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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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FEEDBACK IS ONE WORD, Hatty Iwatsuki and  
Stevens ..... 1

NOTIONAL SYLLABUSES, James R. Nattinge/L. 15

MARKOV AND NOTIONAL SYLLABI, Joe. E.  
*P epe.* ..... a . e ..... 22

DESIGNING LEARNING PACKETS FOR ESL STU-  
DENTS, Kathleen LaPiana ..... 31

*13/Lie6 Communication4*

TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING SPEECH IN ESL,  
Metitt W. Staida JA. .... 43

Editorial Comment..... 59

FEEDBACK IS ONE WORD

Harry Iwatsuki and Lillian Stevens

My great faith in the amazing advances made in the electronics industry since the 1960's , coupled with an interest in second language teaching, led me to explore the application of audio spectrum analysis in second language teaching. I had hoped to find studies on visual feedback systems which were designed to shape either the pronunciation of phonemes or prosodic features, such as intonation, rhythm and stress. But the following passage sums up what had happened before the 1970's.

"Verification of the student's sound production is another problem. For most effective results, the student should be informed from an independent source whether his imitation was acceptable or not. However, such an instrument does not exist yet. (Ornstein, Ewton and Muller, 1971, p. 119)

Muller's expressed optimism about feedback from an independent source is justified by a study done at the University of Tokyo in 1970 in which a native English speaker monitored the pronunciation and general performance of subjects continuously and decided the rate of presentation and sequence of new materials for each subject. This type of instruction was found to be more successful than traditional approaches to group second language teaching.

In another report from 1970, "Mechanical Recognition of Speech: Prospect for Use in the Teaching of Language," Garvey, Johanse and Noblift pointed out that any type of reaction to the subjects' speech is superior to no reaction at all. The essential feature of their French Self-Instruction Machine was a voice activated switch that advanced the frame of the programmed material. Although the machine lacked the capacity to judge the accuracy of subject's response, they found it to be an improvement on the language lab which they felt failed because of its inability to engage spoken behavior and detect mispronunciations.

The appropriateness of some type of automated instruction system is pointed to from several other directions. Discrimination training studies support the notion that visual discrimination would be an effective method for language training. Furthermore, studies have cited scientific evidence that the visual process is faster than the hearing process in learning and have projected its use in language instruction (LLBA, No 03236 and No 03252)

In his section of PROGRAMMED INSTRUC-

TION AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY, Ewton summarizes the literature on the conditioning for sound production with discrimination training. One of the highlights was a study in acoustic perception (Hebb, 1949) which lends support to the theory that discrimination and articulation are intimately related and suggests discrimination training has a direct effect on pronunciation. Another interesting study (Hemming, 1966) showed that a group of subjects with discrimination training but no pronunciation practice spoke French with greater accuracy than the group with no discrimination training but extensive pronunciation practice. Ewton concludes that those with discrimination training do better with the following: less deviation from phonemes, are able to repeat utterances with greater ease, are more fluent and able to read faster, liaisons and intonation features, particularly stress and rhythm features, sounded more French (target language of the studies summarized). So it would seem that one of the most repetitive and instructor intensive portions of language instruction proves to be among the most essential.

The project at the University of Tokyo cited earlier shows the essential element lacking in the traditional language lab: but using a native speaker is not the most practical or effective strategy for giving the lab a brain. An audio spectrum analysis system would clearly be superior to a native speaker for the same reason that it is easier to scratch an itch yourself than to direct someone else to do it for you, i. e., a direct form of feedback. The usefulness of some

type of audio spectrum analyzer is obvious however, only a few prototype systems have been built to date, judging from the small number of studies documenting their performance published in the last 20 years.

In general, computer assisted instruction (CAI) has avoided incorporating any type of audio analysis into its systems. An exception to this is the Plato (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operation) system developed at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Foreign language teaching on Plato includes Chinese, ESL, Esperanto, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Russian, Spanish, and Swahili. The system consists of several hundred terminals linked to a CDC Cyber 73 computer. The terminal, with inherent memory, has a display screen with an attached keyboard.

In a pronunciation lesson the student must not only imitate the utterances, but is required to successfully distinguish them in quizzes placed throughout the lesson. If the student fails to make a distinction in a quiz, he would be directed to an appropriate section. While the student is listening to a tone (the target language focused on in the article is Chinese) he is also seeing on the screen a drawing of the contour of the tone synchronous with the voice. The 1974 article goes on to say that they are currently involved in designing a visual feedback program. The student would speak into a microphone attached to a pitch extracting device which is hooked to the Plato terminal. Plato converts the human voice frequency into graphic-display

on the screen. The student can then adjust his pitch height and contour based on a visual comparison with the simultaneously presented model. The model will be varied for each individual, taking into account the relative nature of tone and the fundamental frequency, which determines the pitch of an individual's voice. Plato will be able to recognize and evaluate the student's spoken response. This program is projected to eventually include teaching intonation. Chen and Cheng assess their program positively, although they acknowledge that it is supplementary and in a developmental stage.

James Eric's system uses a 2 track storage oscilloscope, band pass filters, and computer analysis to present a model intonation on the upper half of an oscilloscope screen while showing, on the lower portion, the subject's attempts to match the model. "Perhaps the most effective way to teach intonation." (LLBA) In a study involving 30 subjects, Eric's speech visualizer was compared to more traditional methods of teaching intonation, accent and rhythm. It was shown to be superior to the other methods. The visualizer also corrects articulatory features such as the lack of vocal linking and insufficient voicing of certain consonants.

Buiten and Lane, working at the center for Research on Language and Language Behavior at the University of Michigan, used a computer to condition a mastery of prosodic patterns. In the 1965 experiment SAID (Speech Auto-Instrumental Device) presented a programmed sequence of sentences for imitation. After each sentence, the student was instructed to imitate

what he heard. SAID evaluated on the basis of pitch, loudness and tempo the acceptability of the imitation and immediately displays the degree of acceptability of the student's response, while concurrently demonstrating to the student how he must modify his next imitation to make it more acceptable. Only after the imitation meets all criteria of acceptability did the sentence sequence advance®

James P. Lantolf makes use of pitch contours derived from a spectrograph as well as an amplitude curve displayed synchronically with the pitch contour. He uses examples of model pitch/ amplitude contours and tape recordings of native speakers to explain differences detected between model and class responses. After a 15-20 minute practice session, each student submits a recording of his own pronunciations for evaluation by a native speaker. Based on this evaluation the student either goes on to the next lesson or retr'ains. Lantolf supports this method, claiming success for his own classes in Spanish phonology and advanced conversation. He insists that the virtues of his system compared to that of Eric's or Lang's are economy and practicality for group teaching.

After a fairly extensive search of the recent literature, so little information was revealed I began to wonder how such gross lack of interest could be accounted for. At first the possibility that research has been attempted and failed miserably and therefore never published occurred to me.

The reports and information I have summarized that utilize some type of spectrum analysis

feedback do not help refute this claim; success is never defined in specific qualitative or quantitative terms. However, there is support for another conjecture; as the machinery gets better, applications once untenable can be successfully managed.

Acoustic spectrum analysis has been used in a variety of research applications with success. Phonetic analysis is one such application as demonstrated by the Institut de Phonetique de Grenoble study of the French /y/. Another example; its use in deriving average tone curves for phonemes in specific environments demonstrates the descriptive inaccuracy of currently accepted phonetic transcriptions of the domain of tone in Mandarin.

I think that it is significant to note the time relationship between the applications of spectrum analysis and the refinements and expanded power of each successive generation of analyzers. The recent systems use sophisticated equipment which gives them the ability to respond in a faster and, therefore, more meaningful way. Phonetic studies do not demand real time analysis like a teaching situation does. A short while ago hardware with a capacity to deliver a rapid response was non-existent. In 1969 Barr utia writes. "The storage oscilloscopes such as the Hughs Memo-Scope are a breakthrough with regard to limited 'seeing' and 'hearing' ability of present machines." (p. 100) The extraordinarily expensive bandpass filters of the 1950's is now an inexpensive chip circuit. The desk top computer was an economic (and physical) impossibility until a few years ago®

The focus of computer assisted spectrum analysis has never been on language teaching. Since the original Bell Labs visible speech project, whose motivation was the selling of deaf phones, the direction of research which employs and develops speech spectrum analysis has been toward the production of synthetic speech.

Sonographs have gone through a metamorphosis. The LLBA mentions a 1976 working document presenting a method for producing discrete binary sonograms from digital versions of the original analog sonogram. This report outlines a simplified matrix calculator which allows for real time representations on an image screen. There are spectrographic devices that will show only the 1st and 2nd formants; all other information can be filtered. The Parametrically Controlled Analyzer (PCA) features several analytical methods including discrete Fourier and linear predictive coding. PCA develops high quality images for standard line printers or CRT displays.

The abstract of a German study (LLBA: 7702255) indicates the trend away from electronic filtering toward that of a mathematical nature. Two-dimensional Fourier coefficients, "room frequencies," were used as a means for a computer to recognize the same words when spoken by different people. Relative independence of the of speech, the fundamental frequency and precise location of formant frequencies allows this approach a distinct advantage over the less flexible electronic filter method.

An interesting point was noted in a Haskins Lab project (Sta. Report: Dec. '74) where they studied people matching spectrograms in hopes of discovering strategies that a computer could employ to recognize matches. It seems that accuracy in matching segments of recorded speech was greatly improved when the subject could see the tentatively identified segment placed in the phrase representation and compared side by side with the known phrase. This is the kind of Gestalt recognition that a teaching machine would use to feed back information on performance. In another approach to computer identification of spectrograms by Haskins Lab., a digital pattern playback system was employed that would work well as a pronunciation tutor. This system stores speech spectrograms in a computer core memory for immediate CRT display in conventional grey-scale. Because it allows visual comparison between two stored spectrograms as well as real time representations, one can see a model alongside one's own performance, present and past, noting progress or trouble in the same or different areas. The study concluded that only some of the information in spectrograms is important to the ear in identifying phonetic content. These acoustic cues can be synthesized, leaving out the remainder.

So it is possible, with the existing technology, to replace the native speaking judge with a machine, but cost is prohibitive for a learning institution and the interests of those with the equipment is not in language teaching.

Today, it is actually the affordability of the

technology that limits its use. Plato is an indication of the willingness of some learning institutions to spend large sums on CAI programs research. The fundamental problem is the lack of a cost effective audio spectrum evaluation function.

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## NOTIONAL SYLLABUSES

James R. Nattinger

This business we are in can be as trendy as the fashion industry. A bright idea comes along and, zip!, it finds its way into all convention programs and current textbooks. The problem is not that the idea spreads so fast, of course, for effective teaching ideas are welcome anywhere and anytime. Rather, the problem is that in order to find its way into all these new contexts so quickly the idea thins and generalizes to the point that it means all things to all people. Take "communicative competence." What was once a useful term for sociolinguistics for describing an aspect of language behavior has now become a term meaning practically anything to do with the ability to use language.

The trendiest phrase these days is "notional syllabus" and, from the number of books and talks mentioning it, it gives every indication of going the way of communicative competence. That is too bad, for like the latter, its origins are respectably lodged in useful linguistic re-

search. I would suggest how such a definition, if rigorously followed, would lend a different and useful perspective to the problem of language teaching.

First, let "notional syllabus" concern language process, not product. That is, let it concern not the text itself, but the perception of it. Let it concentrate on the learning strategies of students in order to help them intervene in the natural process of second language acquisition rather than concentrate on an inventory of linguistic items that these students must learn.

The more familiar syllabus does much the opposite, for it presents a number of linguistic items from the structural categories of a particular linguistic theory, and specific items are selected and presented according to some measure of complexity in their theoretical descriptions. Language system is the object of analysis and not language use in these syllabuses; here it is the product and not the process that is important.

A notional approach would investigate how items are learned and what the strategies are that students use to learn them. Some of these strategies beginning to be explored, as Ruth Crymes suggests in the August 1980 TESOL Newsletter, are: being a good guesser, having a strong drive to communicate, being uninhibited, practicing, monitoring one's own speech and that of others, and attending to meaning and to form. There are plenty of others surely. One undeniable fact is that the best language learners are those who learn to make sense of language fastest, those who, in other words, learn

to interpret.

A notional syllabus would thus concern interpretation, which is the basic problem solving we do with language because it involves the kind of guessing we do and inferences we draw when we try to make sense of language. Material for the syllabus would be selected, graded, and presented to enhance this ability. Doing this, of course, would force us wide of most current structurally-based linguistic theory, for it is the contexts outside of the linguistic system that give meaning and that make interpretation of that system possible. There is little sense to be gotten from the structural facts alone.

Thus the aim of a notional syllabus is to develop students' strategies for interpreting language, and material is arranged to accomplish this best. So far, so good - but now comes a problem. A syllabus may indeed emphasize process over structural units, but it nevertheless has to be written with some sort of items; and just what kinds would find their way onto a syllabus like this? If we reject items from linguistic theory as being too static, just what kinds do we allow? This is perhaps the most crucial question for developing notional syllabuses and the one that ought to generate the most research in the next few years. "Linguistic items" on a notional syllabus will certainly be very special. It will not be, as many have it now, a semanticized version of what has gone before; that is, it will not be those structural items like IC's, or T-Rules or syntactic categories like NP's, VP's, nor even more semantic ones like cases, registers, or speech acts, since these are iso-

lative categories various theories use to describe systems. Neither, I think will they be the broadly semantic categories like Wilkins proposes, such things as "Time Relations, " "Space, " "Quantity, " since these as well classify language systems® ( Wilkins, 1976) ® Items for a notional syllabus will have much more to do with processes than with structures® They will be cognitive groups but not necessarily those we recognize now as linguistic groups, and all will have to do with ways we perform language, how we make sense of it. A good bet is that they will be units that cognitive science is finding useful like frames, scenarios, prototypes, and oral formulas.

It is better to demonstrate by example® Let me talk about two language skills in notional terms, reading and speaking, and mention sources in the literature from which one could draw to construct such a notional syllabus®

One important aspect of learning to read is developing the ability to predict what is going to happen next. This guessing may perhaps be the primary strategy we use to make sense out of what we read, Henry Widdowson offers a notionally-based program for reading which has the student progressing from simple to complex prose by "gradual approximation. " ( Widdowson, 1978) ® The teacher interposes each passage with numerous points called "interpretive checks, " which are essentially questions that direct the students to consider the meaning and organization of what they have been reading and get them to consider what is going to happen next.

Constance Weaver offers a different and perhaps more practical technique in her Psycholinguistics and reading (Weaver, 1980). Whenever students find stop signs drawn at various points in the narratives they read for her class, they must stop and consider - quite often out loud - what is going to happen next. In this way the students learn about other strategies for predicting as well as recognizing the ones they use themselves. Stories with an element of suspense or mystery are especially good for predicting, Weaver suggests, and so are folktales, because they often can be used with students of various ages and language groups. For these reasons a modified cloze and a Grimm's fairy tale maybe a very happy combination for an ESL reading class. To fill the blanks, students would select words that make sense with what went before as well as with what they think will come later; they then defend or reject these choices as the story progresses:

Once upon a time a little \_\_\_\_\_  
 who was leading \_\_\_\_\_ to the mar-  
 ket. The day was \_\_\_\_\_ so he de-  
 cided to \_\_\_\_\_ for a while under the  
 shade of a \_\_\_\_\_ tree® While he was  
 \_\_\_\_\_ there appeared an \_\_\_\_\_ who

Here we need to know a great deal about the clues that allow prediction. Such research would turn out to be a special kind of discourse analysis and would be much more important to teachers than current linguistic models of dis-

course. Some of these clues would undoubtedly be rhythm, rhyme in poetry, familiar cultural sequences (numbers, days of the week), certain repetitive sequences, and, probably the most important, kinds of parallelism. Tests of reading ability would also be directed toward the strategies students use instead of toward the structural facts they have amassed. One way of discovering these would be with miscue analysis of the students' reading such as Weaver, Goldman, and others propose. (Goodman, 1973; Goodman and Burke, 1972). Weaver's procedures for this seem particularly clear.

For teaching speaking let me give an idea of a possible item on this notional syllabus. Remember, we are not looking for structural units so much as for the units in which language is performed. One possibility is the lexical phrase which operates as a kind of oral formula. Bolinger mentions an "incredibly, large number of prefabs... which contribute to the predictability of language." (Bolinger, 1976). Not only do these prefabs make the language predictable, they also maybe the units we use to encode and decode that speech in actual performance. There is good reason to think that these are more realistic in describing actual speech habits in that sense than more conventional units to include in our syllabuses. For good, la pure coincidence, as far as I know, if I had.... then I would, I'm very glad to meet you are all different kinds of set patterns that we use to chunk speech together and understand it. The number and nature of these patterns are far from de-

termined but they are certain to be extensive and various. (Nattinger, 1980; Yorio, 1980)

In sum, a notional syllabus aims to enhance the strategies with which students make sense of a language by presenting problem-solving exercises based on various cognitive units.

## MARKOV AND NOTIONAL SYLLABI

Joe E. Pierce

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As the Editor of the Journal, I am going to take advantage of my position to add something to Dr. Nattinger's paper which concerns the nature of learning strategies. One of the very important points referred to by Dr. Nattinger concerns idiomatic sequences, such as, for good, 12y pure coincidence, etc. My point here is not to disagree, but sequences of this type force us to deal with a much more all-pervasive and significant facet of linguistic structures, which to my knowledge has never really been dealt with by language teachers.

Linguistic theoreticians deal with the Markov Process on a regular basis, but rarely do any of these ideas get translated into either language teaching methodology or the preparation of language teaching texts. Markov was a Russian mathematician in the 19th century who developed a theory of sequential probability. What this means in terms of language teaching or research is that once a listener identifies a given word, sound or morpheme, the probability of some

things coming after that are zero (they cannot occur), 100% (they must occur) or somewhere in between, and that these probabilities are a very important part in identifying incoming signals in normal speech. For example, on the phonological level, if one identifies the sound /p/, he knows absolutely that the next sound in a word will not be a voiced stop or fricative, at least not in English at the beginning of a word. This means that in searching for the next sound in the brain's storage compartment, one does not need to waste time comparing those incoming signals with the patterns for those consonants. Other consonants, such as, /l/ are very common following a /p/. Further, on the word level of linguistic structure, once one has heard or identified the word "is," the probability that the next word will be "is" is negligible in normal conversation, though it will occasionally occur, as in this sentence. On the other hand, there is a very high probability that the following word will be a gerund (i. e., a verb-noun with -inE affixed to it, not the traditional meaningless definition of a gerund). Once a sequence of two words has been identified by the listener, often there are only two or three possibilities for the third word, and so on. This is a very important and basic part of the predictability factor, in addition, of course, to the cues in the social situation, i. e., those things which one can see, hear or feel around him while he is talking.

Dr. Nattinger has covered the extra-linguistic items which make the predictability which we see in the cloze procedure very well, and

this is important. However, the redundancy in the structure of the language is, in my opinion, equally, if not even more important in developing an ability to speak and understand a new language.

If you have ever studied a language in a high school or college and then visited a country in which the language was spoken, you have experienced the feeling that everyone talks very fast in that new language. The funny thing is that after you have been there for six to eight months, they appear to slow down. Actually, they do not slow down, of course. What happens is that you develop a consciousness, by hearing the language and using it every day, of the statistical probabilities, for the linguistic units in that language, and this gives your computer-like brain a better program for searching when it attempts to identify the incoming signal. As your brain programs itself, perhaps while you sleep at night, to search in a more and more efficient manner, the speakers of the second language appear to slow down, because the brain is going first to the elements which are most likely to occur next. If it always looks first at the thing that is most likely to occur, then second at the second most likely, and so on down the list as it identifies each word or morpheme, naturally it speeds up the identification process enormously. The problem here is one of developing a strategy for developing this type of search pattern in the classroom. No language classes that I know of have actually attempted to do this, but this is an extremely important part of language learn-

ing. What usually happens when we learn a new language is that our brain continues to search using the patterns that it has learned for our native language, and this can be enormously inefficient and slow.

What has all of this to do with the concept of a "notional syllabus" and "learning strategies?" On page 20 in his article, Dr. Nattinger mentions "oral formula," by which he means such things as, for good, by coincidence, etc. What these do in a communication situation, because of their high frequency of usage, is to make the probability of the one following the other very high. This logically implies, then, that this is a part of the larger problem discussed above, e., the Markof Process.

There have been some studies into possible and impossible sequencing of linguistic elements (cf. Zellig S. Harris, 1952, 57 and 65 for related information). Harris and other linguists have been criticized for emphasizing this part of linguistic structures because it is too mechanical, and most people related to the humanities refuse to accept the fact that much of what human beings do is purely mechanical and routine, requiring little or no actual thinking. However, while some people may overemphasize the importance of this process in communication, it is my contention that it is an extremely important part of hearing, identifying and interpreting the incoming signal when one is listening to a speaker in a conversation. This fact has been verified by many studies made at the Haskins laboratories and the Bell Telephone laboratories, using devices wherein large chunks of tele-

phone conversations were filtered out and still the listener received 100% of the information content put out by the speaker. This is also verified when, in a conversation, we hear only a fraction of an utterance, e.g., as in /skwap/ for "let us go up." If you ask a second person what the first person said, he will give you the second form, i.e., "let's go up." He will never repeat /skwapi/, because it is very clear, by the fact that you asked a question, that there is not enough information in the stream of noise. There is redundancy here on a variety of levels, none of which is ever taught to our second language students. To begin with, phonological rules for sequencing consonants tells us a great deal about the nature of the incoming signal. Second, rules for sequencing morphemes tells us a great deal, in statistical terms, not in absolute terms, about the meaning of the incoming signal. By this I mean that while one can almost always find some example in which a given morpheme might follow another one, your brain operates on the basis of which one is very probable and which is relatively improbable. Once we go above this, there are word sequences which are extremely probable and others which are extremely improbable. It is these word sequences that Dr. Nattinger was interested in. All of this is utilized by the brain as it searches through all of the hundreds of thousands of miles of storage capacity inside the brain, trying to find a symbol there that matches the one that comes into the ear. The nerve fibers in the brain are over 500,000 miles in length, if they could be stretched out, so one has to have an

efficient search pattern in order to identify the incoming signal at the rate we normally speak. If our brain continues to search utilizing the sequential pattern of our native language, the speakers will always have to slow down so that we can understand. Usually, a person, if he is allowed to hear the language in its natural form, reprograms himself so that he has an efficient search pattern. One of the major problems with the structuralists' presentation of teaching materials is that they distort this Markov Pattern, and this causes the students endless problems.

How do we incorporate such data into a language teaching program? That is a very good question, and one that no one has answered to date. First, however, we have to be aware that it is a problem and that it needs to be presented to the students in some organized manner so that they can learn these sequential probabilities. Highly ordered structural drills do this, if they are selected on the basis of statistical probability in normal speech. The problem is that in most ESL programs, little attention is paid to statistical frequencies of the linguistic elements taught, nor, indeed, to the frequencies of grammatical patterns taught, except perhaps on a very intuitive basis. Since languages are not the perfectly logical systems many people believe them to be, it is absolutely NOT necessary that we learn the "whole" language. In fact, it is not likely that any second language learner ever learns the "whole" language, whatever that is. He learns enough of the new language to function in the situations that he expects to find himself. This being the case, it is imperative

that we do two things in our classrooms: 1) we must find those structural elements that the student will need wherever he is or wherever he expects to go, i. e., if he is in France and expects to go to Singapore; his needs will be very different from the situation in which he is in Germany and expects to go to Chicago; 2) we need also to present materials in such a way as to cause the students to build up in their minds the statistical tables necessary for them to utilize the language effectively.

What advantages are there in the structuralists presentation of language materials, and what are the disadvantages to such a presentation? First, if one does not present the grammar in a systematic way, he is losing one of the basic advantages that language systems have. If we have to learn each utterance as a child in his early years, then abstract the system for ourselves, the process is -very slow and inefficient. On the other hand, if we teach grammar through pattern practice or structural drills, a student can learn very quickly to create literally thousands of sentences he has never heard in his life. The disadvantages can really be reduced to the statement that the structural approach presents an unrealistic view of the language. A simple example, if we teach the sentence type, "I am -ing." you are left with the feeling that all sentences of this type have an equal possibility of occurring. We know, of course, that this is not true. The remedy for this is to present the language through situations in which the frequencies of the word usage parallel the frequency with which those words

would be used in those situations.

The situational approach does help the student build up a Markof Probability Table somewhere in his mind, if the situations are, indeed, typical, and if the conversations are natural.

One of the problems with many of the materials that I have seen is that they are not natural, e., they seem artificial and unreal. Some of the situations, while real enough, are situations that one would rarely, if ever, find himself in. Naturally, these situations do not help the student build up the Markof Probability Table that he needs. In fact, if the brain functions normally, such materials will yield a very inefficient search pattern.

We can see from the two paragraphs above that both the structural approach and the situational approach have advantages and disadvantages. We should be much better off in the classroom if we could somehow combine the advantages of both and eliminate or reduce the disadvantages or both. One way of doing this would be to be absolutely sure that the situations that we choose are typical of the situations that the student is actually going to encounter. Then be absolutely certain that the conversation is typical of conversations in that situation. However, it is also necessary that we present a good deal of the grammar as grammar, because if we do not, we are really wasting our time as well as that of the students, because language is systematic, and systems are relatively easy to teach when presented systematically.

Now, about what structure should we teach? The grammar presented in traditional grammar

books is not only useless in a second language class, it is actually detrimental, as I have said before in my earlier publications (cf. Joe E. Pierce, *HOW ENGLISH REALLY WORKS*, 1979 for further details on this) ® What we need then is a new type of textbook which incorporates appropriately selected situations combined with structurally presented materials which reflect a totally different type of grammatical analysis as well as the statistics of special kinds of sequencing. This latter point brings us back to Dr. Nattinger's article and his major point.

The purpose of this new type of text would be to assist the student in building up in his mind the statistical tables which are absolutely necessary for language systems to work in normal conversations, as well as, present a picture of the grammar which reflects the way the language actually works® This, it seems to me, is what is most needed in the present ESL situation®

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## DESIGNING LEARNING PACKETS FOR ESL STUDENTS

Kathleen LaPiana

### Introduction

Instructional technology applies the method of scientific inquiry to instructional planning. Each step in the instructional process is analyzed systematically in its relationship to the whole® It is a method that focuses on the learner, and on learning outcomes® Gagne (1979), p. 23 has suggested that there exist three stages in the design of instructional systems. At the System level, one begins by analyzing needs, goals and priorities. For the ESL teacher, this translates into, "What do students need to learn in order to function effectively in English at a university, in industry, or in whatever field they intend to pursue?" One must then consider resources for instruction that one has available - teacher-learner, computer-assisted instruction, individualized learning centers, or others. Finally, a determination of the scope and sequence of curriculum and courses must be made® At the Course level, one determines course structure and sequence and analyzes course objectives. At the English Language Institute at Oregon State University,

entrance criteria were compiled for each course in each of five levels to which students are assigned. It was felt that this would aid the teacher in planning curriculum and sequencing of material for each course, and would aid the student by informing him clearly of what he was expected to master in each course in order to proceed to the next level. At the Lesson level, individual teachers define performance objectives, prepare lesson plans, develop and select media, and assess student performance for each of the steps required to achieve each course objective.

#### The Function of the Learning Packet

A problem that ESL teachers commonly encounter is finding students assigned to their classes on the basis of a score received on a placement test of overall language proficiency, but who lack specific skills necessary for mastery of all of the course objectives. The remediation of individual skill weaknesses is often impossible in classes with large numbers of students. One solution to this problem is the development of individualized learning centers in which students can work on learning packets specifically designed to remediate particular skill weaknesses.

Learning must be accomplished by an individual for himself, and there is evidence which suggests that this is best accomplished when the student works at his own pace, is actively involved in the learning task, and experiences

success. The main variable is time; self paced instruction allows most students - low, middle and high achievers - to attain many of the same competencies.

#### The Design of the Learning Packet

The design plan answers three questions: 1) "What must be learned?" 2) "What procedures and resources will work best?" 3) "How will we know when learning has taken place?" The eight sections of the design plan which follow have been adapted from Kemp (1971), p.

One may begin by considering the goals or objectives of individual courses. How can these generally stated goals be subdivided into topics? Topics should be sequenced from simple to complex levels, and should be ordered so as to build on skills already developed. For example, one entrance criterion for the English Language Institute's Level 3 Structure/ Writing class is ability to recognize, understand, and correctly employ simple and information questions. One might sequence the packet according to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive domain, with the ability to repeat (Knowledge Level) preceding the ability to recognize (Comprehension Level), which in turn precedes the ability to employ (Application Level).

The second step involves the enumeration of the important characteristics of the learners for whom the instruction is intended. These might include such variables as the level of the student, his language background, his cognitive style, his motivational characteristics (integra-

tive vs instrumental, cf. Gardner, 1979)®

Next, the learning outcome of the instruction must be specified in such a manner that it will be clear to the student 'upon completion of the lesson whether or not he has mastered the content of the lesson® Objectives might be focused on particular levels of Bloom's taxonomy, which may be found in Appendix A. According to a survey of research on the effects of objectives on learning by Duchastel and Merrill (1973), specification of objectives seems to fulfill several functions® Presenting objectives to students provides direction to their learning and aids them in discriminating between relevant information® (Rothkopf, 1972), In addition, objectives can provide organization to the subject matter, and thus facilitate students' integration of diverse units of information by providing a general structure to content® Ausubel (1968) has theorized that meaningful learning occurs only when new information is integrated into an already existing cognitive structure (p. 41), and that this process can be facilitated by presentation of advance organizers before presentation of content (p, 171). There is speculation that objectives may also serve a management function by enabling students to organize their time and learning experiences in accordance with the goals of the course by providing the learner with feedback as to his fulfillment of learning tasks.

Step four involves the selection and organization of specific knowledge (facts and information), skills and possible attitudinal factors of a specific topic®

Next, a pre-test is designed. The pre-test can serve two functions: it can be used to determine if the student has the prerequisite skills which may be necessary to proceed with the topic, and it can also be used to determine if the student already possesses the skills to be taught in the packet® In the latter case, the pre- and post-tests can be identical.

In step six the teaching /learning activities are selected so as to permit the student to achieve the objectives specified® selection involves consideration to several variables: learner characteristics, effectiveness data, goals of instruction, and cost® According to Kemp (1975), studies have indicated that active participation of the learner, either during or immediately after instruction, contributes to learning® Thus provision for student response in the form of work sheets, taped replies, etc. should be made regardless of media selected® Because of differences in cognitive style among students, a variety of activities is useful to accommodate those who learn best through oral, visual, or written means® Kemp (1975), p. 46, has summarized characteristics of various media, and Dale (1969), p. 107 in his "cone of experience" has grouped media according to the developmental stage of the learner®

Step seven involves the writing of the post-test, which is based specifically upon the objectives delineated for the packet. The student may take the post-test whenever he feels competent to do so, and may work through the learning packet as many times as he believes necessary in order to achieve success® At the Eng-

lish Language Institute, an assistant is present at the learning center to answer student questions and to present and correct the post-test when requested by the student. No record is kept of the attempts made to pass a test, although a limit of attempts within a certain time period may be imposed and alternate forms of the test should be available. Thus the learning atmosphere is as anxiety-free as possible®

A final part of the design process is the evaluation of the packet itself® Was it successful? Did the students learn at acceptable levels in terms of the stated objectives? How long did the learning experience take? What were the students' reactions to the packet? What revisions seem necessary?

At the English Language Institute, packets were designed during the course of a staff seminar. Teachers were encouraged to select topics in their area of interest and expertise. Packets prepared include those discussing relative pronouns, modals, dictionary use, handwriting improvements, past tense of irregular verbs, and questions. Students appear to be availing themselves of the packets in the individualized learning center® A sample packet discussing the past tense of irregular verbs appears in Appendix B.

Learning packets seem to provide one solution of the problem of individualizing instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners® Because of the time and effort involved in the preparation of high quality materials, I would like to suggest the establishment of a clearing-house for learning packets in ESL and I encourage any-

one interested in this possibility to contact me at the English Language Institute, Corvallis, Oregon, 97331

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APPENCIX B

Learning Packet on the Past Tense of Irregular Verbs

Topic: the past tense of irregular verbs.

Intended Students: intermediate and upper levels®

Estimated working time: one hour.

Purpose: to help students memorize the past tense of irregular verbs.

Objectives: at the end of this exercise the student will be able to write the past tense of twenty irregular verbs with 80% accuracy.

Directions: listen to the cassette tape two timesm The first time just repeat after the speaker. The second time fill in the worksheet as you listen. Then, if you think you are ready, take the quiz® If you need more practice, listen to the tape again until you are able to get a G score of 80% on the quiz,

Worksheet on Irregular Verbs

Directions: fill in the past tense forms of these verbs as you hear them on the tape.

Group I: verbs with the same form in the present and in the past®

bet	_____	quit	_____
bid	_____	set	_____
cost	_____	shed	_____
cut	_____	slit	_____
hit	_____	split	_____
hurt	_____	spread	_____
let	_____	wet	_____
put	_____		

Group II: verbs that change the final consonant to a -t in the past.

bend	_____	build	_____
lend	_____	send	_____
spend	_____		

Group III: verbs that change vowel and consonant in the past.

bring	_____	buy	_____
catch	_____	fight	_____
teach	_____	think	_____

Group IV: verbs that change the sound of the vowel from lit to ie / in the past.

bleed	_____	flee	_____
-------	-------	------	-------

breed _____	keep _____
creep _____	kneel _____
deal _____	lead _____
dr earn _____	leave _____
feed _____	mean _____
feel _____	meet _____

Group V: verbs that change the vowel from  
to -u in the past tense.

cling _____	sting _____
dig _____	string _____
spin _____	swing _____
stick _____	wring _____

Group VI: verbs that change the vowel from - i  
to -ou- in the past tense.

bind _____	find _____
grind _____	wind _____

Group VII: verbs that change the vowel in the  
past.

come _____	sit _____
hang _____	slide _____
hear _____	stand _____
hold _____	strike _____
lose _____	tell _____
run _____	lay _____
say _____	Pay _____
sell _____	have _____
shine _____	make _____
shoot _____	

Answers to Worksheet on Irregular Verbs

fyoi221	<u>Group II</u>	<u>Group III</u>
bet	bent	brought
bid	built	bought
co st	lent	caught
cut	sent	taught
hit	spent	fought
hurt		thought
let		
put		
quit		
set		
shed		
slit		
split		
spread		
wet		
 Group IV	 Group V	 Group VI
bled	clung	bound
bred	dug	found
crept	spun	ground
dealt	stuck	wound
dreamt	stung	
fed	strung	
felt	swung	
fled	wrung	
kept		
knelt		
led		
left		
meant		
met		
read		
	 Continuation Group IV	
		slept
		swept
		wept

Directions: fill in the blank with the past tense of the verbs, then give your paper to the lab. assistant to be corrected.

- |     |             |                    |
|-----|-------------|--------------------|
| 10  | bring _____ |                    |
| 2.  | cost        |                    |
| 30  | build       | _____ Answers to   |
| 4.  | make        | _____ the Quiz on  |
| 5.  | find        | _____ the Past     |
| 6   | leave       | _____ Tense of Ir- |
| 70  | put         | _____ regular      |
| 8.  | dig         | _____ Verbs        |
| 9.  | pay         |                    |
| 100 | tell        | _____ 10 brought   |
| 11  | read        | 20 cost            |
| 12. | teach       | 3. built           |
| 13, | feel        | 4. made            |
| 14, | think       | _____ 5. found     |
| 150 | send        | _____ 6. left      |
| 16, | sting       | _____ 7. put       |
| 17. | stand       | _____ 8. dug       |
| 18. | run         | 9. paid            |
| 19. | spend       | 10. told           |
| 20  | hear        | 11. read           |
|     |             | 12. taught         |
|     |             | 130 felt           |
|     |             | 14. thought        |
|     |             | 15. sent           |
|     |             | 160 stung          |
|     |             | 17. stood          |
|     |             | 18. ran            |
|     |             | 19. spent          |
|     |             | 200 heard          |

BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING SPEECH IN ESL

Meritt W. Stark Jr.

Most current studies in psycho-linguistics begin with the assumption that children possess an innate language capacity which enables them to acquire in a relatively short period of time the syntactical complexities of the language system. Chomsky (1972) attempted to explain the nature of the internal predisposition that allows us to develop a knowledge of our language. The child learning his first language is exposed to linguistic data which enable him to prove or reject his hypotheses about the structure of that language. Chomsky suggests that the child constructs this ideal theory without explicit instruction. He acquires this knowledge at a time when he is not capable of complex intellectual achievements in many other domains and that this achievement is relatively independent of intelligence or the particular course of experience.

McNeil (1970) presents the case that early speech is not an abbreviated and distorted form of adult language but a product of a unique first grammar created by a language acquisition de-

vice® According to Wood (1978) children acquire the syntactic rules of grammar in six stages of development,

	STAGE	NATURE
1.	Sentenc elike Words	The word is combin- ed with nonverbal cues ( gestures and inflec- tions) .
2,	Modification	Modifiers a r e joined to topic words to form declarative, interro- gative, negative & im- perative structures.
3.	Structure	Both a subject and predicate are included in the sentence types.
4.	Operational Changes	Elements are added, embedded, and per- mut ed within sentence types.
5,	Categorization	Word classes (nouns, verbs, and preposi- tions) are divided.
6,	Complex Structures	C ompl ex structural distinctions made, as with "ask- tell" and promise.

Brown and Bellugi (1964) realized the im- portance of considering the role of the child as an active learner® As a result of longitudinal studies of the development of English syntax in children between 18 -36 months of age, Brown and Bellugi noted three processes. The first process was that of imitation with reduction. The second was that of imitation with expansion, where the child almost never repeated the adult sentences as they were presented and where the interaction between mother and child is, much of the time, a cycle of reduction and expansion® The third process, induction of the latent struc- ture, showed that utterances which involve mis- takes are an external sign of the child' s search- ing, of course quite unconsciously, for the reg- ularities of English syntax.

Systematic mistakes seem necessary for them to find out the limits of the area of appli- cation of the rules that they are formulating. The best known example is the over- regulariza- tion of the past tense of some irregular strong verbs of frequent occurrence in adult speech, such as came, went, took, sat, but in later speech, they systematically produce the wrong grammatical forms; corned, goed, sitted, etc., which evidently show the extension of the rule for forming the past tense of weak verbs.

How then are these theories related to foreign language teaching in general and to what we call speech c las ses in particular ? The value of such traditional behavioristic practices as rigid se- lection and gradation of vocabulary and syntac- tic structures according to frequency, basic- ness or productiveness; the strict avoidance of

errors, endless imitation, and repetition have been questioned as the relationship is clarified between the process of internalizing the grammar of a foreign language and that of a native language, if we assume the existence of innate language learning strategies.

On the basis of these new mentalistic accounts of language acquisition Jakobvits (1971) has drawn three conclusions. First, the second language learner should be exposed to the full range of linguistic data right from the beginning so as to give him maximum opportunity to test out his inferences about the underlying structure of the language. Second, he should be encouraged to produce any sentence, even if incorrect, to enable him to practice phonological surface transformations of base strings. "Correction" of such semi-sentences by the teacher is helpful only when they represent "expansions," as discussed in connection with language acquisition. Third, drills and exercises are of dubious utility unless they represent attempts to communicate freely (as opposed to practicing a grammatical rule artificially).

Mc Neil (1970) likewise noted that the amount of practice given to a feature is less relevant to language acquisition than the ability to notice that a feature is part of a pattern.

In support of this view, Wilkins (1971) suggests that "the learning mechanism operates through its capacity to formulate rules about the language once the individual has been exposed to it. The essential condition is exposure to the language, and so long as this exposure continues, the learning mechanism will operate.

What is needed in language teaching, therefore, is adequate exposure to the target language." (Wilkins, 1972, p. 172) Our job as teachers, Wilkins believes, is to enable the learner to acquire the means to achieve the maximum rhetorical effect for his spoken and written utterances. This will be difficult because there is no one to one relationship between communication function and linguistic form. It means too, beginning with the content and purpose of utterance and asking what may be communicated through them. It is therefore a notional, not a formal approach to language teaching. How then do we translate this semantic approach into an effective classroom teaching methodology?

Certainly the first and most important goal of a teacher of a class is to stimulate in the students the wish to communicate orally in the foreign language. We should not be surprised by the importance of motivation if we consider that one of the main differences between first-language acquisition in a natural setting and the learning of a foreign language in a school situation probably lies here. As Girard (1977) suggests, motivation is no problem in first-language acquisition; it is given by nature with the innate capacity to acquire the language of the environment. When we turn to foreign language learning we notice that motivation is quite a different matter. There will exist in any classroom a variety of motivation from one group to another. Girard believes there are four main factors in motivation: (1) the socio-linguistic context, (2) the learner's natural aptitude for

language learning, (3) the method of instruction used, and (4) the teacher.

I should like to focus on points three and four in relating the question of motivation to speech classes. We have all asked ourselves the question, "How is it that some teachers will fail in a given teaching situation and others succeed, using the same method and teaching the same pupils?" One can imagine several ways of answering that question. Girard provided 1,000 students with a questionnaire to determine the features considered to be most important in determining motivation in students from the students' point of view. In short, he asked his students to draw a detailed portrait of an ideal teacher. If I may summarize the conclusions, he noted three types of qualities which emerge from the pupils' conception of a good language teacher.

- (1) He must offer a good model in the use of the foreign language, the spoken language.
- (2) He must be a good technician of language teaching in order to be able to:
  - A. Make his pupils understand.
  - B. Correct their pronunciation and develop their communication skills.
  - C. Stimulate activity in the foreign language.

- 3) He must also, and above all be a good psychologist, well aware of all his pupil's individual problems, capable of coping with them and of creating at all stages an atmosphere of mutual confidence and sympathy in the teacher-class relationship.

(Girard, 1977, p, 102)

The teacher must be convinced that motivating his students is, at all stages, his chief responsibility. If we assume this responsibility and with it the knowledge that language learning is a conscious process and not just the parroting of utterances produced by the teacher; that it is an act of communication accompanied by an understanding, how can we then fully exploit the cognitive capacity of our students so that what is learned is better retained and for longer periods of time?

I am convinced that by providing relevant learning activities in the speech classroom we can motivate our students to succeed in learning English as a second language. I might mention but a few of the teaching activities that seem to be particularly rewarding.

#### VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids can be frequently used in a warm-up exercise in which grammatical structures or vocabulary items taught the day before are reviewed. One can easily teach and test pronunciation by utilizing two pictures that contain

minimal pairs. Minimal pairs are sets of phonemes that illustrate clearly how a distinctive feature such as voiced vs unvoiced distinguishes meaning, e.g., tin vs din. Likewise, visual aids can be used to stimulate storytelling. One could easily have the students construct a family and their daily activities by exhibiting a picture of a man, a woman, his or her family, home and place of employment. Pictures, maps, photographs, advertisements, charts, graphs can all be used to establish context in which a speech activity can develop.

#### TELEVISION

For many foreign students, the opportunity to see themselves speak English on television is an exciting event. One popular teaching strategy is to have the student prepare a short two minute speech to present "live" before his classmates and teacher. Instant replay enables the teacher to provide feedback methods to improve articulation, intonation, expression and presentation.

#### THE DISCUSSION CLASS

Relevant ideas on preparing for discussion in the ESL speech class have been enumerated by Arnold and Clarice Kaltinick (1974). The key to a successful language learning discussion, they believe, is the design of interesting topics and questions that are within both the intellectual and linguistic range of the students. Some background or "common grounds" exper-

ience must precede the class discussion itself. The discussion is most effective if the instructor employs a judicious mixture of two types of questions. Information retrieval questions to elicit a personal reaction or conceptual answer might be preceded by questions of inference. The Kilticks strongly advise that the teacher must be primarily a catalytic agent and only rarely an active discoverer. He must correct, but not over correct, direct but not over direct.

According to Hill (1977) the first and most important aim of the conversation class is to make sure that every student in the class says something in English. I do not fully agree with his statement "that making a loud noise in English should be the primary aim not the expression of interesting and intelligent ideas." (Hill, 1977, p. 131) ESL instructors are educators as well as language teachers. I believe that ESL teachers should focus on providing each student with the opportunity to practice speaking and become more self confident that what he is saying is interesting and relevant to the class discussion. Hill also advises that the instructor begin each class with a clear explanation of the aims of the lesson. The seating arrangement is likewise important for a conversation class. The seats should be arranged in a circle. If the teacher insists on sitting or standing at the front of the class, this immediately conditions his students to expect the traditional information-giving type of lesson. By standing at the front he immediately attaches too much importance to himself.

Hill has discovered, like all of us who have

taught speech classes, that the unplanned "What shall we talk about today?" type of class will never be consistently successful. He proposes as a model that the conversation class be divided into two main sections: firstly, controlled practice and secondly, free language practice. There would be four sets of materials to provide the necessary stimuli: dialogues, and fluency drills, discussion texts, topics, questions and situations; passages for listening comprehension and oral exercises. Ideally a fifty minute lesson would be divided as follows: 20 minutes - controlled language practice; 25 minutes - free language practice; 5 minutes - listening comprehension and review exercises.

Berwick (1975) likewise emphasizes the point that the most useful kind of discussion period is one in which the students speak most of the time, bringing into the discussion latent vocabulary and previously learned grammatical patterns and generalizing into previously unuttered patterns. Berwick cautions ESL teachers that if the students are to reach this stage it is essential to recognize and remove socially based inhibitions to discussion.

Applegate (1975) stresses that communication can only be effective when the student is also sensitive to the social and cultural aspects of language use and how these differ between his first and second languages. Expectations and interpretations are likely to differ on the role of silence, speaking volume and intonation, situations requiring set formulas, conventions of politeness and how information is organized and shared. Basso (1970) discovered that A-

pache Indians tend to keep silent in situations in which the status of the key parties is ambiguous, situations for which there are no clear cut rules governing expected behavior. Also, the Apache prefer to keep silent in the presence of strangers.

Anglo-Americans tend to interpret silence negatively. Social conversation silences must be filled. In Denmark, by contrast, there is a tendency to value silences as a sign of well-being - that people's spoken words are genuine.

Orientalists consider the volume of most Americans as far too loud. Americans in contrast to the English do not mind being overheard. Hence, in Europe, Americans are frequently considered rather boisterous. These are but a few examples to illustrate the point that the ESL instructor must be sensitive to the various linguistic backgrounds of his students if he is to encourage them to learn the conventions of speaking English.

#### DRAMA IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

The value of drama as a medium for teaching language was recognized by Walker (1977). He has detailed a teaching methodology incorporating total improvisation, involving no written work at all, but aimed at the spontaneous use of whatever body of language was available to the student at the moment of involvement. Walker's belief was that under pressures and relieved of the strain of self-consciousness, the students would speak more appropriately and more fluently, if less accurately, than they

would if they were asked to produce set pieces. The development of the drama and the associated language would be the responsibility of the group. Each session would be recorded and the playback would ideally take the place of the written exercises in idiom as the basis for a discussion of usage. The instructor is able to present examples of the use of English (good and bad) which the students have created themselves.

A more formal use of drama in the ESL classroom has been described by Lindsay (1977). He suggests several stages leading from simple communication and miming exercises to the more demanding improvisation activities. In stage one, the teacher can start by trying to communicate by means of gestures alone; beckoning, waving, or flapping the hand, or nodding and shaking the head. The students have to interpret the gesture in words or in sentences. In stage two, the teacher should start the session by acting surprised and disappointed in turn, simply by facial expression. The students have to interpret the feeling orally. This can be practiced by each student and further developed with other feelings - anger, impatience, delight or sorrow. The teacher then can proceed from individual to group expression of feeling: the class can imagine they are at a football game and asked to cheer or boo.

The individual expression of each emotion can be developed with appropriate verbal exclamations to go with the facial expressions: the oh's and ah's and really's. It is not difficult for pairs of students to write about dia-

logues such as the following:

STUDENT A: "Have you heard the news?"  
 STUDENT B: "No. What's happened?"  
 STUDENT A: "You've just won a million dollars."  
 STUDENT B: "Wow!"

In stage three, role-playing is introduced. The importance of role-playing is that it gives students masks' to put on which allow them to risk looking ridiculous. The roles in a dialogue or sketch should be clearly and sharply contrasted. Simple props are extremely useful.

Finally, I like to mention several ideas that are very well developed by Dubin and Margol (1975) in their text, *It's Time to Talk*. The text is quite unlike many traditional textbooks in that all the activities call for the users to work in specific participation structures - either individually, with partners, small groups or with the whole class. In all these participation structures, the teacher's role is to facilitate the action in the classroom for each procedure. The chapters contextualize the activities in different settings.

#### Strategies in the Classroom

2. People in the Community
3. Services in the Community
4. Places in the Community
5. Media in the Community
6. Family and Fun

Six basic communication tasks are represented.

1. Share and Tell: talking within the classroom about experiences and interests that pertain to the learners individual background.
2. Interviews, polls and interactions: structures exercises in which the learner talks with other people, first within the classroom and later outside the classroom.
3. Treasure hunts: structured experiences in which learners bring in specific tokens from an exchange or encounter that took place outside the classroom.
4. Asking for information: freer expression in which the learners talk with people outside the class for the purpose of gathering facts or exchanging information.
5. Discussion, panels, debates: a range of talking experiences that move from less structured sessions to more debates and panel discussions. The task always takes place within the classroom.
6. Creating stories: role-creating experiences, fantasy activities, hypothetical situations, and problem solving situations that learners engage in within the classroom.

I would like to summarize by reiterating my conviction that language learning can be an ex-

citing and dynamic activity. If we relate to the learner as an active participant with cognitive insight and linguistic intentions, we can design the type of learning exercises that incorporates the theoretical advances of linguistic science and provoke the learner's emotions and intellect.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

In editing the ORTESOL JOURNAL over these three years, I have been struck by the fact that people in this field appear to reinvent **the wheel considerably** more than in most fields. This editorial will review briefly some of the important milestones in the development of TESOL or ESL during the past half century. My purpose will be to establish some of the things that seem to me have been demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt, but also some of the fallacies that I see bandied about these days by my colleagues.

In the beginning there was traditional grammar and nothing else. Language studies during the 19-30's consisted basically of translating something seen on a page before you into the language being learned and studying a lot of words which told us something, often erroneously, about the nature of the structure of the language we were learning.

Charles C. Fries changed all of that and once and for all set us at least looking in the proper direction. How did all this happen? Professor Fries stepped into an elevator, so the story goes **in the profession, and one** of his Spanish speaking students said something to him. The good Doctor could make no sense out of what'was said, but he made a **mental note** of the sentence and **went back to his office to analyze what he had heard. When he had carefully analyzed the sentence, it turned out that the sentence was created by applying exactly the rules for English grammar that he had attempted to teach in class. In other words, his student had been doing exactly what he had been told to do in class. He had learned his lesson well and was practicing what he had learned.**

How could this happen? Fries asked himself the same question, and he concluded that we must somehow be teaching the wrong things, ' that is, something in the grammar that he was teaching must be incorrect. This actually was the beginning of the modern ESL programs as we know them today. He concluded that we were doing just about everything in the programs wrong. We were teaching the wrong items in grammar, and we were doing it **thewrongway** if we really wanted people to learn to use a language properly in a real situation. **During the decade** of the 30's many new concepts were introduced in the University of Michigan as they **strove to improve** their English program for **speakers of Spanish** from South America. Emphasis was put on the spoken language, sentence patterns rather than grammar and on practice speaking English. Here the instructors equated language learning with learning to play a piano and not to learning history.

The next significant change in strategy came along during WWII, because the **then War Department** needed speakers for many languages, and when they went to the traditional language departments existing in universities, they were told **that no one** could train people to speak another language even in two or three years, let alone a few months. An unknown professor suggested to **someone in Washington** that the War Department should consult with structural linguists, because they dealt with the spoken language all the time, and **perhaps it would** be possible for them to provide a **solution for the** problem.

George Trager was called to Washington and entrusted with the task of creating a language institute in which many languages would **be taught in** a short period of time. By completely forgetting traditional grammar, concentrating **on commonly** identified patterns and having the students repeat these patterns ad finitum it was discovered that

the average person could learn almost any language in a matter of three or four months. This feat of education absolutely astounded the language teaching community. It is important to remember, when we hear people criticizing the "linguistic method" of ESL that what brought it to **prominence are facts** about the enormous improvement over all **of the older** techniques, not lengthy theoretical arguments. There had never been in history such an example of success, nor, indeed, has there been since then.

Next, why were those programs so successful and what are some of the problems with them?

First, let us look at a few shortcomings. If we remember that Dr. Fries worked exclusively, at the University of Michigan, with Spanish speakers it is not difficult for us to expect that he generalized some of his findings to all languages, **when in fact** they were applicable basically to Spanish and perhaps to a few other Romance languages, and we see clearly that this did, indeed, happen. **As you probably** know, Spanish vowels are short and crisp, so quite naturally one of the most significant problems for these students is learning to glide those vowels in English which are glided, **at least enough** so that they could be easily **and clearly understood** in a conversation. Following the principles found in the writings of Charles C. Fries, the American Council of Learned Societies produced **what was then** called "The General Form," a master **plan for teaching** any language in the world, or teaching English to speakers of any other language. Quite naturally, there were long exercises designed to help the student produce glided vowels. Naturally, **again it** was not necessary to teach Turkish speakers how to glide vowels, because their language is overflowing with glided vowels. Also, **these linguists were** human. They had theoretical **principles about which** they were arguing with their colleagues, and often these got in the way of teaching language. One of the most glaring of these is the so-called Smith-

Trager analysis of English which was **spread all over** the world because these two scholars were in control of the language teaching programs of the United States Information Service (Agency). In addition to these normal human problems, George Trager was one of the most abrasive people that I have ever met, and he rubbed a lot **of old fashioned** language teachers the wrong way, which caused a lot of antagonism in people who might otherwise have been helpful.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above, and many others, the programs were, as I **said earlier**, extremely successful, not only exceeding any previous programs but exceeding the expectations of almost anyone anywhere.

Because of the problems mentioned above, large numbers of linguists began to try to rectify some of the problems, and this led to what we now call "Contrastive Analysis," that is, the contrast of two linguistic systems to determine what the significant differences are and what needs **to be done** to correct errors made by the students which are a direct result of these differences. Many non-linguists ask, "why don't you call it comparative analysis?" The reason is that linguists already use this label for a totally different type of process. Anyway, I have heard numerous language teachers denounce this as pointless. If one is to utilize linguistics, one must then realize, as with any information, exactly what the method can and cannot do, **because as with anything, it does not solve all problems, just some.** Naturally, if you have the opportunity to work with large numbers of students and can observe their problems, then much of the work would not be necessary, but even here, the question arises as to which is the most efficient and time saving, and this must be different in each situation. However, even **if one** does not need a complete grammatical and phonological analysis, the technique can be invaluable

in a language teaching situation, because problems come up in all programs which baffle the teachers. For example, one is dealing with some **aspect of the** verbal tense structure, and students who speak one language seem to be unable to master **that point but** speakers of other languages do it relatively easily. Often a quick contrastive analysis of the one part of the grammar of the two **languages will point** out very quickly where the problem lies and enable the teacher to construct a drill or lesson which a student can practice to correct the problem. However, if one just continues to practice the materials previously used, the student **makes no improvement** at all, because the drill does not touch the problem.

What I am saying here, quite simply, is that the contrastive analysis of two linguistic systems or parts of those systems can be invaluable or pointless, depending on the situation, and **one should be** flexible enough to use it when it is helpful and let it lie when it is useless, and at **the same time** language teachers need to know enough linguistics to know the difference.

Now, to some of the things that I believe have been demonstrated clearly by the **successes of these** programs.

First, different techniques are required at different points in any language program.

All I am saying here is that these linguists in intensive programs around the world found that the so-called oral-aural method of oral drill is vastly more effective in the early stages of teaching than later on. However, despite what many people will tell you, I have found that it is very effective even quite far along in the teaching program. Some teachers say that it is so boring to the students, but my experience has been that **it bores the** teacher, not the student. The thing that has made many people feel that the technique is useless is

the fact that many language programs drill the wrong things. What I am referring to here is the errors inherent in the Latin description of English structure. For example, many books have Ling drills on the passive voice, a **grammatical form which does not exist in English at all**. A sentence such as, "those dishes are washed," is not a passive voice in any sense of the word. This sentence is exactly parallel with, "those dishes are red," and the so-called verb is here in 'fact' a participle (c.f., Joe E. Pierce, *How English Really Works*, The Hapi Press, 1979, for more on this). I cannot go too much into details on this here, but the problem is basically illustrated by the drill, "Akamlariniz hayirli olsun," in Turkish. A sentence I was drilled on for long hours, but a sentence that I never, in a seven year residence in Turkey, ever heard. The point is that if you selectively drill, orally, patterns in the language which are very useful and often used, they are extremely valuable in many ways. On the other hand, if you drill useless or rarely used sentences, then, of course, it does no good. If one knows sufficient linguistic theory to understand at least some of the reasons for this, he will understand its value, if not, he may think it is silly.

To mention another problem for ESL, during the **1960's, because of the successes enjoyed by the ESL** programs in the 50's, there were many jobs in this field, but there were relatively few linguists who were interested in it. As a result of these historical facts, many people came into **the field with** little or no understanding of linguistics. Almost all of these new instructors came from traditional English departments with roots firmly grounded in traditional **grammar**. The result was a dilution of the new methods and techniques with a reinfusion of old **grammatical** ideas, including many teaching techniques. As a result, the teaching programs in ESL during the 1970's have not been nearly as effective as they were during the 1950's,

To summarize this one point; then, oral-aural or mim-mem drills are absolutely essential for a well ordered program in the very first stages, because a language is a structured system, and the system is presented to a student in such a way that he can readily identify the **structures and internalize** them in a relatively short time. Further, he hears each example of this system orally, the way he will have to be able to understand it in **a normal conversation** when he finishes the class. One can say, if he is so inclined, that all you have to do **is hear English** in a normal situation, **and you will** learn it. There are serious questions about the validity of such a statement, but it occurs often in this connection. However, even if it is true, the language teaching, during the 50's and 60's, indicates very clearly to anyone interested enough to look at the evidence available to us, that it is a slow, clumsy and very inefficient way of learning. Mim-men drills are at their best when we are teaching things that we know well, and so have been most effective in the early stages of teaching programs. As we get into vastly more complicated grammar, which is not clearly understood, even by the linguists, then simple exposure is better. One technique does not work everywhere at all times. Each stage of learning, and every part of grammar needs different approaches and materials, but the better we understand **how our language works**, the more easily and quickly it can be taught and the more structured materials work more readily.

Second, the use of phonetic transcription systems CAN help or hinder, however there are **many variables here** too.

When I went to Turkey, I was faced with two competing transcription systems; one called itself THE PHONEMIC SYSTEM OF ENGLISH, (George Trager and Henry Lee Smith), and the other was **called a "simplified"** phonemic system (Kenneth L. Pike and Charles C.

Fries). The problem is that a phonemic system cannot, by definition, be **simplified**, because "a phonemic system is the simplest possible system for symbolizing the sounds of a given language. Within a very short time, I abandoned both, BUT I constructed a set of symbols drawn from the Turkish alphabet supplemented with strange symbols **for strange sounding** English phonemes. This worked remarkably well. Why? Because when one is trying to learn a second language, he cannot hear the difference between the sounds in the new language which do not **exist in his** old or native language. One needs a visual as well as an oral symbol until the students **accept** the fact that these new sounds really exist and learn a way to distinguish them, because every phonological error leaves the speaker open to miscommunication. Of course, a single phonological error is easily lost in normal conversation, because of the natural redundancy in the language. The problem with the beginning student is that he makes, not a single error, but many errors, even within a single word. A speaker of English hearing all of the errors cannot possibly retrieve the message. My favorite example of the importance of phonemic interference is:

"There are lots of rocks in Konya."

Said to me one day driving across Central Anatolia. What the student meant was that there are lots of Aug4 in Konya. How did **uck)s** and **AL04** get confused in this sentence? Very simply because the range of the Turkish phoneme /a/ covers both the ranges that English uses for the two phonemes /a/ and /a/, that is the vowels in not and nut, so he said /a/ thinking that he was saying /a/. Further, word **final** consonant sounds are always devoiced, so the student replaced a /g/ with a /k/, without knowing it. The two errors, made without comprehending **that his production** was faulty, made the sentence incomprehensible to a native speaker of English.

To summarize what it seems to me has been proven beyond any shadow of a doubt so far as phonemic transcription systems are concerned, it is not at all necessary to transcribe every utterance that a student is going to say, but some system of transcription is necessary in order to give **avvisual as** well as an oral cue to the student. The best system of transcription is one that relates familiar sounds to familiar symbols. For example, a Turkish /p/ and an English /p/ are similar enough that if the student produces his native /p/ sound it will never interfere with communication in the language being learned. On the other hand, there are a few cases where utilizing his native /t/ sound might interfere, e.g., /tin/ said by Turkish speakers is often heard as /494n/, i.e., the first is tin and the second is thin in English. The vowel sound in **beet** is always confused with the vowel sound found in **bit**, For Turkish speakers then, T would never suggest any of the regularly available transcription systems, but one which utilized the Turkish letter p, and one could easily utilize the Turkish letter t. if the proper pronunciation were not of great importance. However, if one did not utilize separate symbols for the vowel in **beet** and bit he would obscure a phonological difference that over many years will trouble the Turkish speaker and he will be misunderstood over and over again if this problem is not taken care of. Many linguists over the years have said that one must not see the English writing system before he hears **and masters the** pronunciation of a given word or sentence. It is true that one can quibble with this, **but over these** past two or three decades, experience has proven, in many different places, that those students who have phonological drills, either with phonetics in written form or with no visual cue at all, **learn to** pronounce more quickly and much **more perfectly than** do those who are given the words printed in normal English orthography, because English **writing is bad**

news from any possible angle. It does not symbolize the sounds in any way, and any student who has learned his first language with an alphabet which approximates the sound system is lost. Hence one finds that some sort of transcription is a very useful tool for showing students exactly what they are doing wrong in the classroom. Remember, regardless of what you tell students, if the symbol that you use is a symbol from his native alphabet, he will always utilize his native sound. If that can be tolerated in the situation in which he will be utilizing the language, then OK, if not then it is necessary to utilize different symbols.

In reading various articles that have been submitted to the JOURNAL for publication, I see many ideas, but almost all of them have been around for a very long time. Here again, I think **that the method** developed by a team of two or three dozen men all with long experience in the field is basic to a successful language program. This **method is based** on three steps of presenting materials.

- I Listening and Repeating
- II Manipulation of Patterns
- III Creation

To explain briefly how each of these works, let us begin with number I. Everyone who learns to understand and speak a language must first hear some patterns in that language. This is true no matter what theoretical background you follow. For about the first 100 hours of instruction, **there is little** gained by doing anything else, **if your students have** not studied English before. What should the students be asked to listen to and repeat? On their very first days in class, minimal contrasts are an absolute necessity. Note that I did not say minimal pairs, because these often do not work. There is only one reason that they do not work, and that is, that **particularly in English**, there is a set of

five distinct tongue positions which distinguish vowel phonemes in the sequence of words: **beet, bit, bate, bat, bat.** Since few languages around the world distinguish **more than two** vowels in the front region of the mouth without adding another phonetic feature, the foreign student will slip from one to the other if you do not utilize minimal contrastive drills like this one:

beet	feet	neat	keep	bead
bit	fit	knit	Kip	bid
bate	fate	Nate	cape	bade
bet	fete	net	kept	bed
bat	fat	gnat	cap	bad

If you try to teach any of these minimal contrasts utilizing pairs, the student will simply slip into the next vowel above or below, yet it is perfectly clear from the above lists that a student who mixes up any of those pairs, risks being misunderstood over and over again, and in reality they are

After the first few hours, the students will lose interest if something other **than drills are** not utilized. It is, of course, necessary in a language class to maintain interest. However, I have never found this difficult to do, because students normally are interested in the class. The teacher is often bored and fails to realize just how difficult some of these simple manipulations of the oral organs are

It is, however, very easy to begin to teach simple patterns almost immediately, especially if the patterns are things that the student may want to say almost immediately. Here, as with the phonological drills, the **student must listen** carefully to the pronunciation, and the pattern must be repeated the way the student will hear it outside the classroom, and then he must try to reproduce it as clearly as possible and er-

rors must be corrected immediately, because every time a student is allowed to say something incorrectly without note, he feels more secure that it is a good pronunciation and that if he makes that mistake in conversation it really doesn't matter.

The second step is manipulation, and this can begin almost the first day of class, at least on a very simple level. You are all familiar with at least a few of these; e.g., I am a teacher. You manipulate the pattern by substituting in words a student might want to use for teacher. One of the real problems here is that the teacher often feels that the student is learning the vocabulary that a text uses, when in reality the student is mastering the pattern: I am a ; a pattern which will be invaluable to him later on. He is also getting the feel for thousands of English utterances of the type. - subject, form of 'to be,' object. The fact that he learns or does not learn the vocabulary is irrelevant. At first these are drilled orally as repetitions of what the instructor says and later the student will make his personal substitution. There are many statements in the literature to the effect that we as speakers, in normal conversation, create millions of utterances that we have never heard. There is little evidence to back up such statements, except in the very limited sense that we have heard a sentence:

What is that?            and            Where is Mary?

By comparing those two sentences, children learning English will then create the sentence:

Where is that?

So far as I can determine, virtually all of the creation is of this type, or it is a direct translation of something in the native language of our students, and the latter is a good way to be led a-

stray. Any error that is not corrected functions as a reinforcement for the student and makes such errors that much more difficult to unlearn. Anyway such manipulation is to aid the student in making new sentences based on patterns that he has learned.

Now we come to the crucial test of whether students can actually use the language or not. Finally, the last stage is that of creation; **the attempt** to utilize the newly learned portions of the language in a real or simulated real situation. This last phase is actually not a learning experience most of the time. It is a test, and **one problem in** language classes that I have observed is that few teachers appear to know the difference. **Much of what goes on in language classes under the guise of teaching is actually testing. A student does, in fact, learn something during the creation stage and he reinforces things that he has previously learned in the earlier** stages, so that it is not completely a testing phase, but it is largely so.

Now, to conclude, I would like to point out one or two things that have happened during the past two decades to cause this regression in our ability to teach second languages. First, one of the greatest handicaps during the sixties was the absolute success of the programs during the fifties. The programs were so spectacularly successful around the world, that there was **a tremendous demand** for such new programs. This demand caused the selection of many new teachers, not from **the ranks of** instructors trained in the new **methods developed by** linguistically trained specialists, but many came from traditional **grammar**. While many of these new instructors accepted some of the revolutionary ideas, they brought into the field many of the traditional ideas about English **grammar**. The legacy inherited from C. C. Fries is that we must teach a new student patterns that we observe every day in use and forget most of traditional grammar because

it is erroneous and misleading. Fries would never in a hundred years have actually said that but everything he advocated proved beyond a shadow of any doubt that it was true.

Just to point out one or two problems with uses of traditional ideas about grammar, we know almost nothing about the structure of this language. One of the basic tenets of structural linguistics, the only brand of linguistics that actually will ever contribute to language teaching, is that each language has a unique structure and can and must be taught in terms of its unique structure. English has never been described in terms of its own structure. It has been described as a form of distorted Latin, and it in no way resembles Latin in the way it works. Germanic languages have a fundamentally different type of structuring. Second traditional grammarians have confused logic with grammar, because the Greeks did, and we have never been able to completely get away from that.

For anyone who actually believes that languages are logical, the paradigms below should prove just how stupid such a position actually is.

my ball	my self
your ball	your self
his ball	his self (?)

Naturally, the only logically defensible position is that "his-self" **is the** correct form, but few if any in the field of English teaching would accept that as the correct form. No, languages are not logical in any sense of the word. They are social conventions, and they can only be justified in terms of of usage, i.e., tested on speakers of the language in real conversation. Since we know almost nothing about the nature of the structure of this language we have no alternative other than to teach commonly used patterns. The less we try to explain them the better off we will be, at least until we know

more about exactly how this particular language structure operates. Just briefly, English is a language which does not distinguish nouns from verbs at all on the morpheme level but does on the word level, i.e., government is a pure noun but all so-called nominals on the morpheme level can be used as predicates of sentences, so they cannot be called nouns. The things we normally call prepositions are exactly the same as many of the things that we call adverbs, and in fact there is no such thing in this language as adverbs. There is a class modifier which modifies any other part of speech in the language and the only way you can tell what it modifies is just where it is in the sentence, not by any classification such as adverb or adjective. Dozens of words which we just consider to be words in our grammar books are actually parts of very complicated grammatical paradigms, all of which need very badly to be studied and described so that we can teach them effectively, because most of what we teach today about the grammar of this language only confuses students.

So I say farewell to you as your editor with the admonition; look carefully at the programs that were so successful in the past and at least try their techniques. Ignore pointless, futile arguments about theoretical matters which sound good when said, but which have never been tried in real classroom situations and been successful teaching English to students. Also, do the best you can to forget everything that you were ever taught about English grammar, and try to find out "HOW ENGLISH REALLY WORKS!"

GOOD LUCK.