existing questionnaire is not an automatic shortcut. As Reid (1990) reported, a questionnaire cannot be assumed to be valid and reliable for any group other than the population for which the reliability and validity were established. Consequently, even when using an existing questionnaire, a researcher must establish its validity and reliability for learners similar to those in the particular study. Luppescu and Day (1990) and Reid (1990) describe in detail the difficulties they encountered in developing and validating Likert-scale questionnaires for their studies, with Luppescu and Day summarizing their concerns as follows:

We believe that perhaps the most important lesson to be learned from this study does not concern the actual attitudes of the students and teachers who answered our questionnaire, but rather concerns the use of questionnaires in research studies. We hope more researchers will consider evaluating the validity of the data obtained from questionnaires, and that readers will take conclusions based on invalidated questionnaire data with a pinch of salt. (pp. 131–132)

Establishing the validity and reliability of a Likert-scale questionnaire is not impossible, although it is time-consuming and complex, as is
validation of any questionnaire or test. The third area of concern in using Likert-scale questionnaires, however, is specific to the type of data that they yield. Likert-scale questionnaires yield ordinal data. The points on the scales are not equidistant. Many of the statistical analyses used in L2 research are based on the assumption that the data analyzed are interval in nature, not ordinal. Hatch and Lazaraton (1991) note that an ordinal scale can yield interval-like data; that is, data that approach a normal distribution. Further, they suggest that when ordinal data are normally distributed, assumptions regarding the nature of the data are met. However, the small samples typical of L2 research, where groups may be defined by class membership, are not likely to yield a distribution of responses that is normal.

This limits the use of many of the most powerful (and most familiar) statistics, such as t-tests, correlations, and analysis-of-variance procedures. This does not mean researchers should abandon measurement of their subjects’ attitudes and opinions or statistical analysis, but they may not be able to use the powerful parametric analyses that were their original intention. They may find that nonparametric statistics, which do not assume a normal distribution of interval or interval-like data, are more appropriate.

The use of Likert-scale questionnaires seems to be well established in L2 research, and reliable, valid, Likert-scale questionnaires have value when the data they yield are appropriately analyzed. However, Likert-scale questionnaires are not the only option available to a researcher measuring respondents’ characteristics, attitudes, or opinions. Questionnaires or interviews based on well-planned, open-ended questions can also be considered and might be more informative. Open-ended questions allow respondents to express any opinion or attitude on a topic, not merely those offered in a closed format, such as a Likert-scale questionnaire. As Nunan (1992) writes:

> While responses to closed questions are easier to collate and analyse, one often obtains more useful information from open questions. It is also more likely that responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondent wants to say. (p. 143)

The construction of open-ended questionnaires requires the same degree of attention and care that constructing a Likert-scale questionnaire does, and systematic analysis may be even more time-consuming (Nunan, 1992). However, open-ended questionnaires are an alternative to the Likert-scale format and may provide more accurate, powerful measurement of respondents’ characteristics, attitudes, and opinions.
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This book is for language teachers who want to increase cultural awareness and interaction among their students.

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Peter Grundy
This book offers practical, creative, and original ideas for making effective use of newspapers in the classroom.

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Logbooks and Language Learning Objectives in an Intensive ESP Workshop

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Two recent TESOL publications on student-teacher journal writing across various ESL settings (Peyton, 1990; Peyton & Reed, 1990) draw attention to issues concerning the teaching of writing, including the engagement of learners in meaningful written communication and integration of journals into language program design. Other writing teachers have reported how they have used a variety of journal formats (Miller, 1992; Rosow, 1992; Spack & Sadow, 1983). This report documents our own inquiry into language program design with a focus on identifying attainment of language learning objectives through journals. We were interested in determining how an intensive English for specific purposes (ESP) workshop’s objectives were realized by learners as reflected in their use of logbooks, a term we use for student-teacher journals as records of language learning and teaching experiences. The learners considered writing in the logbooks to be work-related writing practice, a purpose they had identified as central to their workshop experience. Thus, the logbooks served a dual evaluative purpose: an assessment of progress in writing for specific purposes and an evaluation of the workshop itself. In this paper, we will describe the processes by which ESP learners in northeast Thailand determined and accomplished their own objectives through the use of logbooks. Research techniques were drawn from qualitative methods and involved analyses of the participants’ logbook writings over the 5-day workshop as well as videotapes of comments and observations from our final evaluation session.
WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The learners were staff of the Aquiculture Outreach Program of the Asian Institute of Technology, which operates in three provinces in northeast Thailand: the main office is in Udornthani and two suboffices in Sisaket and Mahasarakham. Aquiculture Outreach’s principle objective is to determine stable aquiculture strategies for small-scale farmers through adaptive on-farm research. The project employs locally hired Thai staff who are native speakers of the regional dialects of the farmers. Research data and results are ultimately reported in English and access to aquiculture research written in English is essential to the staffs’ work. Also, the project is expanding to neighboring countries and will draw on the Thai staff’s experience. For these reasons, a language program was developed by way of learner-teacher collaboration on needs assessment and program design (Savage & Storer, 1992). So far, two intensive workshops have been conducted: a 10-day workshop for the Udornthani and Sisaket staff and a 5-day workshop for the five-member Mahasarakham staff, the informants in this report.

The day before the Mahasarakham workshop began, we met with the staff so they could inform us of the week’s work, and we could all plan how language workshop tasks could be built around the work. The negotiation which occurred during this preworkshop meeting meant that the workshop content was defined by the staff and based on actual language needs for the project’s work. The resulting workshop’s work-related language learning goals included general objectives to develop confidence, to get the participants talking in English, and to reach a point where the participants could work both alone and together as a staff to further develop their English. Specific objectives were to describe processes in the workplace and to develop a technical-terms dictionary for use in Outreach Program offices.

To document progress in reaching objectives and provide work-related writing experience, the participants agreed to keep logbooks. We asked participants to make daily entries in their logbooks about their general feelings concerning the workshop, what they thought about what happened that day, questions they wished to raise, new words, and whatever else they cared to log. We read and responded to the logbooks during a break each day and spent part of the feedback session at the close of each afternoon discussing what everyone had written. We also kept our own log in which we noted participant comments, both oral and from their logbooks, and our own observations of the participation and development of individuals. On the final day, an evaluation and action plan session was held to review the week’s work and to hear how participants had outlined plans to continue their English development.

THE LOGBOOK EXPERIENCE

In the following descriptions of the logbook experiences of workshop members, the participants are identified by pseudonyms and the teacher
by his real first name. The logbook entries showed clear patterns of a struggle between the participants’ past language learning experiences and the teachers’ views about effective language learning strategies.

The participants initially tended to focus on grammar rather than meaning in their logbook entries. For example, Day 1 entries included the following teacher-student exchange in Chuan’s logbook:

1. Chuan: When you speak I worried about the first tense and I think follow, but not follow when you speak in the second tense. Solve—You will be short tense, use easy word.
   Bill: Don’t worry about the tense, but think about the meaning. When you write in your logbook tonight, can you give some examples of problems that you have solved or examples of problems that still need to be solved?

By providing an alternative assignment, Bill hoped to encourage Chuan to focus on communicatively meaningful tasks rather than on grammatical structures which Chuan felt got in the way of comprehension. In response to this, Chuan noted five difficulties she was having. For example, she wrote: “Concerning my work, I have problem two word such as follow-up farmer or collect data from farmer and item or agenda.” In this way, Chuan was beginning to move away from a focus on grammatical correctness and towards a search for meaning in the context of her daily work.

We also found that participants often lacked the self-confidence needed to complete tasks. For example, Chai and Torn had been hesitant to talk about themselves and their work, which was in effect a spoken task for that day, in the discussion at the preworkshop meeting. To help build self-confidence, we let Chai and Torn use their logbooks as an alternative mode of communication, a way of allowing for individual needs and purposes. They completed this assignment by writing introductions of themselves, descriptions of their work, and explanations of why the work is important to the Outreach Program’s goals. In Pong’s case, although he was the most fluent participant, he had difficulty discussing his work in-depth, so we asked him to focus on outlining the next day’s work schedule and describing daily operations, tasks he is required to do each day as the suboffice manager.

Logbook entries also reflected our suggestions during feedback sessions. For example, on Day 2 of the workshop, we asked participants to turn some of our questions around on us. Our purpose here was to encourage the staff to use questioning strategies and identify potential problems in this area. Participants generally indicated proficiency in questioning; for example, Panya wrote “What do you think about workshop? How do you feel?” However, participants continued to exhibit insecurity in their English language use. On Day 3, Chuan wrote: “Can you comment anything about myself for improve English language?” In an effort to avoid anxiety and build self-confidence, Bill replied: “I have noticed a big improvement... You speak much more freely now and it is easy to talk with you. I think it is great that you study on your own.”

BRIEF REPORTS AND SUMMARIES
Through logbooks, we were also able to monitor our teaching and build on participant-teacher exchanges to achieve the learning objectives which had been set. Although our goals were to foster communicative competence and self-confidence, many participants continued to value grammatical accuracy over meaningful dialogue, and they seemed unsure of their English proficiency. For example, at one point, Panya (who played basketball every evening) asked Bill: “Are you playing basketball?” which prompted a discussion of the differences among are you playing, do you play, and can you play. Panya followed this discussion with an entry in her logbook: “How did you use verb to be, to do and to have to begin the question? Because I used wrong always.” Bill responded in the journal by providing work-related examples so as to contextualized English language forms.

We further used the logbooks in brainstorming for ideas and creative language use. As a means of documenting work procedures—but especially to introduce a meaningful group task—we produced a rough video with the staff called “A Day’s Work in the Mahasarakham Sub-Office.” The participants planned and wrote the commentary, shot the footage, and recorded the voice-overs. Torn’s contribution, which he drafted in his logbook, was “I am maintenance motorcycles for safety everyday in the morning before we go to the field,” which he read himself for the voice-over. Pong recorded in his logbook an idea for a future video project to provide background to the suboffice location and the working conditions there: “We have video commentary about work in sub-office but we don’t have commentary background in Mahasarakham set-up. I suggestion maybe video commentary background for introduce Mahasarakham set-up.”

Another purpose of the logbooks was to get participants to reflect on their English language experiences. On Day 3, the staff had an opportunity to discuss the project’s work with an English-speaking aquiculture researcher who was visiting that week. Bill wrote to Pong: “Tonight when you write in your logbook please talk about speaking English with the visitor. What was difficult? What was easy? Did you have to use Thai? When? Why? What questions did the visitor ask?” Pong responded to Bill’s questions about the English-speaking visitor as follows:

2. I went to with visitor to field to saw project area and saw me interview farmer. He talk with me he want to know staff working. He talk about village code and farmer code is. I comment main government code speak to him I don’t know.

Although Pong continued to have problems expressing himself in English, he had moved closer to the goal of focusing on the meaning of interactions in attempts to meet work-related objectives.

During the evaluation session on the last day of the workshop, the participants spoke about the progress they felt they had made in listening and speaking, overcoming shyness, and being better able to use English in written work tasks. We concluded the session by discussing comments...
from our log, especially those which related to how the participants had assisted each other. The participants subsequently developed action plans that revealed an awareness of how the different language workshop activities could be continued as part of the project’s work.

By reviewing the participant and teacher comments in the logbooks as well as notes from our own logs and the final workshop session, we gained an understanding of how the participants responded to workshop objectives. They showed an increase in confidence and willingness to speak out. They were able to identify language learning problems and ways to address these problems individually and collaboratively. They took advantage of opportunities to improve their ability to talk and write about work procedures. Throughout the workshop, each participant also worked toward acquiring vocabulary by recording in their logbooks new technical words and phrases as they arose in the discussions and written work. In addition, through reading the logbooks daily we were able to immediately review what teaching strategies and workshop activities were most and least effective.

CONCLUSION

In addition to examining how learners work toward language learning objectives, this report summarizes our own first attempt at using data from student-teacher journals to develop greater self-awareness among both learners and teachers (Winer, 1992). The collaborative use of journals can transform the traditional roles of teachers and learners in language classrooms (Vanett & Jurich, 1990). In our situation, in which we act as collaborators in intensive workshops for as few as 5 days, data from the logbooks provide a readily available source of assessment information which we can use to look at the effectiveness of our language teaching practice. Finally, information from the logbooks and teachers’ logs provides a range of activities for future program planning and design. One example of using logs for future planning involves an incident which occurred 1 year after the Mahasarakham workshop during a staff language program planning workshop. In this workshop, when Pong was asked what areas of his writing still needed to be addressed, we were able to refer back to what had been said and written a year earlier and, thus, outline specific writing tasks which Pong could work on. In general, this study suggests that journals can be used in innovative ways to develop long- and short-term teaching strategies which meet the specific needs and purposes of individual English language learners.

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REVIEWS

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 HEIDI RIGGENBACH
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On the back cover of Frank Smith's latest book is a photograph, presumably taken in South Africa, portraying the author sitting on a white table on the porch of a neat suburban house, flanked by four smiling black children. It is an appealing photograph—but it makes me feel uneasy. Such photographs provide a permanent record that the sojourner has “been there,” has related to “the people.” But the smiles mask the unequal relations of power between the visitor and the hosts, between the observer and the observed. In many ways, the photograph is a visual metaphor for the relationships depicted in the book between the author and his former students and colleagues in South Africa. At a glance, the relationships seem unproblematic; however, a closer analysis raises a number of uneasy questions.

In 1991, Smith was invited by the new Department of Applied English Language Studies (AELS) of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits—pronounced Vits) in Johannesburg, South Africa, to take on the leadership of the fledgling department. The department is described as the first of its kind in South Africa, focusing on the relationship between the English language and educational change in the country. Smith arrived in South Africa in December 1991, resigning in “frustration and disappointment” (p. 11) 5 months later. Smith describes his book as an ethnographic account of his experiences in the department over this period and his perceptions of educational and social change in South Africa. A recurring theme in the book is Smith's conflict with some of his colleagues on the appropriateness of his ideas on language and learning in the South African context.

The book is structured around a description of a 7-week seminar led by Smith in which 17 students of different language and social backgrounds sought to develop an honours course in applied linguistics.
relevant to their needs and experience. Eight chapters of the book, “Week Zero” to “Week Seven,” describe in detail how the 17 students in the course sought to grapple with both their expectations of applied linguistics and Smith’s approach to learner-centered pedagogy. The remaining nine chapters of the book (which are interspersed with the chapters on the honours course) provide a vivid account of the social and historical backdrop in which the honours course took place. A central observation Smith makes on the basis of his data is given in the final chapter:

It seems even clearer to me now that authority determines the roles that language plays. Rather than empowering students, the English-language requirements imposed on black students in the school and university settings described in this book held students back, interfering with their intellectual and academic development. (p. 171)

There are a number of appealing features about the book that will be immediately apparent to the reader. Smith has an excellent eye for detail and describes people, places, and events with imagination and flair. From the time of Smith’s arrival at Johannesburg’s international airport, when Smith contrasts the multitude of freeways to the “clusters of shanties” (p. 7) by the roadside, Smith captivates the reader with a narrative that is an eloquent testimony to his journalistic past. His observations of the lifestyle of black and white South Africans are compelling, and his descriptions of visits to black schools in segregated townships near Johannesburg give readers insight into the pernicious effects of apartheid on the education of South Africans. Smith’s descriptions of departmental debates on the role of English in a multilingual society are illuminating, as are his renditions of student debates on curriculum development in applied linguistics. The book is a dramatic account of a society in transition, a society painfully coming to grips with its contentious social and educational history.

Notwithstanding the author’s evocative style and attention to detail, the author’s research methodology may compromise the book’s potential contribution to the educational community. Furthermore, Smith’s approach to learner-centered pedagogy may leave teachers confused and disempowered. I will examine each of these issues in turn.

Smith claims that the book reflects his concern, as a “teacher and researcher” (p. 3) with education, language, and thinking. The methodology Smith adopted in his research was, in his view, “impartial” (p. 3): “My approach is, as far as I can make it, ‘objective’ or at least reportorial, based on extensive notes that became objects of mistrust among some of the people I worked with” (p. 3). As an established researcher, Smith must be well aware of principles of ethical research
that are common practice in educational research worldwide (see American Psychological Association, 1982; TESOL Research Committee, 1980, University of Witwatersrand, 1990). Participants need to give their informed consent to take part in a research project; they have the right to discontinue their participation in a project; they have the right to confidentiality. It is disturbing that Smith seems to have paid little heed to such guidelines. Certainly, the participants in the study are immediately identified by the department and institution in which they work, and there is no evidence that they gave informed consent to take part in his study. When his notes became the “objects of mistrust” (p. 3), Smith did not take the opportunity to investigate and address the concerns of his participants. Instead, Smith appears to shrug off their concerns by arguing:

The book necessarily reflects my own beliefs and values and my own reconstruction of situations and dialogues. Other participants in the events would almost certainly give different accounts of them. My notes were never compared with those of anyone else. Nor have I shown a prepublication draft of this book to the people who appear on its pages; that would begin debates and “negotiations” that would delay the book forever. (p. 4)

Smith’s position that the prompt publication of a book should override possible concerns by the subjects of the book is highly problematic. Indeed, it is ironic that it is the researcher and not the researched who is protected by copyright laws, laws that are made explicit on the inside cover of the book:

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission.

Smith’s book addresses questions of language and power. The educational research community might well ask: Whose language? What power? Whose words are protected by copyright law, and whose words can be reproduced “without permission”? Because Smith has the power to influence international opinion of teaching and learning in South Africa, he has the responsibility to ensure that his research is accountable to the standards of the international community he seeks to address.

Apart from ethical aspects of Smith’s research, it is questionable whether the research is accountable to the tradition of ethnography within which Smith locates his research study (p. 5). In her influential article on “defining the essentials” of ethnography, Watson-Gegeo
(1988) argues convincingly that ethnographic research should not be an impressionistic account of a situation, but should be conducted with respect to a rigorous set of principles which include, among others, the following characteristics:

1. Ethnographic data collection begins with a theoretical framework directing the researcher’s attention to certain aspects of situations and certain kinds of research questions. (p. 578)
2. Each situation investigated by an ethnographer must be understood from the perspective of the participants in that situation. (p. 579)
3. The ethnographer first seeks to build a theory of the setting under study, then to extrapolate or generalize from that setting or situation to others studied in the same way. (p. 581)

With respect to each of these principles, Smith’s research is found wanting. First, although Smith asserts that his research study can be located within the “growing tradition of ethnographic studies in comparative education” (p. 5), he does not give any indication of what these studies might be and how they inform his theoretical framework. Second, rather than understanding the perspectives of the participants in his study, Smith appears intent on informing his participants of his own perspectives. Consider the following “Departmental Dialogue” (p. 37):

May I tell you how an outsider sees the situation?
   Why not wait until you’ve been here six months?
In six months I’ll be thinking like a South African.
   Exactly.

Third, Smith makes little attempt to extrapolate from the results of his research and analyse how his findings on what he calls a “universal conflict” can inform the extensive debate on questions of language, power, and learning in the international community. (See, e.g., Bourdieu, 1977; Bourne, 1988; Burnaby & Cumming, 1992; Fairclough, 1989; Kress, 1991; Ndebele, 1987; Peirce, 1989; Pennycook, 1990; Phillipson, 1992; Simon, 1992; Tollefson, 1988; Walsh, 1987). Smith transfers this responsibility onto the reader by saying in his conclusion:

I see no point in drawing conclusions and providing recommendations, merely for the sake of doing so. The participants in the seminar thought for themselves, relating the considerations of this book to their own attitudes and circumstances, and readers will do the same. (p. 171)

In essence, because it is questionable whether Smith’s research is accountable to international standards of ethical research and estab-
lished principles of ethnography, his study remains an anecdotal rather than scholarly account of his personal experiences in South Africa.

Having raised one set of uneasy questions that may limit the impact of Smith’s book on educational researchers, I wish to raise another question that might be posed by classroom teachers: How does Smith theorize the role of the classroom teacher in his approach to learner-centered pedagogy?

Smith asserts that his approach to pedagogy is to collapse student-staff distinctions (pp. 26, 44) and to empower students by encouraging them to draw on their own interests and experiences in the learning process. His pedagogy, he argues, presupposes respect for students at all levels (p. 21) and implicit trust in student judgments (p. 81). His goals for his honours students were as follows:

I would give them an opportunity to express a point of view and to build on their own experience. I would give them seven weeks to come up with their own recommendations. I would empower them. (p. 21)

These claims and goals are appealing. However, Smith does not interrogate his approach to student empowerment: He does not acknowledge that a teacher who has the authority to give opportunity, time, and power to students, also has the authority to take it away. The students were well aware of this contradiction, and indeed brought it to Smith’s attention: “Joanna had earlier told me I confused students by asking for their ideas and then ‘slapping them down,’ the way I had dismissed Mavis’s concerns” (p. 81).

It is disappointing that Smith does not use such student data to develop a richer theoretical approach to the power relations that persist between teachers and learners, notwithstanding attempts to collapse distinctions between them. Furthermore, because Smith does not acknowledge that a teacher’s power can be used constructively, as well as destructively, he does not take seriously the concerns of students who say they “want some input” (p. 168) and are “totally confused” (p. 80) by his pedagogy.

As a logical extension of attempts to collapse staff-student distinctions, Smith does not validate the specialized knowledge and experience that teachers bring to the classroom. His position is best illustrated by the way he depicts the contributions of his fellow teachers in the department, rather than by any formal pronouncements on his part. In discussions of evaluation in the new honours course, Smith notes, for example, that one particular student “still likes to think the staff have expertise” (p. 146). When the students were grappling with ideas for the course, Smith was “dismayed” (p. 63) when one of the students put an outline of the previous year’s course on the blackboard. When
two of Smith’s colleagues contributed to a student discussion, they were described as “dominating” (p. 44) it; when staff remained silent during a student presentation they were depicted as unresponsive (Chapter 16). The reader remains confused about the role of the teacher in Smith’s learner-centered pedagogy and unconvinced by Smith’s parting comment:

I began my preparations to leave the course, the university, and the country. Had I stayed, I would have had to participate in preplanned instruction, assignments, marking, and grading—and I could not in conscience do this with the students I had worked with. (p. 170)

The reader is left with the view that preplanned instruction, assignments, marking, and grading are “unconscionable” and that, as Smith notes, setting priorities is “ugly” (p. 65). But most teachers cannot pack their bags and leave their posts when such demands are placed upon them. They have to develop a form of pedagogy that will enable them to work with their students day by day, and year by year, in good conscience. Although Smith claims to respect students at all levels, he has little to say to their teachers.

In sum, Smith’s book is at its best when Smith steps out of the department, into the complex burly burly of the new South Africa. His vivid imagery and detailed observations are evocative, providing a comprehensive record of 5 months in South Africa’s social and educational history. Within the department, however, Smith’s observations are less convincing. His treatment of the participants in his research creates cause for concern, his approach to ethnography is of questionable rigor, and his conception of learner-centered pedagogy may prove disempowering for teachers. Readers interested in autobiography and social history will find the book compelling; educational researchers and teachers may well be disappointed.

REFERENCES


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Second Language Teacher Education.

- Jack Richards and David Nunan, two of the profession’s most well-known and prolific second language education scholars, call this volume a “state-of-the-art account of current approaches to second language teacher education” (p. xi), working from the ideological stance of the “primacy of the classroom in providing data for teacher education” (p. 41). They suggest in the Preface that this text provides a comprehensive overview of issues in teacher education in L2 teaching, drawing upon “a representative group of teacher educators from around the world” (p. xii).

The range of contributions to the volume does create a portrait of critical issues. The text contains a number of provocative articles and blueprints for bringing change into language teacher education programs. It allows teacher educators in TESOL programs to quickly familiarize themselves with many critical issues in teacher education.

However, the book is not all-encompassing. The editors suggest that they have invited a representative group of foreign language scholars from around the world: In fact they have invited an impressive array of U.S., British, Canadian, and Australian authors to speak about...
English language education in a volume which may have applications for foreign language teachers as well. Although teacher education projects in Hungary, Egypt, and the former Yugoslavia are cited, the teacher educators were all native-English-speaking experts brought into these countries from the outside.

This text is divided into six parts (19 articles) with contributions by 24 authors: Issues and Approaches in Teacher Education; Investigation of Teachers and Learners in the Classroom (actually an integration of theory and practice); The Practicum; Supervision; Self-Observation in Teacher Development; and finally, Case Studies. Five of the 19 articles are reprints from other volumes.

As one might expect from Richards and Nunan, they provide useful framing comments at the beginning of each of the six parts. Unfortunately, the questions which follow each part are uneven and the types of questions are inconsistent. Many questions follow the pattern of standard comprehension questions in ESL textbooks: They ask for direct, explicit information from the text. Others call upon the readers to synthesize information from the articles and apply this information to their own settings, even though there may not always be enough information in a particular article to make the application, as for example in Nina Spada’s article discussing an observation scheme for assessing a communicative orientation to language teaching (COLT).

The strongest section deals with the practicum. The weakest are the first two sections: the overview and the theory/practice integration. In the practicum chapter, we hear from Donald Freeman on “Intervening in Practice Teaching,” Jerry Gebhard on “Interaction in a Teaching Practicum,” and Martha Pennington on “A Professional Development Focus for the Language Teaching Practicum.” Although Freeman’s definition of “intervention” seems a bit unorthodox, once readers get past this, we are treated to his careful, thought-provoking challenges. Gebhard walks teacher educators through a process he engaged in to help student teachers actually change their teaching behavior in order to prevent the blocking of their professional development. Pennington provides a wonderful set of exercises for teacher educators to use to help learners explore their own beliefs and behaviors.

In Part 1, the overview section, it would have helped to have a single strong review of research as the lead article. As it is, the 16 pages of references at the end of the book area useful place to begin. Richards’s lead article, titled “The Dilemma of Teacher Education in Second Language Teaching,” does, however, raise a useful distinction between macro- and microapproaches to teacher education.

In Part 2, the theory/practice section, there is a lack of attention to detail. In both Richard Day’s “Teacher Observation in Second Lan-
language Teacher Education” and David Nunan’s “Action Research in the Language Classroom” the critically important terms ethnography and action research are inadequately defined. I would contrast for example, Nunan’s definition of action research here with his three pages in his 1992 volume Research Methods in Language Learning. I would contrast Nunan’s careful definition of ethnography in his Research Methods in Language Learning with Day’s broader equation of ethnography with all qualitative descriptive work. In like manner, in the Case Studies section of the book, I would call to task Fraida Dubin and Rita Wong’s use of the phrase an ethnographic approach in their article “An Ethnographic Approach to Inservice Preparation: The Hungary File.” There does not seem to be anything particularly ethnographic in their approach. It is important to point out, however, that this and the Gaies/Bowers article titled “Clinical Supervision of Language Teaching: The Supervisor as Trainer and Educator” are the only EFL articles in the volume and the only ones to point out that country-specific findings may mitigate the claims of anglophone teacher education literature.

Although this is an important volume, it needs to be seen in the context of other useful volumes on teaching. Others would include Wallace’s (1991) Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Rejective Approach and Guntermann’s (1993) Developing Language Teachers for a Changing World. What is missing in this particular text is a more thorough appreciation for what has worked well in foreign language education: We need to move beyond the somewhat provincial unspoken assumption that better work in foreign language education has been done in ESL than in other languages. We need to move beyond the assumption that all successful L2 teacher education models have been created in the West in anglophone countries and that experts from these countries are the only individuals who should conduct language education workshops for teachers in other countries.

Another problematic issue is that the text presents itself as a state-of-the-art volume. More modest claims would allow the reader to savor each of the contributions and avoid disappointment. Not surprisingly, this book cannot be all things to all people. For example, although the text does address reflective teaching, clearly one of the most important research areas in evidence in college teaching at this time, it does not examine critical theory, nor does it look extensively at social and other contextual variables affecting language learning. It does not provide a survey of the full range of perspectives in second language teacher preparation. But it is important to note that it does provide a wide range of perspectives on English language education.

In the end, Second Language Teacher Education is an important resource text which brings together acclaimed English language educa-
tors and one acclaimed foreign language educator, Dale Lange, to provide perspectives on classroom-data-based teacher education. It is clearly a book worth owning.

REFERENCES


KIMBERLEY BROWN
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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.

Pronunciation Textbooks

Despite the best efforts of well-known pronunciation specialists such as Joan Morley, Judy Gilbert, and Rita Wong, the teaching of pronunciation can probably claim the dubious title of “most likely to fall between the cracks.” In recent years, it has been especially difficult for pronunciation to find its niche within a communicative curriculum: Should it be treated as a separate component? as a series of self-paced, individualized modules? or should it be integrated throughout the curriculum? While such questions are debated, many of us quietly go about our work erroneously assuming that someone else is taking care of pronunciation.

One reason we have been willing to overlook pronunciation instruction may stem, not so much from uncertainty about where it belongs in the curriculum, but from a basic uncertainty about how to teach it. In fact, a great many teachers, experienced and inexperienced alike, will confess to feeling insecure when it comes to teaching pronunciation. Of these, many claim a lack of confidence in their ability to effectively diagnose and treat the problems of learners from a wide range of language backgrounds, often because they feel they lack the phonological knowledge that will enable them to do this. Whatever our own anxieties, however, teachers have to be ready to deal with the special anxieties that students bring to the area of pronunciation. Even those who are strongly motivated to improve their speech may become discouraged and frustrated by what often appears to be a minimal rate of progress. Indeed, it is hard for both students and teachers to handle the fact that change in pronunciation comes about slowly and sometimes not in the linear fashion that many courses of instruction would lead us to expect. (For an interesting example of this, see Yule & Macdonald, 1992).

All this, then, puts special demands on a pronunciation textbook. It has to be flexible enough to meet various curricular needs, user-friendly enough to support the most insecure of teachers, and structured enough to guide the most frustrated of learners. With these demands in mind, the following book notices examine two teacher
references and a number of pronunciation textbooks. All are in current or recent use; several are completely new publications.* Some of the notices are by students in my course on phonology and pronunciation at Sonoma State University, others are by Donna Brinton and her students at the University of California, Los Angeles. The second and third notices were written by pronunciation specialists at other universities. I thank all of these colleagues for their help in surveying the field of pronunciation teaching.

VIRGINIA SAMUDA, Guest Editor
Sonoma State University

REFERENCES


* Editor’s Note. Another book on this topic was the focus of a book notice in a recent issue of the TESOL Quarterly (Vol. 26, No. 3): Stacy Hagen & Patricia Grogan’s Sound Advantage: A Pronunciation Book (Prentice Hall, 1992).
lines the need for such a volume, presenting the interested reader with material not readily accessible.

The editor of an anthology selects from among the wide range of available resources. Overall, Brown has made excellent (and undoubtedly difficult) choices. He begins by highlighting the issue of which English (standard/received pronunciation or the local variety) to teach. In the section on philosophical considerations, I would argue only with Brown’s inclusion of Acton’s article on “Changing Fossilized Pronunciation,” which appears better suited to the section on classroom techniques and practices. In this same section, which includes the ongoing philosophical debate initiated by Parish (1977) and Stevick (1978), I question Brown’s decision to omit the fine reaction to this debate by Pennington and Richards (1986). Even assuming space restrictions, I would have selected this contribution over the somewhat redundant articles on sociolinguistic considerations by Baxter and Newbrook in the first section.

The only additional “bone” I wish to pick with Brown concerns his decision to ignore issues of phonological acquisition both in the text and in the accompanying bibliography. To my mind, an insight into how L2 phonology is acquired by learners is as critical for pronunciation practitioners as the other five domains Brown has included in this volume. Notwithstanding these complaints, the volume belongs on the shelves of libraries everywhere for the benefit of those engaged in the classroom practice of pronunciation teaching. Brown is to be commended for providing our profession with a long-overdue compilation of readings in this important area.

REFERENCES


DONNA BRINTON
University of California, Los Angeles


In the early 1980s, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship issued a 44-page forerunner of Teaching American English Pronunciation (Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship, no date); in 1987 Avery and Ehrlich edited an issue of TESL Canada’s TESL Talk (Vol. 17, No. 1), which included material from the ministry work. These earlier publications were prized by the teachers who were able to obtain them, and this current
Oxford volume will be hailed as a now readily available resource for ESL teachers and program planners.

Teaching American English Pronunciation is a welcome addition to a small but growing literature of linguistically and pedagogically sound pronunciation references for ESL professionals. It fits nicely into a timely genre of resource texts and papers that explore aspects of a “communicative” pronunciation focus, while continuing to include useful facets of a more “traditional” pronunciation focus. Thus teachers are provided with an array of practice options from which they can choose those which best meet the oral communication needs of their students at given times. This dual attention is an essential component of today’s perspectives on pronunciation curricula: one focus on macrolevels of oral communication/discourse pronunciation features (e.g., the discourse functions of prosodies and vocal features) and another focus on microlevels of discrete-point pronunciation features (e.g., sound segments, conditioned segmental combinations and variations, and sentence-level prosodic features).

The text is designed for the practicing professional. The material Avery and Ehrlich have assembled makes the book a clearly written and easy-to-use teaching reference. It is unpretentious in its style and in its manner of presentation. Its treatment of articulatory phonetics and phonology concepts and terminology is largely clear and accurate but is not overwhelming in its physical and physiological detail. As helpful as this text is as a personal information resource, it should also prove useful in preservice MATESL programs or in in-service continuing education formats.

The volume is divided into three sections. Part 1 presents six chapters of background information on the sound system of English. The vowel system presented is characterized as “the English used in the national media in the USA and by a large number of North American speakers” (p. 28). Chapters 1–4 comprise two thirds of this section; they focus on sound segments and include sound-spelling considerations, descriptions of the individual vowel and consonant sounds, sounds in context, and syllable structure. Chapters 5 and 6 provide very brief and necessarily generalized commentaries on word stress and vowel reduction, rhythm, sentence stress and intonation, and modifications of sounds in connected speech.

Part 2 focuses on the identification and correction of specific pronunciation problems. It includes discussions of both general problem areas and specific problems of 14 language groups, with the caveat that the list of problems is in no way intended to be exhaustive. The information presented here will be especially helpful to novice teachers with limited experience. Unfortunately source references for this material are not given, but for more extensive information teachers can consult other sources which are referenced in the annotated section, Further Reading.

The final part of the book focuses on classroom activities. Eight chapters of about 10 pages each discuss some key considerations. They are quite brief but serve readers well as an introduction to a variety of concepts and practical issues in the teaching of pronunciation. The annotated Further Reading lists 18 student texts and teacher reference books. It also includes a bibliography of 55 books and articles and a useful glossary.
The thoughtful comments of Carlos Yorio in the Foreword to the 1987 TESL Talk forerunner of Teaching American English Pronunciation are as true today as they were then:

This text is applied linguistics in the very best sense. This book will give classroom teachers the theory they need so that they will be able to make their pronunciation classes practical and, as we all know, there is nothing more practical than a good theory. (p. 6)

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Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship (no date). The sound system of English for teachers of English as a second language. Toronto, Canada: Author, Citizenship Branch.

JOAN MORLEY
The University of Michigan


With these three volumes, Joan Morley offers a comprehensive instructional program in spoken English for intermediate- and advanced-level ESL students. The set is accompanied by tapes with a variety of voices (tapes for the first two volumes are available now; tapes for the last will be available soon). Morley's goal is ultimately to foster learner independence and self-confidence. Activities encourage students to take charge of their own language development process while the teacher plays the role of facilitator.

A strong point of these books is their broad range of coverage. Originally trained as a speech therapist, Morley has the expertise to provide a detailed analysis of speech production at the microlevel. At the other end of the spectrum, her global perspective on pronunciation as an integral part of communication leads her to include many activities which encourage clarity of speech in extended discourse. Students are also given explicit self-monitoring strategies to extend their practice into their daily communication outside of class.

The three volumes can be used individually or as a set. Rapid Review of Vowels and Prosodic Contexts begins with a unit on the vowels of English spoken in the U.S. The lessons in this unit include clear information on the articulation of the vowels, practice exercises in production and listening...
discrimination, tips for self-monitoring, and short tests. The second unit briefly reviews rhythm and intonation, with lessons on word and sentence stress, vowel reduction, linking, and other topics. Supplementary material includes a glossary of terms, charts of sound-spelling correspondence, and an answer key.

The second volume, Intensive Consonant Pronunciation Practice, provides the most comprehensive coverage of consonants available for ESL students to date. Each lesson clearly presents articulation information on the consonants of English, comparing closely related groups. Study notes for each sound are provided on such topics as kinesthetic, spelling, syllable structure, clustering, and linking across word boundaries. Practice activities follow, including imitation of words, phrases and sentences, rhyming, minimal pairs, and listening discrimination. Of particular interest are activities which encourage self-monitoring. Among these are oral readings of extended texts which students are to analyze, rehearse, and present. Working in small groups or individually, they mark these texts for pauses and stress, identify targeted consonants, and practice several times in preparation for presentation. Such activities promote extended self-monitoring and provide an important link between imitative practice and unstructured spontaneous speech.

The third volume, Extempore Speaking Practice, has 12 speaking assignments, each with a language function. This series of creative, enjoyable assignments is designed to help students modify the clarity of their speech in extended discourse. For each assignment, there is an emphasis on the communicative context of the speech act and the speaker-listener relationship. To list a few examples, in one assignment, students work in small groups to compose and present a recorded message; in another, students conduct interviews on a topic of interest in their community and present the information as a panel; in a third, each student gives an informative 5-min talk using visual aids. In each case, step-by-step instructions are provided, the language context is discussed, and models of the speech task are given.

Educators and students alike will appreciate these volumes. They are appropriate for classes in pronunciation and presentation as well as English for specific purposes (ESP) training. The first two volumes are also a good resource for teachers or for student self-study. In addition, this program could easily be supplemented with reading materials for use in an integrated skills course.

ANN WENNERSTROM
University of Washington


The second edition of Clear Speech has been eagerly awaited for some time, and Judy Gilbert’s many fans will not be disappointed by the “new
and improved" version of this classic text. Following her thesis that the
two fundamental purposes for teaching pronunciation are speech clarity
and listening comprehension, Gilbert once again emphasizes the impor-
tance of rhythm, stress, and intonation. This time, however, she has
changed her format and expanded her repertoire of activities. The second
edition is now divided into four new topic areas: Sounds, Words, Senten-
ces, and Conversation, each of which comprises several units. The last
part of the book has seven appendices, which include much of the material
found in the Listening and Clear Speech sections of the first edition,
including vowel and consonant work, lecture comprehension, note-taking,
and oral reports. The book concludes with a valuable glossary.

Gilbert argues that the most effective way of improving the clarity of
individual sounds (as well as overall listening comprehension) is not
through the intensive practice of the sounds themselves but through sys-
tematic work on stress, rhythm, and intonation. However, during 3 years
of field testing the material for this edition, she found that students, on
the contrary, seemed to believe that the best way to improve pronunciation
was through prolonged practice of individual sounds and were resistant
to working on stress, rhythm, and intonation before they felt they had
mastered all the sounds. With this understanding, Gilbert integrates prac-
tice in both areas throughout this new edition.

With the goal of integrated practice, Section 1, Sounds, (in contrast to
the first edition) begins with a focus on stops, continuants, voicing, and
sibilants, interwoven with instruction on syllables and syllable length. This
is done in such a way that students do not become bogged down in the
production of individual sounds as an end in itself but are encouraged
to think about the relationship between the qualities of certain sounds
and overall meaning. Section 2, Words, focuses on stress, including vowel
length and clarity, reduced vowels, and word stress patterns. As in Section
1, rhythm and linking are built into each unit. Section 3, Sentences, intro-
duces basic emphasis pattern rules for content and structure words as well
as further work on linking and contractions. Section 4, Conversation,
introduces pitch patterns, thought groups, questions, and statement inton-
ation. Throughout the book, there is an emphasis on self-monitoring,
and several units have a Check Yourself activity built in. Other evaluation
techniques are included. For example, the student's book begins with two
diagnostic tests: Clear Speech and Clear Listening that students may take
at the beginning and end of the course. To support this, the teacher's
book provides useful guidelines on how to create a pronunciation profile
based on these tests and includes a list of the most common errors students
have made. The teacher's book also includes quizzes for each unit, de-
signed to be copied and handed out.

One of the outstanding features of the first edition was the teacher's
resource book. Teachers familiar with this will be delighted to find that
the second edition is even more informative. Gilbert provides support for
experienced and novice teachers alike. The teacher's book gives clear
explanations of the phonological principles involved in each unit, with
reference to relevant, current research, as appropriate. Gilbert also pro-
vides numerous cross-linguistic examples to show why students might encounter problems in specific areas. In addition, she provides teachers with a wealth of teaching tips and innovative techniques for dealing with a range of pronunciation problems. The information is presented in an interesting and readable manner and doesn’t require the teacher to have an advanced technical knowledge of phonology. In short, the teacher’s resource book can almost stand alone as a state-of-the-art manual on pronunciation teaching.

Overall, these two books are extremely clear and informative for both the student and teacher, encouraging an active and exciting approach to pronunciation.

RACHEL LA FEIN
Sonoma State University


The title of Ann Baker and Sharon Goldstein’s Pronunciation Pairs is potentially misleading because the book sets out to accomplish more than simply drilling students in minimal pairs. Directed toward high beginning- and intermediate-level students, Pronunciation Pairs includes a teacher’s manual, student’s workbook, and four cassette tapes.

The student’s book is divided into two major sections, Vowels and Consonants, each of which begins with an introductory unit that encourages students to explore their own speech organs in a kinesthetic way. I would highly recommend these two units as resource material for any teacher wishing to introduce the basic terminology of speech production in a clear, nonthreatening way. These two major sections are then subdivided into units focusing on the production and recognition of specific vowel or consonant sounds, with 20 units on vowels and 26 units on consonants. Each unit follows a standard format that includes clear illustrations and basic notes on sound production, illustrated exercises on sound contrast pairs, word practice lists, dialogues, conversations, games, and spelling practice. The production of a sound in isolation is a relatively small part of each unit. Work on stress and intonation is also presented in various ways.

The teacher’s manual assumes no prior technical knowledge of linguistics. It follows each step in each unit of the student’s book and further explicates the unit by giving suggestions for classroom work. Particularly useful are the brief, clear descriptions of various problems students are likely to encounter in each unit and what the teacher can do to help. In addition, relevant cross-linguistic information designed to help teachers understand how students from specific language backgrounds might produce specific sounds is included in every unit and briefly summarized as a list of likely errors at the back of the book. The text contains a diagnostic test, and although this focuses on sounds in isolation and is based on a
relatively artificial reading sample, it may give the teacher some basis for evaluation.

Pronunciation Pairs has many attractive features; however, I do have some reservations. The text might better serve the instructor if the stress and intonation features were indexed along with the other phonological features. As for the sequencing of units, it may not be to the advantage of all students to begin with so much emphasis on vowels. For example, the first two units begin with work on /i/ and /iy/. It has been argued that the most difficult vowel sounds to address are the lax vowels and that problems with /I/ in particular may persist long after other problems have disappeared (Firth, 1992). For this reason it may be discouraging for some students to begin with exercises at which they may not be successful.

On the positive side, however, Pronunciation Pairs has excellent illustrations that relate well to the work in each unit. It presents the material in a nonthreatening, non-technical way that makes the content clear for both students and teachers. It is a versatile text that can be used by itself or as supplemental material; it may be taught in whatever sequence best suits the students’ needs. Individual units can also be used to supplement other course work. Moreover, units may be presented to individuals for a particular pronunciation problem, thus giving the option of students working in groups, alone, or in a language lab. Pronunciation Pairs makes it clear that pronunciation is not an end in itself and overall provides teachers with a useful resource for teaching pronunciation as a part of communication.

REFERENCES


JAMES DANIEL
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◆ Two seemingly opposite features characterize Say It Clearly: (a) lessons that are teacher directed and uniform and (b) language activities that are student centered and imaginative. This is because Say It Clearly aims to bridge the gap between skill learning and language use by incorporating work on pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation with creative language use. According to the author, the book is suitable for beginning, intermediate, and advanced learners, and the activities are graded throughout based on proficiency level.

Fifteen lessons are each divided uniformly into three parts, Introduc-
tion, Exercises, and Activities. In Part 1, learners are asked to listen, then to fill in missing letters in a passage dictated on audiotape or by the teacher. The passage focuses attention on three vowel/consonant sounds and introduces the topic of the lesson. Topics of high interest to young adult ESL students such as employment, dating, and world affairs constitute the theme of each lesson.

Seven or eight pronunciation exercises follow the Introduction in every lesson and provide guided practice in dictionary and spelling skills; articulation of sounds; and work on stress, rhythm, and intonation. The focus of Part 2 is the mechanical reproduction of English sounds.

Part 3 of each lesson offers freer communicative practice through a wide variety of more than 100 group activities. Each lesson outlines 9 such activities, 3 per proficiency level, which are based on the lesson theme and exemplify an aspect of language featured in the lesson. Through dramatizations, games, commercials, debates, sharing values, and even going out into the community to share stories with children, learners can help create their own positive learning experiences and environments.

The activities are set up for teacher, peer, or self-monitoring, thus enabling students to make connections between the focused practice at the beginning of the lesson and the freer language use at the end, and to check on their progress.

Say It Clearly is aimed at all proficiency levels. Although the consistency of lesson themes provides important contextual clues for beginning-level students, the introductory listening/reading passages, beyond the first two lessons, contain extremely challenging vocabulary for beginning learners to comprehend without extra dictionary work. That limitation, along with the possible difficulty for beginning learners in following directions for the exercises without a good deal of teacher demonstration, would seem to make this text more readily usable at the intermediate and advanced levels. Learners at all levels will appreciate the familiarity of consistent lesson patterns as the content becomes progressively more complex and the difficulty of the readings increases. Knowing what to expect in each lesson will help them confidently proceed. (See Wong Fillmore, 1985.)

Teacher confidence is supported in several ways, although a teachers' manual is not provided. Step-by-step instructions for implementing the three parts of any lesson are listed in a preface entitled “To the Teacher.” And worth noting for both native- and nonnative-speaking teachers are the clear, well-illustrated, and nontechnical explanations and the production clues demonstrating speech mechanisms. A list of activity types and preparatory steps further simplify the teacher's role.

Say It Clearly can be useful as a core textbook, as a supplement, or as a diagnostic tool because each lesson is a complete and self-contained unit. For example, by consulting the table of contents, the teacher may select a lesson by what the author terms sounds (e.g., /ts/ and /dz/), skills (e.g., rising intonation) or functions (e.g., predicting or narrating), as needed, and may emphasize the creative activities or the focused exercises to accommodate different learners. An answer key is an additional aid to both teachers and students.
Flexible and versatile, Say It Clearly is more than just a pronunciation textbook. It makes integrating pronunciation into L2 learning feasible and fun.

REFERENCE


MARY MARTIN
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Well Said is a welcome addition to the growing number of pronunciation texts designed for high intermediate- to advanced-level learners. Influenced by the work of Joan Morley and Judy Gilbert, this book offers many creative and learner-centered approaches to help students cross the bridge from pronunciation to communication.

This course is meant to be used as the main text of a pronunciation course, although many of the exercises on tape are suitable for individual use. The explanations of the material in both the student text and the teacher’s manual will allow teachers with and without extensive training in phonetics and phonology to use the course confidently and effectively.

The student text progresses logically from sounds, syllables, words, and sentences to rhythm, stress, and intonation. Indeed, more than half the text is devoted to suprasegmentals, reflecting the author’s view that these aspects of speech are more critical than segmental in the development of overall intelligibility.

Chapter 1 consists of creating a Student Pronunciation Profile. To this end, the teacher’s manual gives many useful and detailed suggestions about how to elicit a speech sample and compile a speech profile and, on the basis of this, to establish a needs assessment. An attractive feature here is the Pronunciation Proficiency Continuum, which enables students to set individual course goals which can be adjusted as the course unfolds. Chapter 2 shows how the dictionary can be a valuable pronunciation resource, with useful information on English dictionary usage and differences across dictionaries.

Chapter 3 focuses on spelling versus pronunciation problems, and Chapter 4 addresses syllables and grammatical endings. Here teachers and students are guided to the appendices, where they will find overviews of consonants and vowels and intensive practice of some of the more troublesome sounds. The overviews and practice activities are to be referred to as needed; this arrangement reflects the author’s view that segmental are handled most effectively through individualized practice.

Chapters 5 and 6 address word stress; Chapter 7 focuses on sentence...
rhythm; Chapters 8 and 9 address sentence focus and intonation; and Chapter 10 deals with phrasing, pausing, and blending.

Practice is spiraled and recycled throughout the text to assist in retention and reinforcement of material. In addition, the text balances the need for controlled practice with the need for “real-life” contexts. To this end, Chapters 3-10 follow a standard format that progresses from form-focused exercises to free communicative use. In the controlled practice, students listen to models and derive rules and regularities of pronunciation for themselves. The communicative exercises are stimulating and relevant to students’ experience. They call for authentic uses of language that students are likely to need, such as explaining a graph, solving a problem, or participating in a discussion. They include information-gap activities in which, for example, students elicit responses from each other to complete a résumé or a stockroom inventory. Further, they include increasingly challenging role plays and simulations which the students themselves are involved in creating.

The author provides suggestions for audio- and videotaping and encourages self-monitoring throughout. She is sensitive to different learning styles, involving students in self-monitoring through various modalities: auditory, kinesthetic, and visual.

The teacher’s manual is very helpful and user-friendly. It gives teachers an orientation to the text, explains the theory behind the exercises, offers suggestions for teaching the material, and gives transcripts for the tapes as well as answer keys to the exercises in Chapters 1-10.

The course is flexible; teachers are advised to progress in sequence through the course, but the teacher’s manual offers alternative sequences and suggestions for teachers who wish to emphasize or reemphasize particular material. Further, the course would be very useful in academic skills courses and international teaching assistant (ITA) training as there are activities to prepare students for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Test of Spoken English and the SPEAK (Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit) test.

In sum, Well Said admirably achieves the author’s goal of balancing communicative language teaching with organized presentation of the features of clear speaking. Stimulating, challenging, and systematic, this book should prove valuable and enjoyable for students and teachers alike.

BRETT SANDERS
Sonoma State University


Pronouncing American English: Sounds, Stress, and Intonation is a versatile textbook. According to the author, it is suitable for beginning-, intermediate-, and advanced-level students (although I judge that beginning-level
students would have difficulty using it due to the amount of reading required and the level of vocabulary necessary to interpret the material). The text can be used in the classroom with a teacher or with students working individually in a language laboratory. It can also be used as a self-study text for advanced-level students who wish to work independently. This versatility makes Pronouncing American English a very attractive textbook.

The text is divided into four parts. Part 1 presents a short overview of the sounds of English used in the U.S. Here special emphasis is put on problems with sound-spelling correspondence, and a modified International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is introduced. This is followed by a description of the speech organs and places of articulation.

Part 2 is divided into four sections: syllable stress, word stress, content and function words, and rising and falling intonation patterns. The author argues that by introducing patterns of stress and intonation in the beginning of the text, students will be aware of them throughout the remainder of the material covered and will naturally start to incorporate stress and intonation into their speech. Primary stress and rising and falling intonation patterns are clearly identified for the students. Many exercises also require students to mark stress and intonation patterns themselves. This emphasis on stress and intonation is in keeping with current views on pronunciation teaching and is presented so that students monitor themselves while working through the lesson.

Parts 3 and 4 contain units on vowels and consonants, respectively. Each unit initially offers the student a description and a diagram of how and where each sound is produced. Each unit puts special emphasis on contrasting the sound being discussed with similar sounds, offering minimal pairs to highlight the contrasts. These are accompanied by illustrations, to which students are invited to contribute. Other activities include paired practice, dialogues (which students can act out after having marked appropriate stress and intonation patterns), and home assignments that often draw on proverbs, tongue twisters, and short poems. Although home assignments tend to vary, the rest of the exercises are similar for each sound across the unit.

A separate answer key is available for instructors or for students who wish to work alone. This key provides answers to all of the lessons and home assignments but does not provide teachers with any additional support. For this reason, the text would be more attractive to teachers who already have some background in the principles of phonetics and phonology and a grounding in pronunciation teaching techniques. For example, there are no tips on why students might experience problems with certain sounds and how teachers might remedy these.

The text is fairly flexible to use. Teachers should be able to create their own routes through Parts 3 and 4, but the author recommends that Parts 1 and 2 be worked through before either instructors or students attempt to pick and choose from the others. A set of 16 audiotapes, each approximately 40-45 min in length, accompanies the text and would be very useful to those students who have limited access to native English speakers.

In summary, the text is well developed, clearly laid out, and presents...
pronunciation lessons which are challenging and informative. High inter-
mediate- and advanced-level students should be able to feel a sense of
security and support with this text and, along with the accompanying
series of tapes, be able to work through the lessons with a minimal amount
of instructor assistance. Teachers, however, may find that the uniformity
of the text makes this book more suitable as a reference for students who
would often be required to work alone, rather than as a book that is used
extensively in the classroom.

TERRY ROSE
Sonoma State University

Focus on Pronunciation: Principles and Practice for Effective
+ 228.

Focus on Pronunciation is a comprehensive pronunciation course aimed
at intermediate- to advanced-level learners. Consisting of a student text,
teacher’s guide, and a cassette package, it is designed to be used as either
a core text for a pronunciation class or a supplemental text for an inte-
grated skills class. Focus on Pronunciation is based on the belief that work
on stress, rhythm, and intonation should be tied to practice of specific
sounds. Emphasis is on the need to integrate all aspects of pronunciation
into clear, fluent speech, heighten the student’s self-awareness, and de-
velop self-monitoring techniques.

The student text is organized into eight parts. The first is divided into
four units, each giving an overview of the subsequent parts of the book,
which deal with sound segments, syllable stress, rhythm, and intonation.
Each of the following parts is divided into self-contained, well-focused
units, each addressing one element of pronunciation, such as a single
sound segment or pattern of intonation. The last part provides supple-
mental units for review or additional practice and includes a good list of
minimal pairs. At the end of each unit is a list of related units for review
and extension.

What makes Focus on Pronunciation different from other textbooks is
that, although it is structured in a traditional format for easy reference,
each unit is independent and keyed both by a specific element of pronunci-
ation and by topic for integration within a content-based curriculum. Once
the overview has been presented, units can be presented in any order,
allowing the teacher to easily tailor the text to the needs of the students,
even to the point of individualized assignments, as necessary.

Each unit introduces the pronunciation topic with a clear, concise de-
scription. Units on sound segments present a “focus word”—a frequently
used word which exemplifies the target sound and is used to heighten
awareness of the sound in question. These units also employ phonetic
symbols which are introduced in the overview unit, with charts comparing
the symbols employed by the author with several other standard symbols, including those found in major English dictionaries.

Interfactional activities cover a broad range of contexts and include highly structured practice as well as activities that give students opportunities to experiment and play with the language. The recorded homework assignments are described by the author in the teacher’s guide as one of the features of the text that students most appreciate. Students record the assignments on tape, and the teacher gives individual feedback, both on tape and in writing. Many assignments ask students to compare an aspect of their language or culture with that of the U. S., drawing attention to differences in a way that allows each student to teach the teacher about his/her native language and culture.

The teacher’s guide provides helpful information and suggestions for presentation of focus words and variations on the activities in each unit. There are detailed guidelines for the recorded homework activities, including error correction and diagnosis, and detailed suggestions (with examples) for providing individual feedback, a topic not often discussed in pronunciation texts. A section is devoted to designing a syllabus and includes a list of topics covered in reading passages and practice activities so that units can be selected by topic to integrate pronunciation practice with other areas of study or a content-based curriculum. Another nice feature is a section devoted to Source and Diagnosis of Problems, which includes a handy chart that lists problem sounds for learners of English and suggested approaches to correction with references to units for re-teaching and practice.

Because independent units each present one pronunciation element and are cross-referenced to related units and keyed to content areas, this textbook can be tailored to fit nearly any classroom and teaching style. Though I would hesitate to put the student text in front of students for whom the phonetic symbols and phonetic vocabulary might be intimidating, motivated academic learners will have no problem with it. The flexibility of the material; the clear, concise information on error diagnosis and correction; the variety of communicative practice activities; and the recorded homework assignments make Focus on Pronunciation a powerful instructional tool and a valuable teacher resource.

SHERRI L. AYERS
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**Accurate English: A Complete Course in Pronunciation.**

**Accurate English** is designed for intermediate-through advanced-level, educated adult nonnative speakers of North American English (NAE)
who desire a nativelike accent. Using the International Phonetic Alphabet, the text systematically covers vowels, stress and rhythm, consonants, and intonation. Review chapters follow each major section.

Accurate English is predicated on the belief that imitation of sounds alone is not sufficient for improving pronunciation. To encourage students' cognitive involvement, detailed descriptions of the principles operating in NAE are given and opportunities are provided for students to practice these and reflect on the characteristics of their own speech. Two introductory chapters describe the speech process and language variation and provide an in-depth self-analysis designed as a student pretest and diagnostic. Remaining chapters begin with prereading questions to activate students' schemata and generate discussion on various pronunciation aspects. The chapters on vowels and consonants include helpful To Do boxes which alert students to the articulatory configurations necessary to produce each isolated phoneme.

In each section, overview chapters are followed by optional advanced chapters. Both give descriptions and explanations of the pronunciation focus and contain reception and production activities. Welcome surprises include the discussion of vowel sounds and English orthography, the treatment of consonant clusters, and a chapter on -ed and -s endings.

A highlight of Accurate English is the thorough presentation of word stress, including vowel quality in unstressed syllables, reduced speech, stress placement, and disappearing syllables. The chapters on rhythm are similarly impressive for their use of poems, pictures, and other graphics to explain the stress-timed nature of English. The discussion of stress placement on content rather than function words and the reduction of the latter in spoken English should be especially useful for students. Various types of sandhi variation (all called linking) are also treated adequately and succinctly.

Dauer devotes a good deal of attention to explaining the multitude of sounds of NAE as they are actually articulated. Grounded in current theory yet simply written, the text continuously raises students' awareness of both what happens in spoken NAE and why such phenomena occur. Clearly, the belief is that such awareness will not only improve students' receptive ability but will also increase their fluency and accuracy.

Although so many lists, tables, and detailed explanations may be considered a strength of Accurate English, unless used by astute teachers and highly motivated students, these could also be seen as its major drawback. Other, more minor, criticisms involve the lack of dictation exercises and overview charts for the vowels and consonants. And, although there are guidelines for teachers, an index, and a glossary, there is no answer key. Finally, the similarity between the diagnostic passage and that in Prator and Robinett's (1985) Manual of American English Pronunciation is a little disconcerting.

Despite these drawbacks, Accurate English is an up-to-date, comprehensive pronunciation text which gives intermediate- and advanced-level students both awareness of and contextualized practice in spoken NAE.

Communicate: Strategies for International Teaching Assistants, written by three teachers from the University of Minnesota, is specifically designed for the instruction of international graduate students who plan to serve as teaching assistants at North American universities. Its goal is to provide international teaching assistants (ITAs) with training in efficient teaching skills, language skills, and cultural awareness of their values in the context of the North American university.

Communicate is divided into 10 units which center on tasks ITAs are likely to perform such as introducing oneself and the course syllabus, teaching a process, fielding questions, and leading discussions. The language skills section in each unit is broken down into the areas of pronunciation and grammar.

Believing that among ITAs there exist many common problems in spoken English related to stress, rhythm, and intonation, the authors aim their pronunciation instruction at the suprasegmental level. Generalizations and rules for determining primary and secondary stress in words and phrases together with valuable tips for separating longer sentences into thought groups to enable fluency are given. The section on sandhi variation introduces the phenomena of reduction, linking, and rhythm and provides practice exercises based on field-specific materials. A lengthy section featuring question-pattern intonation is a highlight of this book, considering that ITAs will be fielding and directing many questions. To address this need, several types of questions are listed in the text with markings for rising and falling intonation patterns. Tasks involve marking field-specific prewritten questions for sentence stress and intonation.

The later units address concerns that are less task related. Because the failure to produce word endings can lead to serious miscommunication, a brief review of voiced and voiceless consonants is given. Aural practice of minimal pairs is complemented by production activities involving oral reading of sentences designed to incorporate vocabulary common to most fields. The authors also present in a humorous way examples of common errors and ways to compensate for them, realizing that the goal of eradicating all pronunciation errors may never be attained. It is clearly stated that these useful techniques should not substitute for further pronunciation practice.
Given that Communicate is not exclusively designed to be a pronunciation textbook, the sections included appear to reflect years of experience in working with ITAs. Because mastering English pronunciation at the segmental level does not guarantee intelligibility, the emphasis on the suprasegmentals is reasonable for students at this level. The authors present realistic goals for the students through a nice balance of listening and speaking activities. Lastly, the value of using an authentic content base cannot be overemphasized because of its transferability to the ITAs’ actual classroom environment. This key feature makes for a highly valuable textbook.

JUDY MARASCO
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The use of computers for language instruction has tremendous possibilities, especially in the area of L2 phonological pedagogy. An ideal pronunciation program would be highly informative (describing place and manner of articulation and using phonological symbols), highly interactive (having the students’ performance dictate the next lesson and having the computer check for acquisition of the material), and highly captivating (including graphics and sounds to keep students interested in the instruction). The American Accent Program falls far short of these goals.

The program is structured for either self-paced instruction or a more structured 16-week course of study. Topics of the lessons, in order of presentation, include Tongue, Lip, and Jaw Position; Tongue Tension; Vowel Duration; Compound Vowels; Vowel Sounds; Stress, Pitch, Duration, and Intensity; Steps and Glides; Intonation Patterns; Place, Manner, and Voicing; Consonant Sounds; Vowel Production; Vowel Reductions; Word Reductions; and Sentence Level Intonation.

At first glance, the program looks promising. Students need only click a particular button to have the computer reproduce the synthesized speech sounds. The program is also quite fast, without much wait time between screens. However, it quickly becomes evident that this program and its notes were written in a haphazard manner with little attention to detail. Typographical errors mar the program, the disks, and the manual. There are also glaring omissions in pedagogy. Minimal pair activities, which are a proven standard method of introducing the student to language-specific sound contrasts (phonemes) are not a part of this program. Student interaction and feedback is also lacking. There are no tests for the students to check their recognition skills, and there is no way for them to know if they are actually producing the sounds correctly.

The American Accent Program gives a basic account of common spellings of consonants and vowels in English. It also makes use of a phonetic alphabet, though some of the symbols bear no relation to any commonly
used phonetic alphabet. On several occasions, one symbol is used to represent two different sounds. This obviously breaks convention with the typical one sound/one symbol correspondence of a phonetic alphabet and further detracts from the program.

In sum, those looking for computer software to aid in the pronunciation of English, especially one that is communicative in nature, will have to look elsewhere.

GABRIELA R. SOLOMON
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“Do it the way I do it on the tape,” advises David Stern in his 1-hour video, Breaking the Accent Barrier. Throughout, Stern conveys enough empathy to calm a nervous newcomer to English. The video itself consists of eight manageable lessons (three on intonation and five on musculature) in which viewers are given ample opportunity to practice with on-screen visual reinforcement.

Unfortunately, viewers will soon encounter frustration, for the video is full of inconsistencies. The first occurs in the introduction to the viewer. Here Stern stresses the role of suprasegmentals (especially intonation) in solving accent problems, dismissing the need for learners to focus on individual sounds. Although current literature on the teaching of pronunciation is in accord with this philosophy to some extent, it recognizes the importance of focused drilling in a speaker’s attainment of targetlike production. In fact, at the conclusion of the video, a three-cassette audio series focusing on the “correct pronunciations of difficult American English sounds” is promoted. This apparent inconsistency in philosophy is not further explained.

Another problem arises in the accompanying Drill Sheets, an inadequate attempt at providing practice beyond the video. The three-page booklet simply repeats the instructions and practice sentences which appear on screen. The claim made here, that this program is for all speakers of ESL, is belied by the program’s very basic nature. Certainly, students at any but the beginning levels would take exception to the oversimplified descriptions of English intonation. Further, in the muscle-training section, viewers are reminded to keep their lips “lazy and relaxed”; however, throughout the presentation, the author exaggerates his own enunciation with tensed lips.

The program’s most consequential problem lies in its central premise that “effective American speech jumps up and steps down.” This is explained as follows: Pitch “jumps up” on, an early important word inside each thought unit, then moves down incrementally at every syllable, with the most significant decrease in pitch occurring on the final word or idea. Stern asserts that this “is the pattern that gives listeners the impression
of American speech music.” In fact, such an oversimplification does not account for unfinished statements or yes/no questions. Furthermore, Stern ignores the role of intonation in reflecting the grammatical function of individual words or in conveying attitude or emotion. Given the basic inadequacy of Stern’s premise, it is hardly surprising that the intonation patterns depicted graphically often depart from the actual intonation being modeled.

Despite its best intentions, this video program is a superficial introduction to English prosody and vocal musculature. Had the basic “jump up, step down” pattern been depicted as a building block upon which other, more complicated, intonational patterns find their foundation, the materials would be more praiseworthy. As it stands, Breaking the Accent Barrier presents far too many shortcomings to be cataloged in the essential library of ESL resource materials.

DENISE C. BABEL
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Erratum

In Sarah Benesch’s commentary, “Critical Thinking: A Learning Process for Democracy,” which appeared in Volume 27, Number 3, the following sentence on page 546:

Short (1989), for example, refers to analysis as synthesis and clarification as cognitive, not critical, thinking skills.

should read:

Short (1989), for example, refers to analysis, synthesis, and clarification as cognitive, not critical, thinking skills.

We apologize for this error.
EDITORIAL POLICY

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

1. psychology and sociology of language learning and teaching; issues in research and research methodology
2. curriculum design and development; instructional methods, materials, and techniques
3. testing and evaluation
4. professional preparation
5. language planning
6. professional standards

Because the Quarterly is committed to publishing manuscripts that contribute to bridging theory and practice in our profession, it particularly welcomes submissions drawing on relevant research (e.g., in anthropology, applied and theoretical linguistics, communication, education, English education [including reading and writing theory], psycholinguistics, psychology, first and second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and sociology) and that address implications and applications of this research to issues in our profession. The Quarterly prefers that all submissions be written so that their content is accessible to a broad readership, including those individuals who may not have familiarity with the subject matter addressed.

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Sandra McKay
Department of English
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132
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H. Douglas Brown
American Language Institute
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

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The Forum. The TESOL Quarterly welcomes comments and reactions from readers regarding specific aspects or practices of our profession. Responses to published articles and reviews are also welcome; unfortunately, we are not able to publish responses to previous exchanges. Contributions
to The Forum should generally be no longer than five double-spaced pages. Submit two copies to the Editor of the TESOL Quarterly at the address given above.

Brief discussions of qualitative and quantitative Research Issues and of Teaching Issues are also published in The Forum. Although these contributions are typically solicited, readers may send topic suggestions and/or make known their availability as contributors by writing directly to the Editors of these subsections.

Research Issues:
Anne Lazaraton  
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Teaching Issues:
Bonny Norton Peirce  
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Special-Topic Issues. Typically, one issue per volume will be devoted to a special topic. Topics are approved by the Editorial Advisory Board of the Quarterly. Those wishing to suggest topics and/or make known their availability as guest editors should contact the Editor of the TESOL Quarterly. Issues will generally contain both invited articles designed to survey and illuminate central themes as well as articles solicited through a call for papers.

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2. All submissions to the TESOL Quarterly should be accompanied by a cover letter which includes a full mailing address and both a daytime and an evening telephone number. Where available, include an electronic mail address and fax number.

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

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