INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ESL FOR ADULTS

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Abstract

The communicative competence "revolution" in ESL has received considerable attention, but other developments of potential importance can also be discerned. They are (1) the concept of ESL competence as intercultural interactional competence; and (2) the acquisition of English through the study of subject matter. The combined effect of these developments is to pave the way for a more relevant and perhaps more effective ESL curriculum for adults. The philosophy of such an approach is outlined in this paper.

"The history of language teaching is the history of ideas about what language is and how languages are learned" (Richards 1984:7). Are the current changes in our ideas truly revolutionary, and indicative of a "paradigm shift," or are we merely witnessing a modification of our basic ideas? Raimes (1983) addressed this question recently and concluded that

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there is an *emerging* paradigm which:

- sees language as communication
- emphasizes real language use, as opposed to usage
- recommends a student-centered classroom
- encourages language acquisition
- develops humanistic, interpersonal approaches
- considers the nature of the learner, the learning process, and the learning environment

However, she concludes, a true paradigm shift has not yet occured:

> The current emphasis on communication has, I believe, been absorbed neatly into our positivist traditional framework. Far from superseding tradition, it has been assimilated into it. (1983, p.543)

For now, she feels, "Terra Incognita will remain our home" (1983:543).

Raimes' analysis is reasonable within its own terms of reference: she has examined recent developments within the boundaries of what is commonly recognized as the field of ESL at the present time. However, if a wider view of ESL is taken, the picture is changed somewhat by the implications of some recent developments both in ESL and in related fields. While it may be accurate to say that no true paradigm shift has yet occured in ESL, it is worthwhile examining these related developments in order to understand what the future may hold for the more traditional, narrower view of ESL. In this article I propose to present some viewpoints in intercultural communication and interactional competence which appear to have great relevance for ESL in general as well as for the issues that Raimes discusses.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

Larry Smith (1978) drew attention to the fact that English is used not only by visitors and immigrants to English-speaking countries, but also by members of groups or nations that have adopted English as an official lingua franca and by individuals who use English in multicultural settings where all the participants may be non-native speakers of English. This conception of English as an international language (EIL) as Smith terms it, is beginning to receive more and more attention (see Smith 1981; Kachru 1982). More recently, James Baxter (1983) has used the phrase "intercultural communicative competence" to emphasize the intercultural nature of most communication where ESL is used.

The viewpoints of researchers such as Smith and Baxter reflect a focus on real-life communication situations where English is used by ESL-speakers (whereas much current thinking in ESL results from an interest in the process of language learning in classrooms). One example of the application of the intercultural communication point of view in ESL is the rapidly growing interest in the use of English as a second (or international) language in the workplace (see, for example, Baxter, Coon, Frentzen, Hambrook, & Roberts 1983; and various papers in Gumperz 1982). Researchers in Great Britain (notably Tom Jupp, Celia Roberts, and associates) have engaged in pioneering work in attacking communication problems which result from what might be called the lack of intercultural communicative competence. Many of the misunderstandings that occur in the multicultural workplace can be traced to inter-group differences in how language is used in interpersonal communication, rather than to lack of fluency in English.

At the heart of this focus is the importance of culture, which is also the basis of the communicative competence

"revolution" in ESL, of course, in that rules of language use are culturally determined, as was made quite clear in Hymes' (1974) redefinition of linguistics as *socio*linguistics. Raimes' (1983) examination of the effect of this viewpoint upon current thinking in ESL suggested, as stated above, that no truly substantial change has resulted yet, but the intercultural communication perspective in ESL may be a factor that will help bring about such a change in the future.

A fundamental alteration in "ideas about what language is" *is* implied in the intercultural perspective. If language-in-use is governed by cultural norms, that is, if language cannot be understood properly apart from its cultural context, then ESL and EIL should in most cases be taken as necessarily referring to intercultural communication (an exception would be the use of English for international communication – for example, when English is adopted as a lingua franca, and the users are from the same cultural background – see Smith 1978). This observation – that the use of ESL or EIL usually implies intercultural communication – is simple, and basic, but it seems to have been overlooked in many quarters so far. The tendency has been to pay "lip service" to the intercultural aspect of ESL, just as, in Raimes' (1983) view, the communicative approach is often claimed without being practiced.

The idea of communicative competence as one component of cultural competence (see Hammerly 1982; Krasnick 1984) links second language teaching directly with traditional cognate disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and social psychology, as well as with the growing field of intercultural communication itself (see, for example, Barnlund 1975; Brislin 1981; Condon & Yousef 1975; Gudykunst & Kim 1984; Hall 1976; Samovar & Porter 1982; Samovar, Porter, & Jain 1981). The concept of *subjective culture* is central to these disciplines, and one unavoidable implication is that an understanding of subjective culture should be a goal of ESL teacher

training programs. Though this linkage of language and culture brings with it great possibilities for development not only with respect to how language is conceptualized but also for teaching language through content (see below), culture is something with which not all ESL teachers are comfortable (Alptekin 1981; Bancroft 1975; Jacobson 1971; Marks & Heffernan-Gabrera 1977). However, it is true that one cannot teach what one does not know, then teachers must take responsibility for commencing their own education in this area, if it is lacking. All of the methods suggested later in this article for use with ESL students can of course be used by teachers themselves in upgrading their own knowledge and skills. It should also be pointed out that, while learning about other cultures inevitably sensitizes one to the characteristics of one's own culture, the systematic study of one's own culture is probably the easiest way to begin since in most cases there are suitable materials available in the teacher's native language, and the teacher has considerable experiential background.

Aside from the problem of a general lack of awareness of culture, there are some specific problems. First, culture can be problematic in all situations because so much of it is covert, that is, difficult to discern or recognize. This certainly applies as well to one's own culture; in fact, the problem is probably worse in that case. Because of the hidden nature of culture, native-speaker ESL teachers may not realize what a very considerable cultural "load" is involved in teaching ESL. The failure to appreciate the intercultural nature of ESL instruction may interfere with the teacher's ability to emphathize with the students' experience of learning ESL (see Mizuno 1983 for a sensitive approach to this problem). Because cultures consist of different and often diametrically opposed rules, and because much of culture is subjective and covert, intercultural communication must be considered intrinsically problematic, with great potential for interpersonal misunder-

standing (good illustrations of this may be found in Condon & Yousef 1975; Gumperz 1982). The development of intercultural communicative competence in the learner is made more difficult to the extent that the problem is not addressed in a systematic way; that is, ignoring the issues makes things worse. Of course, in teaching English as a *foreign* language, where the teacher's own cultural values and rules are not those of the community, the teacher who takes his or her own culture for granted is the teacher who will encounter the greatest difficulties. Vexing problems caused by the failure to address the learners' culturally governed approach to second language learning have been brought to light in Japan and, more recently, the People's Republic of China. In this sense, teacher-student communication may be considered paradigmatic of intercultural communication in general.

On the learner's part, culture can be problematic both because it may be taken for granted by him or her, too; and because the learner often tends to acquire someone else's (that is, usually, the teacher's) culture along with the second language. One reason this is the case is that, recalling the discussion earlier of the cultural nature of communication rules, how the language is properly used is itself part of the culture of the group of people ("speech community") whose native language that is. This can pose a threat to the learner's cultural identity in a way that the study of methematics, to take a counter-example, usually does not (see Alptekin & Alptekin 1984).

The worst possible situation, perhaps, is where the essentially cultural nature of the language teaching enterprise is not recognized or addressed, and neither the form nor the content of the instruction takes account of intercultural issues. Even if the student is fortunate enough to emerge from the course of instruction without having experienced any culturally-based discomfort, he or she may well experience it later, in

daily life. This can occur on a personal level, of course, but it can also affect international negotiations in business or political affairs, as Kume (1984) shows. Using Nagoya's loss to Seoul in the competition to host the 1988 Summer Olympic Games as an example of intercultural (in)competence in persuasion, Kume warns:

> Persuasion in an international arena involves many factors that do not require careful consideration when the speech is intended for homogeneous or mono-cultural audiences. People from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds have different values and assumptions about their lives, their human relations, and their approaches to the problems they face. (1984, p.63).

What is true with repect to international organizations, such as the International Olympic Committee, is also true with respect to multinational corporations. In the case of interpersonal encounters in daily life, the cost of intercultural incompetence may be reckoned in terms of satisfaction, joy, or the achievement of personal goals; in business or politics, the cost may be calculated in dollars and cents (or yen). This potential for problems does not mean that there is cause for despair, but rather that there is work to be done.

In concluding this section on intercultural communicative competence, it may be useful to comment on the role of competence itself as a concept. Emphasizing competence over performance directs attention to the individual's "true," context-free ability. The result is that all other factors are relegated to analyses of social situations, leaving the individual's linguistic – or, more specifically, communicative – competence as the proper concern for the second language teacher. (After all, the thinking seems to go, the teacher cannot be responsible for analyzing all the interpersonal transactions in

which the learner may be involved, either during instruction or after it has ended.) However, the development of the disciplines of sociolinguistics and intercultural communication has revealed a problem in this emphasis upon competence over performance: the two cannot be so easily separated in everyday life, where, to mention what is the single most important problem confronting the analyst, language and culture are thoroughly and completely mixed (see Krasnick 1984). The evolving intercultural perspective in language teaching tends to place less importance on the theoretical separation between competence and performance, focusing instead on the successful use of language for ordinary purposes in everyday situations. This has lead in turn to a concern with what competence in using language in everyday life actually involves. Only when questions of this sort are answered can we expect to know what intercultural communicative competence entails.

Intercultural Interactional Competence

One part of the growing intercultural force in language teaching is the intercultural communicative competence perspective, as discussed above. Another component is the concept of intercultural *interactional* competence (see Krasnick 1984), which emerges from the observation that in everyday life, language is nearly always used for some interactional purposes. Language has what Schutz called an "in-order-to" motive (Schutz 1972). Others have acknowledged this in referring to language as "fundamentally and primarily a *social instrument*" (Dewey, cited in Seelye 1974:13; emphasis added), and as "a mode of action, and not an instrument of reflection" (Malinowski, cited in Hudson 1980:109). The language found in many ESL textbooks, in contrast, lacks this

purposefulness:

> In language teaching that has people talking to each other about quarters and nickels or about the hours of the British Museum for no identifiable purpose other than to practice a sentence pattern or a function, what is being emphasized is still the message itself (language), as it was in the traditional paradigm. Students can be talking to each other in a language class and the focus can still be on the form of the language itself and not on the context of reality. (Raimes 1983, p. 544f).

A similar approach is taken by Jakobovits and Gordon (1979), who distinguish between teaching *language* and teaching *talk*. They suggest that a major weakness in second language teaching is the reliance upon *simulated* interaction in the classroom. In real life, they argue:

> . . . the participants count each others' [*sic*] moves as *spontaneous*, i.e., taken as a sign of *relationship* between the participants; whereas in simulated talk, the moves of the participants count as *role performance* or as play acting: e.g., in a classroom, the student's move in a practice exchange counts only as his performance as a student who is practising, not as an individual with an identity acting on his own behalf, i.e., NOT in relationship. This is why all sorts of overlay activity can be noticed during such practisings of simulated exchanges: embarrassment, giggles, hesitations, interruptions, rehearsals, repetitions, corrections, flood outs, etc. (1979, p.9; emphasis in the original)

It is in this sense that the ordinary second language classroom, and the communication that takes place therein, is not "real."

The competence that is cultivated in the classroom is likely to be confined to competence in using language correctly with

respect to linguistic structure and communicative situation. What is absent is the notion of creating social relationships and/or managing social interaction. One criterion, then, is whether language is used for a recognizable purpose. There is no point, of course, in aiming for interactional competence to the exclusion of linguistic and communicative competence. Rather the latter are encompassed within the former. Normally this can be taken for granted, but in attempting to set out the difference between communication and interaction, the distinction becomes important. This emphasis on interaction in fields such as anthropology, sociology, intercultural communication, and negotiation. The same variation can be observed in different occupational spheres: interaction is of great concern to businessman, lawyers, and politicians, while teachers tend to restrict themselves to communication and analysis. What is being argued here is that, to the extent that the second language will be used in real life by the learner, interactional competence is relevant.

This may be a potentially controversial approach to language to take with respect to second language teaching in part because it highlights aspects of the learner's personal qualities which may diverge from his or her apparent ability to learn language as it is presented in traditional ESL student textbooks. That is, a student may master the rules of grammar and syntax, possess an adequate vocabulary, and know how to use language politely, and still fail utterly in interactional tasks in intercultural situations. Even in the native language situation, of course, there are individuals who produce well-formed sentences (linguistic competence) and use conventional and appropriately polite forms of speech (communicative competence) but are still unsuccessful in negotiating, persuading, placating, reassuring, justifying, and so on. Such individuals are interactionally incompetent.

Interactional competence is a part of cultural competence,

since the rules of interaction are culturally variable. The "deep structure" of culture includes its basic values, that is, whatever is considered good or desirable; and the important norms, or rules, associated with those values (see Condon & Yousef 1975; Stewart 1972). Patterns of interpersonal communication are, of course, of prime importance (see Barnlund 1975 for some pertinent examples). When the concept of interactional competence is applied to second language teaching, the problem can be seen immediately: the user of English for intercultural or international communication frequently does not have the advantage of sharing the cultural background and expectations for communication and interaction of the other party. The study by Kume (1984) exemplified this problem. The situation is made even more difficult by the fact that, as noted earlier, the parties may be unaware of their own culturally based expectations as well.

For most people, one of the primary goals of everyday interaction is presenting themselves in a good light ("putting your best foot forward," "making a good impression"). The late sociologist Erving Goffman coined the term "impression management" (Goffman 1959) to describe the pursuit of this goal by people in their daily lives. His "dramaturgical" metaphor has the communicator playing the role of the actor, with the others as the audience. He saw everyday social interaction as consisting in large part of the ongoing negotiation of meaning among individuals. His famous treatise on the subject begins with the observation:

> When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. (1959, p.1)

The others, then, are already cast in their roles as audience

members. As for the actor:

> While in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure. For if the individual's activity is to become significant to others, he must mobilize his activity so that it will express *during the interaction* what he wishes to convey. (1959, p.30; emphasis in the original)

In terms of the present discussion, "expressing" what one wishes to convey, and making the impression that one wishes to make, is the interactional goal, the purpose for which language – usually, along with other modalities – is being used.

The implications for interactional competence in multicultural settings or intercultural interactions, though Goffman does not take them up specifically, stem directly from the fact that:

> . . . when the individual presents himself before others, *his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society,* more so, in fact, than does his behavior as a whole. (1959, p. 35; emphasis added)

The importance of values in impression management makes it clear that cultural competence is involved. Within our own societies, that is, in monocultural situations, we tend to take these things for granted most of the time, taking explicit notice of them only in special situations, for example, job interviews or ceremonies. It is Goffman's position, though, that impression management is actually a pervasive feature of everyday life. It is just that, as with many other areas of our innate social and cultural knowledge, impression management

is part of "what everybody knows," and so does not ordinarily receive our attention. For intercultural communication, however, it is problematic. Having what some people refer to as "common sense" is not enough, for the simple reason that common sense is common only to the particular social group involved, that is, common sense is culture-specific. Achieving success in intercultural encounters requires intercultural interactional competence. The implications of all this for ESL curriculum follow directly.

Content In ESL : The Vast Wasteland

Perhaps due in part to its modern role as part of military intelligence training, post-war second language teaching has much of the feeling of behavioral training, as opposed to education. Foreign language instruction, such as the study of European languages in North America or the study of English in Asia, often tends to be more of a classically educational enterprise, in that there is an interest in the history and institutions of the people whose language is being studied, and access to their literature through the study of their language is often contemplated. Interpersonal communication may not be a goal at all. In English as second language instruction, there has been a great emphasis on interpersonal communication, but not much emphasis on education. Finding out which methods of teaching produce the best results for interpersonal communication is always a valid concern, of course, but there is also the issue of content in second language learning. The ongoing discussion concerning the relative merits of grammar-based or communication-based syllabi has little to do with the question of content.

Until comparatively recently, it seems to have been assumed that no real content teaching could be integrated into ESL

instruction, and in any case the desirability of real content[1] was rarely discussed. In ESL, then, the term "learning" can have two different meanings: it can refer to the development of interpersonal communication skills; and it can refer to the learning of subject matter, including knowledge and ways of organizing knowledge. The two meanings of the term can be seen in the question – rarely asked – "Do you learn anything while you are learning ESL?" The answer to that question used to be, "No," but the possibility of integrating language learning and content learning is currently being demonstrated in North America. This is a development which has considerable implications both for the question of how second language competence is most effectively developed, and for the challenge of designing a responsive second language curriculum. It has implications for the intercultural perspective in ESL, too.

Some recent experiments at the University of Ottawa[2], a bilingual (French and English) university in the capital city of Canada, are lending support to Krashen's model of language acquisition (see Krashen 1982; Krashen & Terrell 1983). The experiments involve university students who are taking an Introductory Psychology course which is taught in their second language (both English and French). The research data show that the students who are studying psychology in their second language, are with only minimal assistance from a second language teacher, improving their second language ability as well as their peers who are receiving ordinary second language instruction. Furthermore – and this is critical, in the circumstances – the students are learning psychology as well as students who study it in their native language. The idea that training and education need not be mutually exclusive, that there *can* be real content in ESL instruction itself, is a fairly revolutionary one. It is, however, consistent with Krashen's theory of second language acquisition, and seems to

meet a need. To take advantage of these new possibilities, of course, we will need to have a model of both language learning and content learning, such as the one presented in Mohan's *Language and Content* (1985, forthcoming). What is also exciting is that the intercultural perspective in ESL and the language-content issue combine very naturally.

For university students, such as those in the Ottawa experiments, the proper content for ESL instruction may well be dictated by the students' academic programs – psychology, English literature, and so on. But what of second language learners who are not university students? Although they may not have brought with them any specific expectations for learning (in the sense of education), a great opportunity is lost nonetheless if the ESL curriculum is devoid of useful content. Too often, it seems, the "content" in ESL student textbooks serves only as a vehicle for the language, as Raimes has noted above. There is no intention to teach any content area which is of value in its own right. At best the textbook writer selects some factual information which it is hoped will prove interesting to the students, for example, information about holidays or government or material culture. In some cases, English-language literature is studied, but again typically this is only a means of getting the students to read something in English. Compared to what the University of Ottawa students are learning – in ESL – most ESL students learn next to nothing.

While university students can be said to come equipped, as it were, with easily identifiable content needs, in other cases a needs analysis must be conducted. What needs have the textbook publishers discovered so far with respect to content? Student groups with particular needs are accommodated in the cases of Vocational English, English for Science and Technology, and English for Academic Purposes, to take some common examples, but these constitute well-known excep-

tions to the general rule, which appears to be: no special content learning need take place – language is enough. This approach can no longer be justified, if the results of the Ottawa studies are valid and the implications taken to heart. Learners' time is valuable, and should not be wasted on empty instruction.

The possibility of learning something of value, and the question of what is of most value to ESL learners can be approached in terms of intercultural interactional competence, as outlined herein. There are three major points to be made:

(1) In many instances the learner will be using language in intercultural communication.
(2) Communication is usually for some (interactional) purpose.
(3) Many times the goal is achieved through some combination of impression management and/or negotiation.

It is these things, the stuff of everyday communication, which dictate the content to be learned by adult ESL students, especially those who will be using English in intercultural situations where the stakes can be relatively high. This line of thinking, unlike the trend toward "communicative" language teaching, does imply a true paradigm shift. Certainly in terms of ESL curriculum and instruction there is a shift in emphasis away from the question of how to teach and toward the question of what to teach. With respect to the underlying conception of language, the old view of language as a set of empty categories is being replaced by a view of language as an integral part of culture. Competence in using a second language, as stated earlier, is therefore part of cultural competence. And the appropriate content for ESL is thus content for intercultural competence. Teaching only language "will leave the students social cripples" (McLeod 1976:217).

Content For Intercultural Competence In ESL For Adults

In the preceding discussion I have raised the possibility that adult ESL students can learn something of value to themselves while developing linguistic and communicative competence. In this section I will attempt to outline what content the curriculum would contain, and in the next section I will say something about instructional methodology. Although a rather general treatment will be offered, it should be borne in mind that groups of leaners do have different needs. In fact, the concept of "ESP" may come to be more useful than that of ESL in this connection, since we are referring to specified needs, namely, English for Intercultural Encounters.

First all learners intending to use English in intercultural settings should gain some familiarity with the basic concepts of the discipline of intercultural communication. Many learners may have some acquaintance with some or all of the concepts from their everyday experience, but by and large they do not have a systematic, conceptually-oriented approach to intercultural communication. They should learn about topics such as: gestural and postural communication; proxemics (use of space); silence; cultural influences on rhetoric; and cultural preferences in verbal communication style. The work of John Condon (for example, Condon & Yousef 1975), Dean Barnlund (1975), and Edward Stewart (1972) is readily accessible and could form the basis for this component of the ESL-through-intercultural communication curriculum. The writer has used Levine and Adelman's student textbook *Beyond Language: Intercultural Communication for ESL* (1982) with university-bound ESL students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including Japanese students, and this experience very strongly suggests that the general intercultural communication-oriented approach to content in ESL is workable. As a matter of fact, the students found the book both

interesting and useful in adapting to life in North America. It would probably be equally well received in any situation where the learners had any interest at all in North Americans, and certainly the approach it exemplifies can be used with respect to any target culture. In principle, a culture-general version could also be produced. (This textbook seems to be the only one currently available which offers a ready-made treatment of the topics mentioned above, and other related issues. A companion volume, authored by James Baxter and Deena Levine, and aimed at lower-level ESL students, is in preparation.)

Second, learners planning to use English in particular cultural or national settings should study the general features of the target culture in a systematic way. This may mean adapting materials that are essentially anthropological or sociological in nature, rather than using materials designed for tourists or visitors, since the latter are not, as a rule, organized around a recognized set of concepts or concerns[3]. Newbury House Publishers, in the United States, have initiated a Series on Nonverbal Behavior which is exemplary of a practical approach to culture learning. The volume on Brazil (Harrison 1983), for example, discusses elements of everyday subjective culture such as "machismo," privacy, and doing favors, in addition to standard topics such as conversational style, social organization, gestures, and so on. More of a psychocultural approach – also very helpful in making sense of the target culture – is taken in Stewart's *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (1972). Barnlund's (1975) comparison of Japanese and North American communication styles is another good example of a contrastive approach. Though studies of this type are not designed for language learners, they do contain information which is essential for interactional competence, and they offer a starting point for curriculum developers who wish to prepare ESL learners

for successful interaction in identifiable milieux. They would also be useful for ESL teachers seeking to acquaint themselves with cultural analysis. Such culture-specific treatments are helpful, in addition, in reinforcing the general approach to intercultural communication presented in culture-general works such as Brislin (1981) and Gudykunst and Kim (1984).

The third component is, like the first, somewhat general in nature in that it can be applied in every cultural context. It comprises the basic concepts and strategies of impression management, as presented by Goffman (1959) and later writers (for example, Schlenker 1980; Tedeschi 1981). Since, as Goffman noted, impression management is related directly to the cultural values of the audience, it is possible to tailor this aspect of the curriculum to the needs of particular groups of learners, including those intending to use English for international communication.

If we are dealing with adults, the learners' general awareness of the very existence of nonverbal communication, cultural differences in communication values and norms, and the phenomenon of "putting your best foot forward," can be presumed, just as adult learners can be presumed to know more than children do about how conversations are initiated and carried on. The significance of making impression management a subject of inquiry in the ESL classroom can best be appreciated by considering the difference between "the man in the street" and the sociologist – the latter seeks to understand everyday phenomena in terms of a theory of human behavior, whereas the former is content merely to act from moment to moment.

The first three components have this in common: it is probably not necessary to achieve total mastery, that is, to act completely like a native member of the target group, in order to reap benefits. The major problem in interpersonal intercultural communication is the drawing of negative in-

ferences about the other's intentions due to lack of familiarity with that other's culture and the way that it shapes his behavior. Making what can clearly be seen to be an attempt to modify one's behavior – that is, to accommodate – may be one way to show one's good intentions.

The fourth component in this brief discussion of content for intercultural competence in ESL is one which may have more relevance for some learners than for others: principles of negotiation and mediation, in cross-cultural perspective. Even so, it can serve to illustrate the use which can be made of a patterned form of interaction which occurs in both the learner's culture and the other culture. The phenomenon of negotiation can be focused on traditional subjects of negotiation, such as business transactions; or on interpersonal dispute resolution (called mediation: seen, for example, Folberg & Taylor 1984), or the negotiation of respectability (see Douglas & Waksler 1982). The cross-cultural or contrastive approach would be suitable for business negotiation (see, for example, Harris & Moran 1979); negotiating respectability is a part of impression management; and mediation as a form of dispute resolution has the potential for application in a broad range of cultural settings. It would be a rare adult ESL learner who contemplated using English in face-to-face intercultural interaction but had no need to negotiate or manage the outcome of various transactions. The same principles apply to non-face-to-face interaction (see below).

The four components outlined above are all oriented toward successful interaction. They may be broadly grouped into two categories:

(1) *knowledge* (of principles and concepts of intercultural communication; and of target culture); and
(2) *ability* (to make a good impression; and to negotiate a satisfactory outcome).

To repeat something argued earlier, *all* ESL learners have the potential to learn something of value while developing their English skills. The curricular content proposed here represents an attempt to specify what is valuable for intercultural interactional competence.

Many learners, of course, do not contemplate having face-to-face interaction with English-speakers from other cultures. They still may have a need to develop intercultural interactional competence, however. If they are dealing with others through writing, most of the points made in the foregoing discussion will apply. For example, in commercial transactions, face-to-face interaction may represent the culmination of a campaign that began with a successful exchange of letters. Success and failure are opposite concepts, but they do not refer to two realities, one of which is the "mirror image" of the other. There are many ways to fail – many ways, for example, to give a bad impression due to intercultural incompetence – but there is only one way to succeed. So the need for intercultural interactional competence does not depend on there being face-to-face interaction .

The preceding discussion is oriented toward the needs of the one who initiates the interaction, the one who may be said to have the goal. However, the other party may also have something to gain; indeed, the creation of a successful relationship implies that both parties benefit. While A may "fail" if he does not meet B's expectations (see Kume 1984, for example), B may also be said to lose if he does not appreciate the cultural factors which influence or explain A's approach. In other words, when people from different cultural backgrounds are considering working together, both sides need intercultural interactional competence. In this case, B needs to be able to correctly interpret the meaning of A's initial contact. If B makes a negative evaluation of A because of cultural differences in interaction or communication style,

B fails, because the potential for a mutually beneficial relationship has been lost. In other words, intercultural interactional competence comprises both receptive as well as productive competence.

A Note On Instruction

When the focus of the teaching is on interaction, as in the present discussion, the approach to instruction should be modified. Learning about intercultural communication and impression management and negotiation, like learning how to speak English, is learning for *use*. One use-oriented method which might be appropriate for businessmen and other professionals learning ESL is the case study method. Moran (1980:vii) states:

> The case study method in intercultural education is based on the assumption that working effectively in a multicultural environment is a *skill* more than it is a collection of techniques or ideas. An effective way of learning these skills is to practice them in a simulation type process.

Role-play has considerable potential, too, of course, and "attribution" techniques such as the culture assimilator or cultural sensitizer have also proven to be effective (see Albert 1983). Of course, these methods have been developed by North Americans, and they should be used selectively, depending on the student group involved. In situations where the emphasis is on receptive rather than productive competence, and/or where experiential learning is not compatible with the students' expectations or preferences, the culture assimilator might be best, because it is aimed at receptive competence, initially – understanding the reasons for others' behavior –

and it uses a conventional format (reading comprehension exercises, followed perhaps by discussion). As a generalization, it may be stated that emphasizing receptive skills before productive skills will give the students time to begin to get acquainted with the target culture before they are themselves asked to perform in novel ways.

The case study method may also use the "critical incidents" which are the heart of the culture assimilator method, but the instructional focus is on problem analysis (the culture assimilator utilizes a straightforward "programmed learning" format). Learners who are comfortable with discussion and analysis would find the case study method acceptable.

Perhaps the most culture-bound method is the workshop or training approach, where participants get "hands-on" experience in practising the skills involved. Negotiation, either with or without a third party such as a mediator, is an example. Anything which smacks of individualism or assertiveness might clash with the cultural background of many learners from countries in East Asia or Southeast Asia, but yet the study of mediation (see Folberg & Taylor 1984), for example – that is, how to be a mediator – is a valuable undertaking which might not present such serious problems. Learning how to mediate also includes learning something about negotiation, conciliation, compromise, and collaboration – all useful interactional skills that can be learned and practiced in a classroom setting. Learning mediation meets the test of real content learning, and thus the language used therein represents real talk, not simulated talk.

Conclusion

Raimes (1983) addresses a question of real importance in asking whether a paradigm shift has taken place in ESL, but

perhaps she does not go as far as she could in framing her question. A more significant issue may be the extent to which the entire ESL enterprise is being shaped by factors such as the growing importance of English as an international language, the application of intercultural communication approaches to ESL, and the question of teaching ESL through content teaching. Taken together with the concept of interactional competence, these changes foreshadow a curriculum well suited to the needs of adults who will be using English for social, business, and political purposes in intercultural interaction.

Whether the curriculum is orientated to American culture, as in Levine and Adelman's (1982) textbook for pre-university students, oriented to other culture cultures, or culture-general, it will focus strongly on *language as communication, communication as social interaction, and social interaction as culturally governed behavior.* It will provide adult ESL students with something valuable to learn while improving their English, and, according to the input theory, their language development will proceed more quickly because language will be being used in a natural way, namely as a means of learning something which is worth learning for its own sake.

In summary, there is great economy to be achieved in the confluence of two separate but related propositions:

(1) There is something in addition to merely language itself that ESL students can benefit from learning; and
(2) they can learn it while they learn English.

Merging these theoretical propositions and putting them into practice seems eminently reasonable, and may lead to an entirely new way of looking at second language instruction.

Notes

[1]Much content in ESL instruction represents only simulated learning, not real learning, just as most role-plays in ESL represent simulated, rather than real, interaction. Formal education, for example, secondary or post-secondary studies, where the medium of instruction is the student's second language, does not represent real content in ESL instruction because English has already been learned. The question is, was any content learned while the second language was being learned? Or, to put it another way, was English learned *through* learning something else?

[2]There is insufficient space to describe the experiments in this paper. The interested reader should refer to: Edwards, H., Wesche, M., Krashen, S., Clement, R., & Kruidenier, B., "Second language acquisition through subject-matter learning: a study of sheltered psychology classes at the University of Ottawa," *University of Ottawa Centre for Second Language Learning Journal*, 1983, *28*, 29-54, and *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 1984, *41*, 268-282; Wesche, M., "A promising experiment at Ottawa University," *Language and Society* (a publication of the Commisioner of Official Languages of Canada), 1984, *12*, 20-25; and Wesche, M., & Ready, D., "Foreigner talk in the university classroom," paper presented at the 10th University of Michigan Conference on Applied Linguistics, Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 1983 (forthcoming in a collection of papers edited by Gass, S., & Madden, C., Newbury House Publishers).

[3]The unsuitability of literature for this purpose has been discussed in Krasnick 1984.

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