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NEWSLETTER

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English Teaching Today

Robert Lado
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[Professor Robert Lado, one of the founders of the Audio-Lingua2 Method, was recently in Tokyo for a series of public lectures. The lectures were co-sponsored by Sophia University and the Japan Association of College English Teachers. We would like to thank Professor Felix Lobo of Sophia, Professor *Ikuo Koike* of *JACET, and the* Daily Yomiuri for permission *to publish a somewhat abridged version of Dr. Lado's first address. The complete text can be found in the November 1 edition of the* Daily Yomiuri.]

The Oral Approach

Some 21 years ago when the US Government began to support the teaching of foreign languages through the NDEA (National Defense Education Act), the most widely used methodology in the U.S. was the Oral Approach developed by Charles C. Fries and associates at the University of Michigan. Its structural linguistics rationale and intensive course materials influenced practically all subsequent methods and materials.

The essence of the Oral Approach was to consider language a system of vocal symbols used for everyday communication by the members of a society. From that view derived the corolaries that language is speech, that languages are different, that language is habit, and that one should teach "the" language rather than "about" the language.

Within the structural linguistic view shared by Leonard Bloomfield, Hackett, Moulton, Henry Lee Smith and others, the Oral Approach developed by Fries introduced the concept of patterns of English sentences, the first structural analysis of American English intonation, and contrastive linguistics into language teaching methodology.

The prestige and influence of the Oral Approach at that time, however, should not obscure the fact that other methods and views were also used widely at the same time. Among them were various direct methods such as Berlitz, In-Lingua, and the Audio-Visual Method, which is a variation of the Direct Method using pictures to convey meaning. And as always, Grammar-Translation methods were practiced by many teachers, and others used personal combinations of various features according to the particular preferences of the author and the teacher.

Changes in the 1970's

The 1970's saw a continuation of the Oral Approach and its parallel the

Audio-Lingual Method while major revolutions and changes in the theoretical bases of the teaching of English made their impact felt. The Chomskian revolution in linguistics caused the introduction of transformational explanations of grammar and challenged the value of habit formation and pattern practice in language teaching and learning.

Skinner's behavioristic psychology yielded to cognitive psychology, and pattern practice was again attacked in favor of conscious grammatical exercises that applied rules taught explicitly first. John B. Carroll coined the terms cognitive-code learning and habit-pattern methods to characterize the opposition between the two methodologies. He later explained that he favored a synthesis of the two methods rather than a defense of one and condemnation of the other. In practice, no set of English materials became completely transformational and cognitive-code in nature; all incorporated features of two opposed philosophies.

Simultaneously with these developments, there was great interest in the study of child language and child language acquisition, which sought to record the development of language in children and to explain its grammar using Chomskian transformational generative models.

Roger Brown's The First Language is the most widely known reference of that research and view. The methodological suggestions coming from child language acquisition were reminiscent of classical direct methods. The obvious fact that all normal children learn their first language on their own had originally been the inspiration for the direct methods themselves.

The new slogans were, "Language is acquired, not learned." "You cannot teach a language; the student acquires it ." From this source came also the rediscovery of the idea of immersion: "Immerse the student in English, and he or she will acquire it."

These ideas took a variety of forms when put into practice, however, and contradictions which were inherent in the theoretical suggestions began to emerge. For example, a cognitive-code approach explains every point of grammar before the student is asked to perform in an exercise. Yet in a language acquisition approach, the teacher must not teach; the student is to acquire everything by immersion.

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From the extreme behavioristic position of B.F. Skinner of Harvard came the idea of programmed learning and teaching machines. Teaching machines were soon abandoned, and the emphasis shifted to programmed learning. In programmed learning, the learning tasks are broken down into numerous frames such that the students can respond correctly every time. Correct responses are supplied immediately to reinforce learning. Programmed learning evolved into individualized learning in which the student is allowed to progress at his or her own pace and style. Individualized instruction often made use of programmed materials. Personalized instruction, on the other hand, is a form of individualized instruction which controls the student's work by means of unit quizzes or tests based on some textbook or set of reference materials.

English for Special Purposes (ESP) developed during the 70's in the form of small readers or courses for careers or special technical training. And arising from the same desire to meet specific needs of students, there developed Notional/Functional Syllabuses in which the material is selected according to the functions of the language rather than for the goal of mastering the language as a tool for whatever uses may arise later.

All the while, other methodological suggestions were being made from other sources. Asher proposed Total Physical Response for the teaching of languages with the claim that such a method reached the subconscious permanent memory more directly.

Curran, a clinical pyschologist, suggested the application of group therapy techniques in Community Language Learning (CLL). In CLL, students ask how to say things to each other in order to communicate with the members of the group in the foreign language. And finally, George Lozanov, a psychiatrist from Sophia, Bulgaria, proposed techniques of de-suggestion to bypass the protective self-barriers of the individual who according to him feels threatened and resists learning. By these techniques, he seeks to reach the deep permanent memory and cause faster and more permanent learning.

And, as in the 60's, direct methods and the opposing Grammar-Translation methods continued to be used by some organizations and individual teachers.

English Teaching Today

Although there is disagreement on many points, the majority of international general courses use conversations as the starting or focal point of the units of study and develop from there into contextualized practices and activities of various kinds which involve listening and speaking as primary modes. In other words, they are basically audio-lingual in nature.

Most of them, though not completely or exclusively audio-visual, make generous use of functional pictures to provide context and stimulate language use. And they have supplementary materials of the workbook type, requiring written answers, transformations, completions, etc.

They all attempt to provide a maximum of opportunities for the student to produce active responses and create utterances expressing his or her own ideas. In other words, they are all methods that can be classified as active rather than passive.

They represent an evolution from the earlier Audio-Lingual methods rather than an abrupt radical departure from them. Among the most striking changes are a greater emphasis on contextualization. Exercises involving changes in isolated sentences have almost disappeared. One finds instead exercises in which the sentences are contextually related to each other, to pictures, or to situations. This has the effect of keeping student performance closer to the communicative process of language use.

NEW EDITION

Lado English Series by Robert Lado

This new series is one of the most comprehensive courses available in English as a second language. It is comprised of six textbooks, workbooks, and teacher's manuals, and corresponding tests and cassettes. To achieve the primary language objectives-listening, speaking, reading, and writing-Professor Lado employs modern linguistic principles within a format that is practical for both students and teachers.

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Each lesson introduces basic patterns through contemporary dialogues, model sentences, and simple explanations. Audio-lingual drills and speaking and reading exercises reinforce learning. Each new lesson builds on the preceding one, resulting in a cumulative learning experience. The components of each lesson are:

Conversation—Students learn a dialogue containing the grammatical points introduced in the lesson. Intonation lines and stress marks are provided.

Adaptation—The basic sentence patterns from the dialogue are practiced in different contexts to review material previously covered and to teach new vocabulary.

Study--New patterns are explained and simple, easy-to-follow examples are given.

Practice-The patterns are then practiced through substitution, expansion, transformation, and other types of drills, all set in meaningful contexts .

Read—Reading passages containing the new patterns are followed by questions for comprehension and oral practice.

Speak—Illustrated dialogues are read aloud, dramatized, or used as a stimulus for class discussion.

Think-Illustrations and key questions encourage students to be as original and creative with their English as their skills permit.

Pronounce—One sound or sound contrast is presented with facial diagrams, descriptions of articulation, and words and sentences to pronounce.

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Six workbooks parallel the textbooks. Designed for independent work by the students, they review and reinforce what is learned from the texts. Answer keys for the workbooks are found in the Teacher's Manuals.

Teacher's Manuals

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The cassettes cover all the dialogues and exercises in the texts, and are recorded by a variety of speakers. Each cassette is recorded on a four-phase sequence of stimulus, response, reinforcement, and repetition.

#18745 Book 1	**#18751 Workbook 1**
#18746 Book 2	**#18752 Workbook 2**
#18747 Book 3	**#18753 Workbook 3**
#18748 Book 4	**#18754 Workbook 4**
#18749 Book 5	**#18755 Workbook 5**
#18750 Book 6	**#18756 Workbook 6**
Each ¥910	**Each ¥670**

#18757 Teacher's Manual 1
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Tests

A set of tests is available in new Pressure-Fax duplicating masters for Books 1, 2, and 3. Pressure-Fax masters are printed with a unique ink formula which permits copies to be made without use of a duplicating machine. Each quiz presents a variety of objective activities, allowing the teacher to test the student's grasp of the material. Review tests evaluate student retention. In addition, oral tests evaluate listening comprehension and sound discrimination. The teacher is provided with answer keys for easy grading.

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In the earlier types of exercises, the lack of unifying and meaningful context permitted the student to practice the problems in isolation, more as a separate grammar game than as part of the language for communication...

Some Problems and Contradictions

There is nevertheless a confusion between conversational exercises and the separate skills of listening and speaking. Conversational activity, because it involves speaker-listener exchanges, is taken to represent all listening activity as well as all speaking activity, even though in fact it is limited to exchanges of short utterances with spontaneously changing contexts and not extended utterances on some specified subject, such as a lecture or a speech. And in speaking, conversation actually avoids extended and formally organized oral presentations and reports. At least one widely used international series of textbooks gives attention to more extended listening and speaking as separate skills.

In theoretical discussions, the concepts of creativity--as advanced by Chomsky, cognitive learning from cognitive psychology, and language acquisition from child language studies are accepted without question, and any suspected violation of them is condemned outright. Yet the inner contradiction involved in lumping together those three concepts surfaces in general purpose English courses in still unresolved ways.

Some international courses present no grammatical explanations or cognitively guided exercises and limit themselves to contextually restricted exercises without realization that this violates the cognitive-code dictum that the student should understand explicitly any grammmatical rule before it is applied. In other words, child language acquisition and cognitive-code learning are in theoretical conflict and actually clash in their practical appl icat ion.

Other courses that attempt to implement Chomsky's concept of linguistic creativity also clash with the concept of child language acquisition according to which the child's language evolves through various stages of non-well-formed sentences in terms of adult grammar. Chomsky's concept of linguistic creativity is essentially the application of the human capacity to apply general rules to behavior, in this case to the production of English sentences. To put it another way, Chomsky's creativity restricts the production of sentences to those that are well formed because they follow the rules of English grammar.

Another conflict arises with regard to the widely accepted and hitherto unchallenged concept of communicative competence. This idea has been understood in two ways: 1) the view that utterances must be appropriate to their communicative purpose in social situations, and 2) the view that utterances must succeed in communicating the basic intended meaning, whether well formed or not. In either interpretation, linguistic grading and internalization are made secondary to situational success. Thus, students are asked to create utterances for each situation, even if they lie beyond the linguistic competence of the students and turn out to be not well formed. The same problem arises with the idea of Notional/Functional Syllabuses, in which the selection and ordering of the learning material is determined by functions without regard to grammatical complexity, difficulty, or knowledge on the part of the students .

In attempting to present an overall view of the general characteristics of English language teaching today, we must not overlook the fact that some materials do overcome the conflicts mentioned. They have not abandoned grammatical grading and have incorporated the concept of meaningful grammar and

language functions. They maintain explicit teaching of some rules and patterns of grammar and pronunciation and give attention to separate skills...

A Synthesis for English Teaching in Japan

The teaching of English in Japan today should take into account the language, culture, and thought of the learners. It should provide for the learning stages identified as breaking the communications barrier; internalizing vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation systems of English; developing the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating; and going beyond language into selected areas of English for Special Purposes.

On the basis of current thinking, I would begin with contextually useful, graded conversations presented simultaneously through the ears, eyes, and mind, i.e., through speech, writing , and comprehension of their meaning in the most effective ways, including the use of the native language. The conversations should be internalized, not merely heard or read, and not necessarily memorized verbatim, and they should be adapted through controlled and creative exercises to the communicative interests of the learners.

The materials should provide for internalization of the vocabulary, grammar, and sound systems through explicit patterns and rules, accompanied by contextualized practices of various types adapted to the age and education of the students, with motivation as an important consideration. Generous use of pictures and color will enhance significantly the motivational value of the materials.

Provision must be made also for extended reading, listening, speaking, writing, and translating, at least at the advanced levels.

The main characters should not be Japanese learners talking English to each other, since that is not the purpose or socio-linguistic function of English; they should include Japanese, international, and English-speaking persons among whom the use of English would be necessary and appropriate.

English for special purposes should form part of the teaching of English in Japan chiefly as supplementary readers which students may choose according to their interests.

Adequate native speaker models should be provided through cassette recordings, slides, video-tapes, and other visual aids (which) should be accessible to schools and universities that wish to make them available to their students .

Valid assessment of proficiency and competence should be provided at all stages and levels, while tests of extreme difficulty or doubtful validity should be discouraged and abandoned altogether because of their adverse effect on motivation and selection.

Teachers whose competence in English is inadequate should be encouraged and helped to improve.. .A native English pronunciation is neither necessary nor sufficient for good teaching performance. Japanese teachers of English should attempt to master the phonemic distinctions of English (however). ..

Native English speakers should study Japanese in order to better understand the problems of their students in learning English and to help break the communications barrier when new material is introduced to the class.

Motivation should be stimulated and maintained by properly graded materials dealing with contexts that are useful and adapted to the students' cognitive and educational development. Student's efforts to learn should be generously praised by the teachers in view of the great achievement that learning a foreign language represents. *(The Daily Yomiuri, Nov.1, p.5)*

inter·views

Lado: The Audio-Lingual Method

Professor Robert Lado has had a long and distinguished career in the field of Applied Linguistics. Through is writings and texts--which now number over 200, he helped to revolutionize foreign language teaching and testing by estabZishing them on a more scientic basis. Originally a student of Charles C. Fries, the founder of the Oral Method., Dr. Lade succeeded his mentor as Director of *the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan. Since 1960, he has been at Georgetown University where he has served as Dean and Director of the Institute of Languages & Linguistics. During his brief stay in Tokyo, Professor Lado was interviewed by Fred Allen.*

* * * * *

You were a student of Charles C. Fries, one of the founders of the Audio-Lingual Method. Can you tel1 us how this method was developed?

First of all, let's place it in history. It coincides with the beginning of the Second World War. That's when it really got started, but there's a background preceding that. The Oral Approach,which is the parent of the Audio-Lingual,arose out of the interest in structural linguistics. For example,in 1939 Charles C. Fries organized--revived actually--the Linguistic Institutes at the University of Michigan. The Linguistic Institutes had been summer gatherings of a small group of American structural descriptive linguistics;...it was sort of a round table,and graduate students came (too). In this '39 Institute,upon the initiative of Charles C. Fries, you got coming together such people as Leonard Bloomfield, Edward Sapir, and their students--Charles Hackett, Moulton, Cowan, George Trager, Freeman Twadell, and the small group of linguists that later became identified with structural linguistics.

At about that time,the Department of State gave Fries a very small fund to develop materials making use of linguistics for chiefly Latin American professionals--doctors, dentists, nurses,and public health engineers--who were being brought to the United States to be brought up to date on new professional developments. And Fries then created the Intensive Course in English, and, for this intensive course, he put together...a group of linguists and students. Very prominent among these were Kenneth L. Pike, who became well known because of his work with American Indians, where the structural linguistics movement got its strength and insights. Pike did the analysis of American English intonation published in '45...(I'm now talking about '39) *. ..American English Intonation,* which was the first structural description of any language. The British had described British English intonation but not in structural terms. Pike reduced intonation to four significant, contrastive levels, plus the contours,plus the rhythm, plus the stress. Ile also brought with him Eileen Travor...and Virginia French...and others. With this team of graduate students in linguistics and English--it was a combination of Fries, English,and Linguistics--they implemented the Oral Approach which was the predecessor of the Audio-Lingual Approach. Therefore, Fries,in developing the oral approach was definitely influenced by structural linguistics. Structural linguistics also created the intensive course

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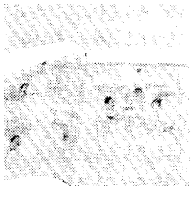

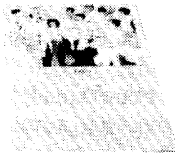

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The Linguaphone Teaching System is designed to encourage the development of communication ability in the target language, in a classroom situation, where the learners' communication strategies develop under the guidance and control of the teacher.

The syllabus includes a carefully selected progression of functional language items and extracts, which help to activate the learners' communication strategies through the integration of language items into imaginatively chosen, authentic contexts.

However LTS is not just a functional or communicative course. The LTS materials have been developed by combining the best features of accepted methodologies, making the course eclectic in the best sense of the word. We have endeavored to incorporate into these materials the effectiveness of the Direct Method, and the most useful pattern presentations of the Audio-Lingual Method with the strong pictorial support of the Audio-Visual Method.

Features

a) Wallcharts — 8 large, 97.6 x 7fcm illustrations for use by the teacher in establishing learning and practice situations.

b) Tapes — Tape practice should occupy about half the lesson time. The recorded practices include not only the usual closed drill exercises with only one correct response, but also practices where the student must supply an 'individual' reply, which only he can give. These replies are evaluated by the teacher who can comment or not as he wishes, as the tape practice progresses. This stage, where the student first begins to express himself, is in fact, one of the most important in learning a language.

c) The teaching programme in the Teacher's Manual is designed in such a way as to give full guidance to the teacher inexperienced in these teaching techniques, and to minimize preparation time for those accustomed to them.

d) Each Unit consists of Review, Structure, Dialogue and Oral expression sessions.

Structure — In these sessions, students are encouraged to look at the illustrations in their texts or wallchart guides while listening .to the listening, question and answer, choral, and dictation practices recorded on the tapes.

Dialogue — The dialogues are presented for general comprehension, choral speaking practice, detailed comprehension, and role pfaying.

Oral expression — This is where expressions learned in the structure and dialogue sessions are applied to new, realistic situations, using wallcharts, props, and role play.

e) Tests — There are tests for checking progress half way through and at the end of the course.

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materials for the Army.. under the program A.S.T.P., which stood for Army Specialized Training Program.

Now, the things that the Oral Approach did over and above descriptive linguistics were the use of phonemics, rather than phonetics, and this was developed by Pike... Phonemics was a structural analysis of the sound system of English. It introduced the Oral Approach developed by Fries and introduced another thing, intonation...and, finally, the idea of contrastive linguistics, which was conceived by Fries and then I developed it in my book, *Linguistics Across Cultures.* Now, the purpose of the Oral Approach was a little bit different from that of the A.S.T.P. The A.S.T.P. was a matter of survival, but the Oral Approach at Michigan was academic. It was for university graduates who wanted to specialize. Therefore, the Oral Approach always had reading as a part of its program. It taught grammar formally. The Intensive Course was made up of four classes: one was grammar or structure, pattern practice, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Fries summarized these views in a still-published book, *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language (1945,* the University of Michigan Press).

The schools, after the war, because of the success of linguistic methods, wanted to adapt this to the ordinary classroom, They took from the Intensive Course, and they took from the Armed Forces' intensive courses, and then they called it the Audio-Lingual (Method). It incorporated practically everything in the intensive courses. That's the historical origin and also the conceptual origin--structural linguistics applied to English, English intonation, phonemics, contrastive linguistics...

Let's leap *forward to the present. There's a new edition of the famous Lado Series now. How has it changed?*

It's still basically audio-lingual, but greatly modified. I would say the major, the largest and most important, change in it is contextualization. In contextualization, all of the exercises including the grammar, including what remains of pattern practice, the readings, the pronunciation exercises, everything, is put in context. The old isolated sentences that illustrated a particular rule or pattern are gone. Contextualization is achieved in two or three ways. One: the sentences themselves are connected to a particular situation. Two: the sentences are unified by a picture which sets the situation. Three: the response to the sentences depends on individual pictures, which would be an audio-visual component..The book is still grammatically graded, structurally graded, from unit to unit, from book to book. The conversations have been changed to be more functional because of new ideas on functional/notional language. And the teacher's manual explains the functions of the particular lines of the dialogues. Each of the dialogues responds to a particular situation and function. Therefore, there's a definite change in contextualization, (towards) putting it into functions, which more nearly approaches what I've called full linguistic performance.

Full linguistic performance is the use of language for communication at normal speed with attention on meaning and thought. So, the whole second edition, new edition, has been contextualized in order to make all the activity of the students come much closer to normal. And I have tried to include more exercises and activities in which the student has to create his own response express his own ideas. This is responding to the greater empasis on creativity.. .

So, contextualization is a relatively new development in the Audio-Lingual Approach. Is it due at least in part to the influence of the Notioml/Functional Approach?

I think it's the other way around. In other words, in my first edition, I began Unit One with introductions, and then later notional/functional said, "That's an important function of the language," and they're beginning with introductions. So, I am very conscious of the fact that I gave this prominent place to contextualization--let's be fair and say "autonomously" from the the notional/functional idea. I believe...that notional/functional has a fundamental problem, at least as explained by Wilkins (and I think they're aware of it), and that 's the problem of grading. They begin with a function and then try to use a variety of language devices to perform this function... They may throw very complex grammar at the student because it's necessary for that function. But in addition to that.. .the functions, as we all know, are not performed with the same linguistic instruments in every situation. Introductions for example, greetings for example, apologies are performed differently and use different language devices depending on the particular formality-informality of the situation,... .on the particular pragmatics of the situation. So the notional/functional (movement) has to face the problem of becoming a grammar of functions. By that I mean that you have, say, apologies, and then you must--to be fair to this function--you must explain how the apology would vary depending on the situation. If they do this, then it becomes a grammar of functions, and this can be very dull just as grammar explanation can be very dull. Now, Wilkins and others are aware of this, so they're talking about doing it on three levels. You go through once with these functions; then you come back again at a higher level and again at a (still) higher level. This still brings in the problem of grading and of fatigue because the student may say, "Look, we've already had introductions, why do we have to have them again?"

What we really need to use a language is to use functions and grammatical devices in context. When we manipulate language in context, then we come close to what I call "full linguistic performance." Therefore, the context, it seems to me, brings language teaching closer to normal than functions.

Do you see a fundamental difference between these two approaches in their origins or do you see a common starting point and merely different emphases?

I think Wilkins attempted to begin fully from functions, and see what happens, and that has been extremely valuable. Then as he progressed, he discovered that structure was still there...I think that what we had in the Audio-Lingual was not beginning exclusively from the grammar. I think Wilkins is, say, incomplete in his description of grammatical syllabuses because he says we learn one element of grammar, then another, and then we cannot communicate for a long time. But I have not found such books on courses in the Audio-Lingual Approach. I have never seen that done. Only in the very old-fashioned grammars where they start by explaining the noun, the adjective, (etc.).. .that would be a grammatical syllabus, but it 's not a good description of the Audio-Lingual Approach. Now, Fries, and I always began with both the structure of the language and the situation, and it's never been said in the literature how this was achieved at Michigan. At Michigan, we had an English House where the teachers lived with students and where everything was supposedly conducted in English. So, the functional uses, the situational uses, were taken care of by the presence of the teacher with five students at table, after meals.. .Then the class brought in, systematically, the patterns of the English language. So, the original Michigan (program) already had situational use and structural development. When this was taken away, you saw only the books, so they took only the patterns. Therefore, in my series, I began with conversations which were the basic materials at Michigan. I believe that a good strategy (it's not the only strategy, but a good

strategy) is to begin on a double track with situationally selected conversations and, at the same time, gradually build up the linguistic devices. At first it's extremely difficult because your linguistic devices are limited; therefore, your conversations tend to be limited. That's clear in the first edition, and that's even clearer in the new edition. So, I still subscribe to that. The difference in the new edition, of course, is that even the grammatical progression has been contextualized...

Have you been able to see any difference in the end product of these two approaches and by that I mean in the ability of students themselves?

I think it's too early to say. I know of no controlled experiments.

DO you think it's a fair criticism to say that students who did so many substitution drills and expansion drills were later at a loss to actually communicate?

Definitely, if that's all they did. I have seen classes in the Audio-Lingual Method where they just drilled pattern practice from the beginning to the end, and I really don't think the students would be equipped to use the language. However, when the Audio-Lingual Method was properly used by teachers who knew what they were doing, then...communication was there. So, the criticism would be correct of those classes that limited themselves to pattern practice. That was (however) only one of the devices used in the Audio-Lingual Approach.

DO you think that perhaps a drill-oriented methodology is better suited to languages other than English, for example, Spanish, which has a more complicated verb structure?

I don't think so. It just happens that in the origin of the Oral Approach we had grantees from Latin America who came there, so that we had more initial experience with them. No, I believe in this one universal: that no matter what the language background, the student has to internalize the system of English. The thing is that in this internalization, certain things will be easier and other things more difficult...

I like to put this matter of pattern practice into a larger frame. The term that I use now is "facility." One has to acquire facility in certain devices in order to free the mind for meaning and thought. Now, that facility, when you're dealing with constructing a question, is not at the automatic level,...but, say, being able to use the allophones of aspirated "p" or unaspirated "p," that has to be almost an automatic habit...And, I think that the attack of the transformationists has been "off the mark" in describing internalization (what they call habit) as the same for everything. We need facility; without facility, you cannot speak language. Some things have to become habits; others--different degrees of facility. And, that is true whether you use notional/functional, the Direct Method, Audio-Visual, or Audio-Lingual modified. The student has to develop facility, which sometimes we call "skill." What is skill but a certain facility to be able to put sentences together?

In your lectures this week, you've put great emphasis on teacher sensitivity to the students' language, whereas everybody has a tendency to think that we're preparing the students to work in the foreign language or foreign culture.

I've always put a good deal of emphasis on the teacher. This runs counter to the current trend which always tries to put this on the learner. Of course, we're interested in the learner, but we reach him through the

teacher. I think that the native speaker of English who teaches in Japan may have a tendency to assume that, if he keeps everything in English, it'11 be better for the students. I'm not so sure that I didn't favor that myself.

Certainly, if one has a class in which there are six language backgrounds, as is not unusual in the States, we couldn't possibly expect the teacher to handle six languages. And I think I have observed, and others have observed, that when you have mixed language backgrounds in your class, the chances of their speaking English to each other is greater. So, there are some advantages to this. But, the tendency I observe now is to ignore the fact that, even though we want to move them into English, that the way they think, the way they look at English has a tremendous influence on them,

We need at the present time, it seems to me, to call attention to this and not forget it, to become again aware of this. It's a matter of emphasis. I think I was responding to many articles which have appeared lately, rediscovering the universality of human learning. We have lots of research saying that children and adults of all language backgrounds use the same strategies to learn another language, children and adults of all language backgrounds seem to have a uniform progression in their acquisition of a language. That is what I was trying to attack. Though that is true, that is only one aspect of the learning process. The Japanese student, when he faces English, is still going at it in a very different frame of mind from a Spanish speaker.

What benefits do you think a working classroom *teacher can get from a knowledge of the structure of Japanese?*

I would say that it's so easy to forget how extremely difficult it is to learn a foreign language. I heard this from Twaddel first in 1935 at the Linguistic Institute. He told us that in order to become a good language teacher, you yourself should study a new language every six months (well, that 's too much to ask). . because we forget how extremely difficult it is. So, that 's one of the reasons I recommend that teachers of English in Japan study Japanese,... so that you're reminded how difficult it is for the students...

The second thing is I now believe in using the native language to clarify meanings. Not always, but there are things you cannot point to or put in pictures. And, in those cases, I say don't delay; just tell them what it is in their language.. . I would not be averse to, once in a while, using their language for points of grammar that are giving them trouble...

I really belive now that, in teaching a student, we have two avenues, and we should use both. One is what I call going through the senses, that is, giving them a model which they can see, hear, perceive..., so that by means of sensation they can create mental images of the utterance itself. Then, separately from that, we can reach the mind of the student by cognitive means, that is, for example , when I describe' the articulation of the sound, when I don't give any images but try rationally to reach his mind, so that he will cooperate with me in what I'm teaching. In giving the model, only English is what you can give. But in reaching his mind conginitively, if using English isn't enough, then I would switch occasionally to his native language to clarify in his mind what we're trying to do.

Some teachers might say that kind of explanation of grammar is a distraction from the language. Is that a valid criticism?

It is if you consider it a criticism; I think it's a virtue. A human being learns in a variety of ways, and cognitively being able to construct an expectation will help the student perceive a sensation. So, I really believe

it 's a virtue on our part. Where we go wrong is where we start explaining this for the sake of explaining it, and we get away from real communicational use.

How does memorization fit into this two-part scheme? Are you de-emphasizing it now?

I'm not really de-emphasizing it. I'm avoiding such clashes as **you** find. In the revised Language Teaching... I point out that culturally we have a tremendous resistance to memorization in the U.S. and in the Hispanic world. I don't know about Japan. I think in the Arabic world and in the Chinese, memorization is perfectly acceptable, but for Hispanics and for Americans, this buisness of memorization is an insult.

Now, I think that memorization is a crutch; therefore, **it's** not necessary. But **it's** a temporary scaffolding where we could have our examples, our models, in order to manipulate them. Memorization of a dialogue is not an end in itself, but it will permit a student to carry this example with him and then manipulate it. In that sense, I think memorization is extremely valuable. Where I've changed a little bit is that I would not insist on verbatim reproduction, whereas when I did the first edition, I would insist on verbatim reproduction. There may actually be some merit in student performance where he cannot give you the exact word, but he puts in a word that makes sense. So, I now use more internalization, which includes memorization, but it means putting into deep memory bits of the language.

As a kind of wrap-up, what advice do you have for us teachers?

I think that learning is an extremely complex and difficult thing, and I think, if we can divide conceptually the learning process into four stages, some things are clarified. These stages I call for convenience: stage one, breaking the communications barrier; stage two, internalizing units, elements, and systems; stage three, developing skills--conversation, listening, speaking, reading, writing; and stage four, using the language for some organized study beyond language, Let me clarify this a little bit and then maybe give examples. First of all, when we first present new material, we should not forget that the students' primary urge is to answer the implicit question, What does it mean?" No matter what we do later, we should be very conscious of the fact that anything new may require a clarification of what it means. Earlier, I might have said, "You just repeat it; we'll clarify it later. " No, no, no. The number one urge...is to clarify what it means, by whatever means: pointing, pictures, the native language, acting it out.. .The student should never be asked to manipulate an utterance that is not understood.

Now, as a matter of fact, the grammar-translation method did this. The only trouble is that it did only this. Therefore, we should then say, "Having done this, now they know what it means, but they'll forget it because it' s not become part of them." I then should concern myself with how am I going to help them make this theirs, internalize it. Now, units of vocabulary: memorize them. Grammatical rules: understand them first (that's breaking the communication barrier), explicitly when it's an important rule, but then put it into contextualized practices until they can use **it...ever** so slowly, ever so halting, but they know what it is, and they can construct the sentence. I think that most of the current methodological proposals are trying to skip that. I think notional/functional is trying to skip that. They would like to begin higher, and I think they're going *to* have troubles by not helping the student internalize.. .This applies to the grammar, to the vocabulary , to the pronuciation, and to contextualized appropriateness,..

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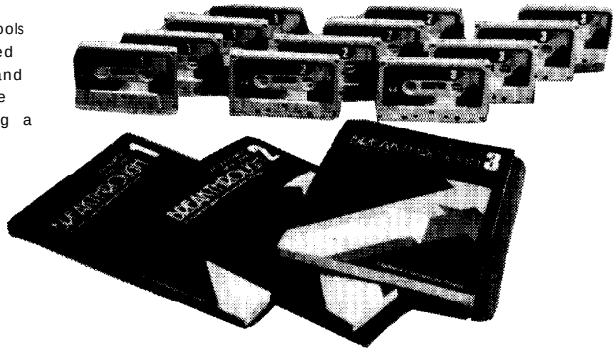

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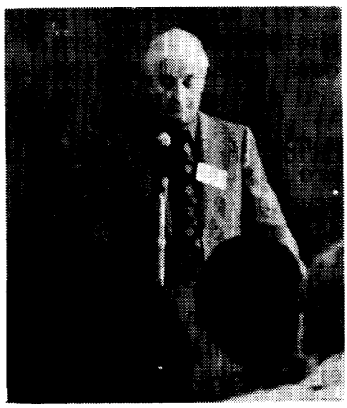
fea·ture

Communicative Language Teaching

A full year has passed since David A. Wilkins, Director of the Centre for Applied Language Studies at the University of *Reading, addressed LTIJ '78. At that time, Professor Wilkins called for a more communicative approach to language teaching, one which would emphasize the social and semantic rather than the formal* or *structural aspects of language. Since the publication of his path-breaking book,* Notional Syllabuses, *Professor Wilkins has been in the forefront of the effort to produce a viable alternative to the prevailing method of course construction. In the excerpt that follows, he defines the principle upon which the "communicative approach" is founded.*



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"Notional ", "functional", and "communicative" are terms which have entered the vocabulary of language teachers and applied linguists only within the last three or four years. Yet, as the spate of recently published and promised text -books shows, they represent ideas which have been eagerly taken up by the language teaching profession. It may not be clear yet whether these developments are merely another manifestation of the transitory fashions which seize the language teaching world from time to time or whether we are witnessing a much more substantial and long-lasting change of orientation. Either way, if the practising teacher is to be able to reach his or her own conclusions about the significance of the newer ideas and, most importantly, to be able to distinguish the spurious and superficial from the genuine and carefully thought-out, it is essential that he should have a clear understanding of the principles on which these developments are based. It is the aim of this short paper to contribute to this understanding.

We should, perhaps, begin by establishing the general argument that underlies the new approaches, since specific proposals for the practical application of the principles involved may take diverse forms. We are concerned with a change of emphasis and priorities in language teaching, a new conception of what we are seeking to achieve in teaching a language. From it will potentially develop new ways of organising the structure of language teaching, a reconsideration of the importance of the differing components of methodology, and the introduction of sometimes novel techniques in adopting this methodology in the classroom.

Whereas the focus in conventional modern language teaching has been on the language itself, it is proposed that the first priority should be given to the purposes that language serves, that is to say, communication. Few would wish to argue nowadays that learning the form of a language is a desirable educational end in itself, but, in practice, most of our language teaching enshrines this principle that a foreign language is best learned through systematic exposure to its formal system. We do this because we hold that a fairly comprehensive (practical). command of the grammatical ("structural") system, supported by an adequate vocabulary, is a necessary precondition for any effective communication in the language. This being the case, it seems only sensible to organise language teaching in terms of

this grammatical system. While it would be foolish to deny that mastery of the grammatical system is important for wide-ranging and effective communication, it can be argued that in concentrating our attention on the forms by which communication is achieved, we have tended to lose sight of the purposes for which language is being learned. If, instead, we take the communicative purposes of language learning as our starting point, we are more likely to obtain a proper balance between the ends of language learning and the means. It is this belief that informs the recent developments that concern us here and that enables us to characterize them as *communicative.*

Once we adopt a communicative perspective, we will note that there are a number of ways in which existing language teaching falls short of what we are trying to achieve. Most importantly, what we typically regard as the meaning of a sentence is by no means the same thing as its potential for use. An interrogative sentence may be used for many things other than asking questions, and, indeed, questions may be asked by many other means than the use of an interrogative. It follows that having learned how to construct sentences, one has still not necessarily learned how to use them. A second point is that in conventional modern approaches we seek to enable the learner to advance by means of the progressive accumulation of grammatical structures. The criteria by which these structures are selected and ordered are of a general linguistic and pedagogic character. They are not selected because they provide the means to meet identifiable social needs. As a result, a good deal of what is learned at the beginners and intermediate levels offers little immediate return for the learners' efforts. It is only when a fairly substantial range of language has been mastered that the learner possesses a linguistic repertoire which he can begin to learn how to exploit. Real communication is, in effect, a deferred objective in much current language teaching.

We will content ourselves with one further point which is of a predominantly methodological nature. Existing language teaching provides the learner with a carefully controlled linguistic environment. With the best of teaching, the learner becomes able readily to recognise the language to which he is exposed in this environment and to produce sentences of the type being taught with some fluency and accuracy. To this extent, it may be said that the learner has a practical mastery of what he has been taught. However, it is worth noting that this is a linguistic experience quite unlike that which is provided by language use outside the classroom. Far from being controlled and limited, natural language use is richly variegated, and the learner will eventually need both to understand language in its full variety and to draw on the whole range of language which constitutes his personal repertoire. If language teaching does not provide adequate opportunity for him to do this, he will not be able to perform outside the classroom with any degree of fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness. We will observe the familiar phenomenon of a classroom fluency which cannot be applied to real social use.

Communicatively oriented language teaching will seek to overcome these weaknesses by taking as the starting-point in the planning of language teaching the communicative potential which is sought for the given group of learners. To put it another way, the first step will be to establish a set of objectives which will have to be expressed not in terms of the grammatical structures and words that should be known, but in terms of the content and purposes of the acts of communication in which the learners can be expected to engage.

Ideally, the objectives will be determined by what is known about the actual needs of the learners. In this case, objectives will be the result

of accurate predictions of future language behaviour. Often, however, accurate predictions cannot be made. In this case, there has to be much more caution in establishing a suitable set of objectives. Bets may have to be hedged, and needs will have to be provided for which may, in practice, never be encountered. In spite of this uncertainty, it is important to establish that the difficulty in making accurate predictions is not a reason for not setting up explicit communicative objectives.

It follows from the above that there is no single set of objectives that will suit all kinds of learners. It is a mistake to imagine that "functional" language teaching is exclusively concened with the everyday use of spoken language. The general argument is often illustrated by reference to spoken language, but it is equally valid for other language skills and other kinds of language situations. The needs of a technologist to read technical papers or of an export correspondent to read and write letters in the domain of commerce are every bit as functional as those of the intending tourist.

It does not even follow that the "'general" language learner should be primarily concerned with the spoken language. This may be a suitable aim, but the case would have to be argued. All in all, then, it is no part of the intention to set up a new, normative syllabus that all language teaching should follow.

In using the term "communicative to describe the newer approaches to language teaching, we have done little more than indicate in a general way that we are seeking to give a more explicitly semantic orientation to language teaching, We have left open the question of how these communicative objectives are to be defined. A full characterization of the aimed-at language behaviour would draw on many dimensions of description. We would certainly need to know how far both the spoken and written channels would be involved and to what extent the learners would need to be both producers and receivers of language. We would have to establish the domains in which the language activity would take place and in what "styles" it would be useful for the learner to be able to operate (e.g. colloquial, informal, formal). But in themselves neither these nor a number of other possible factors determines what it is that is communicated on a given occasion, however significant they may be in conditioning the form that a particular act of communication may take. It is to meet this need that much use has been made of the concept of "function".

Reference has already been made to the distinction to be drawn between the terms "interrogative" and "question". "Interrogative" is a grammatical term, describing a particular kind of sentence structure. "Question" is a category of use, i.e. a *functional* category. We are much more readily able to understand what someone is doing with language if we say that he is asking a question than if we say he is producing an interrogative. It is possible to see any larger stretch of language, whether produced by one or several speakers, as being made up of a succession, of such functions. Analysing the functions to be found in any piece of speech or writing enables us to establish what it is a person intends to communicate to the person or people addressed.

It would probably be impossible to establish a definitive list of the functions to be found in a given language, but, in English for example, it might include such obviously interactive functions as questions, requests, suggestions, invitations, refusals, agreements and denials, the expression of such emotions as pleasure, sorrow, sympathy, anger, surprise and dislike and functions commonly found in longer stretches of language, such as narrative, comparison, reason, exemplification, description and condition.

A functional approach to language teaching will be one that sees the communicative purposes of language users in terms such as these. It will therefore set out to enable learners to master those functions that are seen as relevant to their needs. The majority of the "communicative" courses that have appeared so far have, in fact, been *functional* in this sense.

The question will now arise as to why it has been thought necessary to introduce the further distinction of a *notional* approach to language syllabus design. If we assume that we are seeking *to* make our approach to language teaching a wholly communicative one, we have to take account of the fact that functional meaning, in the sense in which this is presented above, is not the only kind of meaning that sentences or utterances convey. Most sentences also contain some kind of proposition which further contributes to the meaning of the sentence. To put it crudely, we do not simply ask a question; we ask a question about something. This aspect of the meaning of sentences has been variously called propositional, cognitive or ideational. It expresses our actual perceptions of events, states or ideas. As we construct sentences, we are invariably involved in expressing concepts of time, place and quantity, in representing the relations between the persons, things and actions that we are recounting, in relating what we observe to the context in which it occurs. In any language teaching we could not possibly be satisfied unless the learners could handle (i.e. express or recognize) these concepts or, to introduce a further term, *conceptual meaning.* An adequate language competence presupposes the ability to express both functional and conceptual meaning...

Much of the conceptual meaning in a language is expressed through the grammatical system. "Time", for example, correlates closely with "tense"; "place" with "adverbials". If learners have already mastered a reasonable proportion of the grammatical system, whether or not this was through a communicative style of teaching, they will probably be able to express a good deal of the conceptual meaning that characterizes the language. In such a case, a functional statement of objectives and a functional organisation for language teaching is not unreasonable, since the other important aspects of meaning can be taken for granted. It is no accident that most purely functional courses are aimed at intermediate learners. In that way, the problems of teaching conceptual meaning are avoided...

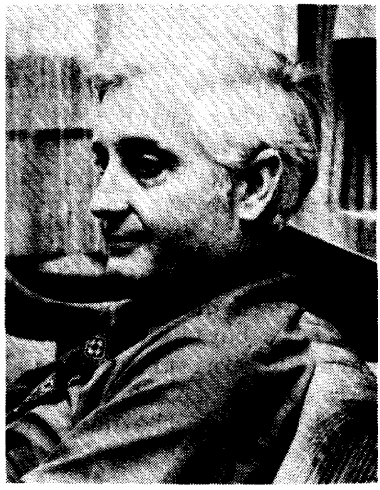
It is very important to realize that a functional approach to language teaching does *not* mean teaching people handy phrases for everyday situations. We wish the students to learn the ways in which important functions are performed, and we are interested in these in so far as they are conventionalized in the language. In this way, what is learned is applicable to many situations of use. Anything less would be merely an elaborate form of phrasebook learning. This point about generalization is, if anything, even more important in the case of the grammatical system. The grammar of a language remains its heart. There is no serious way in which a person who has not substantially mastered the grammatical system can be said to know a language. The grammar provides the essential mechanism for the individual to construct sentences (utterances) which are appropriate to his communicative intentions. We will have to satisfy ourselves, therefore, that in adopting a broadly communicative approach to language teaching, we are not sacrificing the grammar of the language. If we are not happy that through the systematic presentation of types of conceptual meaning and the means by which they are expressed, the grammar will be satisfactorily acquired, then we may prefer to retain a more explicitly grammatical element in our teaching, alongside the functional and conceptual,

[From Functional Materials and the Classroom Teacher *(eds., K, Johnson & K. Morrow, pp. l-11 Centre for Applied Language Studies, Reading, 1978.]*

inter·views

Wilkins: The Notional Approach

Perceiving the ineffectiveness of traditional courses, the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe took upon itself the task of producing a new, more utilitarian method of language instruction. The result was the Notional SyIlabus devised by David Wilkins. During the decade since the project began, the Notional/Functional Approach has gained wide and enthusiastic acceptance by those seeking an alternative to a structurally based curriculum. While attending a three-week seminar on the Functional Approach in Reading this past summer, Newsletter Editor David Bycina talked to Professor Wilkins about the beginnings of the movement, its impact on Europe, its applicability to all four language skills, and its prospects for the future.



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By way of background, would you explain how the Council of Europe first got involved in developing what has come to be known as the Notional/Functional Syllabus, and just when that occurred? I've seen two dates: 1969 and 1971, . . . '71, when *your group was put together, I think; '69, I'm not really clear about. Could you clarify that?*

Well, even I can't fully remember the dates, but I think, in my case, '69 was probably when I first went to the Council of Europe. You don't want time taken up with an explanation of the roles and so on of the Council of Europe, but the thing is that it's an organization that has representatives of all the West European countries on it. It had originally been the sole talking place politically in Western Europe before the settlement of the Common Market, and originally it had a very important political function. But once the Common Market came into being, it was really left with only relatively residual things and has really concentrated very much on the field of education, social issues--welfare, culture, that sort of thing--because those were things that the other political organizations were not concerning themselves with at that stage to a very great degree. And, they have a series of sections, one of which is concerned with adult education, what they call out-of-school education. In British English, it's adult education. And, I don't know what the source of this was, but they had convened meetings on the teaching of languages to adults and were particularly keen on (as all the European institutions are) promoting the teaching of languages. And, they got together people, who they felt had some sort of experience to, I suppose, produce working documents, reports,...generally try and influence the directions that governments were taking, the policies they were developing. I got invited to this at some point after it had come into being, and that was about 1969.

In 1971, the whole thing was reconstituted after a meeting, a conference which had been held with representatives of all the European countries, that is to say, representatives of the ministries of education, people on inspectorates, and things like this. And, the group consisted of about four people at that stage: John Trim, who was Director; Jan van Ek, who eventually pro-

duced this thing called *The Threshold Level;* Rene Richterich, a Swiss who was particularly interested in analysing language needs; and myself. Subsequently, people were added to it, and it expanded. And really, their interest was that in a large community, the multi-lingual community of Western Europe, there was an increasing mobility, and there was also an increasing emphasis on continuing education; that is, education continuing right the way through adulthood after the conventional forms of education had finished. Also the fact that in a period of very great technological and economic change, people were probably likely to need to be retrained for jobs different from that which they had originally had, and this might very well involve languages. So, there was this whole feeling that languages were going to become more important for the adult population,. . .and that the Council of Europe was an organization which should attempt in some way to stimulate change.

I don't know how the team of people involved now (because I'm no longer directly involved in their work),... I don't know how they conceive their work now, but I would see it as an attempt to persuade,...influence governments and ministries towards a particular kind of approach to the teaching of languages to adults, and that approach is essentially one that is designed to meet the needs of individual learners. And from that comes the association with what has come to be called "communicative language teaching" and so on, because that also is very much based on the principle that what we are setting out to do is to enable people to learn to communicate in a language. And in order to do that, you need to know what kind of communication it is they've got to carry out. So, that, if you like, a sort of bureaucratic initiative on the part of the Council of Europe has actually stimulated quite a lot of thinking which is quite advanced in language teaching.

Could I ask, was there in *any way a predisposition on the part of the members of this committee towards a notional/functional approach when the committee was constituted, or was this a result primarily of looking at the needs of language Learners in Europe?*

No, I think it was the outcome; it wasn't a predisposition. What predisposition there was probably stemmed from a realization that the relatively traditional approaches adopted in European countries were not terribly successful in giving people the kind of practical proficiency or competence in language which it was thought was needed, and that, therefore, it was necessary to look for something fresh. But just exactly what that was going to be was not clear. And, in a sense, I feel personally that the biggest contribution that I made was probably to help to influence the direction that it subsequently took. But that was very much the outcome of the work that we did. I certainly didn't go into my work for the Council of Europe with this very much in mind at all. And I must say that my own ideas about notional approaches to teaching are very much the result of the work that I did for the Council of Europe. That was the stimulus.

In your own work, before associating with the Council, were there any tendencies that might have pointed in the direction of a notional syllabus?

I would say it's probably almost wholly an outgrowth of the work for the Council. I think the only hint--but it's not original in any way--of such thinking would be that I would subscribe very much to the view that language teaching has to be concerned not only with the forms of language but with what those forms mean. That is not a new idea at all, because it is very much in the tradition of British English-as-a-foreign-language teaching anyway, which never favoured a highly mechanistic approach to language

teaching. The worst excesses of audio-lingual teaching--and I say that advisedly, because I am sure that not all audio-lingual teaching went to that extreme--but the worst excesses of audio-lingual teaching of a highly mechanistic character,... those were never excesses that were characteristic of our kind of English-as-a-foreign-language teaching. So, the tradition that I was trained to in EFL teaching was very much one where you were concerned, on the one hand, with the forms of language but also very much with how you conveyed the meanings of those forms to your pupils. And, if I go back 20 odd years to my own training as a teacher, a great deal of the time was spent in discussing how you would present certain structures in teaching, but with a view not only to insuring that there was adequate repetition, and so on, of those structures, but also that the basic concepts that they expressed were clearly identifiable from the manner in which we were teaching. so, I don't feel that was new in any way, but I would share that, and, in a sense perhaps, it makes one sympathetic then, when one begins to look at things afresh, to the notion that meaning might be all important in language, which is partly what characterizes the newer approaches.

Well, since the publication of your book and van Ek's proto-syllabus, several texts have come out--I think may be 20 at least--which seem to subscribe to this communicative approach;20 texts published in England, that is. I was wondering whether there has been any practical consequence on the continent as a result of the Council of Europe's proposals?

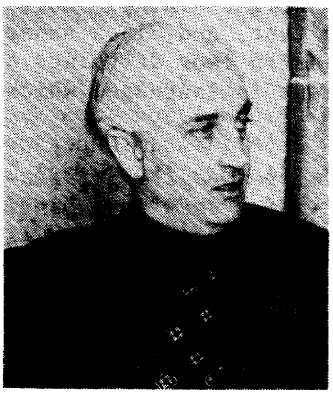
Uh, that's a very difficult question for me to answer because, to answer it, I'd have to be pretty familiar really with publications and so on which don't necessarily reach us here. I think (however) there is no doubt that there has been a lot of work done in certain centres on the continent which is very different from the styles of language teaching that were being adopted before, which reflect the influence anyway of ideas like those of the Council of Europe. I don 't think that one has to read my book on notional syllabuses or have read the Council of Europe's documents. There are various ways in which people might be influenced to revise their thinking. There are plenty of other people, apart from myself, who are working in this sort of field and who are disseminating ideas. So, where the ideas come from exactly, I wouldn't like to say, but there are certain centres. In France, for example, at the University of Nancy, there's long been a team of people who've been seeking out new ways of doing things and whose approaches bear considerable similarities to some of the things that we do. I think a lot of it remains, though, at a fairly experimental level within the institution, rather than being more widely applied.

In Germany, certainly, there are certain of the Lander which have been very busy revising syllabuses and things like this, and indeed even producing new courses for their equivalent of comprehensive schools, for example. In Scandianavia, in Sweden at least (and I guess probably elsewhere), there has certainly been work done.. .

Now, you said that there had been perhaps 20 textbooks produced in this country which claim influence of functional/communicative teaching and so on. Those, of course, in general are books which are offered very widely on the market. To that extent, they are limited because they cater for stereotypes of learners, rather than for actual individual learners. Very many of them, in point of fact, are really geared to the private language schools in this country, where you've got foreigners coming to Britain to follow intensive language courses, and they can restrict their applicability to that situation. It's quite a large market; therefore, commercially interesting for the publishers.

But, I think the principles underlying all this suggest really that one would be moving away from the standard textbook, sold globally, and more towards the idea either of resources of language teaching material, perhaps relatively unstructured (I say perhaps), which the teacher in a particular institution uses and exploits in a way that seems appropriate there,...or, (perhaps it's not an alternative; this is something that perhaps supplements it) , the idea of the teacher or the individual institution creating much more of its own language teaching material within the institution, rather than buying it...

Are you saying then that you're skeptical of the possibility of developing a functional textbook that can be used *globally?*



Well, I think it might be difficult. I think, for example, there will immediately be a difference. If you take a school population of language learners, if you're dealing with European countries, then there is a reasonable prospect that an adequate proportion of those pupils will at some time find their way into an English-speaking country. In the case of Europeans particularly, it 's usually Britain. And also the amount of travel, particularly, between the **countries**--English-speaking people visiting their countries and so on--is such that it is not unrealistic to believe that quite a number of them will have **occasions** to use English in the future. When you're dealing with populations in--I don't know--perhaps say parts of South America, parts of Asia perhaps, that's a much less plausible proposition. And if, as I would argue, we base our language teaching on the characteristics of the learners, then it would seem by definition that you cannot easily design a syllabus or a course which meets the needs of both those different kinds of school learners. So, yes, to that extent, I would be skeptical.

I think language learning has to be related to the particular contexts, either the contexts of the way in which the learners already find themselves or those one can reasonably assume they will find themselves in the future. And those can be very different contexts in different parts of the world.

In general, therefore, the main thrust of the functional approach seems to be to provide what is most useful and *meaningful to the students...and also to provide au-then-tie materials for them to use. This raises another question though. On the basis of my own survey of some of the functional texts, it appears that these "authentic" materials tend to be very, very culture-bound. Many of the books produced thus far deal with England or, more specifically, a small town in England (even Reading, I believe). I just wonder whether the specifies of British life--street signs, restaurant menus, theater posters, etc. --are of interest,* or use, *to a world-wide language-learning population. Might this not be a dead-end into which the movement seems to be going?*

Well, I doubt whether it's a necessary dead-end. I don't think it is inevitable that authentic materials should be of that character. I'm sure it's not inevitable. I suspect it goes back to something I said earlier, which is that much of the material that is published nowadays has been originally prepared with the private language schools, the British private language school market, in mind; that is, where you do actually have students studying on the spot. Therefore, since many of those schools do exist in small British provincial towns, it is relevant to them at the time they are

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studying it. It wouldn't be relevant if you are in a small provincial town in Iran, maybe, where you're never likely to find yourself--you know--outside your own country, let alone in a particular town in Britain.

But, I don't see that as being an insuperable obstacle. There's absolutely no reason at all why authentic materials should not be authentic in a way which is relevant to the learners themselves, and that may not involve a particular British culture. It could be a local culture, for example. Actually, that is a wider issue which has got nothing to do with notional syllabuses or anything of that sort at all-: how far language learning should be contextualized against the context of the target language culture or against the context of the pupils' own language culture. And, I don't think there% any general answer to that particular question. It depends enormously upon the particular circumstances.

In most European countries, it is, I think, generally thought that children in learning English (and I'm talking about children) should become familiar with certain features of British culture, being the nearest English-speaking country, because--if you like--it% part of their European heritage. It's also educational for them to become aware that nearby is a culture which is different, which has different values, perceives things differently, and so on. So, for that situation, to present the English language against the background of a particular kind of English culture is not a totally unreasonable thing to do.

But, there are plenty of other parts of the world where the motivation for teaching English in schools is quite different,..is a much more narrowly functional one, and the functioning could conceiveably be largely local functioning, rather than in an English-speaking community. And, in that case, it may very well be felt that the way in which you present the English language is against the local cultural background, not against the target language cultural background. I don't think there's any right or wrong in this. I think it's got to be decided. It's almost a political question.

And indeed, in the very first teaching post which I had, the policy of the country where I taught was under no circumstances to teach English or American culture. That was specifically to be excluded. I was teaching in Africa. The language was seen as a tool of inter-African communication. If there was to be any other cultural element, it was to be of some other African country, not of one of our English-speaking countries. And, in that case, we had to do our best to avoid all of the kind of topics and things which up till then had probably largely characterized language teaching materials.

Content apart, Brumfit suggested in his review of your book that just teaching the functions, the language behavior of English to foreigners tends to impose our cultural values or patterns upon them. He seems to consider this a kind of cultural chauvinism and, therefore, a bad aspect of the functional movement. Do you think this is a fair and telling criticism?

There's an element of truth in it, but I'm not sure I would regard it as a "telling" criticism. And I think, again, what I've just said also, in a sense, applies to this question, too. It depends what you want out of language learning. I don't think there's any doubt that if you want to become highly proficient in a language, you can't really do that unless you become aware of, perceptive of, many aspects of the culture because knowing how to use a language means knowing when to use it, what is appropriate, and that means recognizing features of the particular society in which you are using the language.

You could not become truly bi-lingual, for example, without, in a sense, absorbing many of the elements of the culture of both of the languages in which you were bi-lingual. When one says "absorb," perhaps that's a bad word to have chosen because I think one can become familiar, one can even operate through values,. . . against the background of values which you don't necessarily adhere to yourself.. . It's a consciousness which is needed. I don't think it necessarily demands acceptance.

On the other hand, I don't think there's any doubt that, when you come to design language teaching materials, this does actually pose you concrete problems because the question arises: Are you going to teach your foreigner to behave like a middle-class Englishman with a certain educational background, who behaves linguistically, and in other ways, according to a certain pattern, or are you going to choose some other model, or are you somehow going to have a rather arbitrary selection of features which doesn't actually characterize any one particular individual person. There is certainly a practical problem there. And again, I presume that in those countries which don't feel very strongly that an English culture is of interest to them, or of interest to their population, to their children and so on, they would be more reluctant to adopt the kind of degree of functionalism which I'm talking about now...

So *far, the* notional/functional *approach seems to have concentrated on teaching the spoken language. Could you comment on its applicability to teaching the other three skills:* listening, *reading, and writing?*

The focus has been very much on the spoken language and probably very much on teaching people to perform certain functions in a language. And I think that characterizes many of the texts that one sees now available on the market. That is what they are setting out to do; they are setting out to enable people to make requests, to ask questions, to do this and to do that. And it's probably true that a lot of people have interpreted the notional approach very largely in those terms. I don't think that's entirely unfair because that is the way in general in which the notional approach has been presented in the articles and books that have been published, including my own. We tend to have emphasized that kind of skill in language. We've used those kinds of examples to illustrate the points we wanted to make, and there may, therefore, have been an assumption that this was all that has been intended.

In fact, I think there is in the ideas about notional teaching enough to show that, in varying ways, the ideas can also be applied to other skills in language teaching. But, I think that the task of planning the teaching of those skills probably is carried out in a rather different way,

When we talked about notional teaching, we tend to have assumed that we can identify particular functions, particular concepts. We find ways of expressing them, and we teach them. There is at least the intention, in a way, to isolate things, and the attempt, then, to get people to learn them. If you're dealing with receptive skills--listening and reading--, then, in a sense, you're dealing with complete and integrated texts in which many different things are taking place simultaneously; all sorts of functions are being performed; all sorts of concepts are being expressed. And, except for a highly artificial text, you couldn't isolate these or insure frequent repetition of certain elements.

So, it seems to me what happens, what will happen, in the teaching of reading and the teaching of listening is that one sets out to teach people to recognizes these features of texts... that at a certain point in the text,

what the writer is doing is such and such a thing;...(that) this particular utterance in a text is related to a previous utterance in a particular way...

So, what I'm really saying is that the notional influence is not in planning the construction of texts particularly, but in appreciating why certain features exist in the text and what it is they actually convey to the reader (or they are intended to convey to the reader),...or, if it's a piece of listening material, then to the listener. So, it occurs more in the interpretation of the texts, I think, that you introduce the notional dimension, rather than in the design and construction, or planning of the text.

I think the essential perspective, the philosophy of notional teaching--that we give an altogether more semantic emphasis to our teaching--is just as applicable to receptive skills as it is to productive skills,..Our emphasis has not been on the written side, but I see no reason why it couldn't be extended. Indeed, there is work being done. Keith Johnson (of the Centre) has been doing work on the teaching of writing skills as opposed to the teaching of speaking skills.. .And, I think that we will find that, both through articles and to some extent through published teaching materials, the notional thinking (will be) spreading into these other areas.

One objection that I've heard raised against the communicative method of teaching is that it lacks a correlative means of testing. Would you comment on any developments in this area?

Well, I think that's a reasonable point. I wouldn't say that it was a criticism of communicative teaching. It's a criticism of testing, rather than communicative teaching. Teaching must be more important than testing. And even if that was absolutely true--we were able to teach, but we weren't

able to test in an appropriate fashion--, I would argue very strongly that that does not invalidate the teaching. If we are convinced that teaching in this way is worthwhile, then we would be getting our priorities very wrong if we came to the conclusion that we shouldn't teach this way because we couldn't test that way.

Having said that, I think all one can say is that there is work being done on testing with the intention of making testing also more communicative. I don't think it's likely to reflect directly the sort of things we say about notional teaching. By this I mean that I 'm not at all sure how far we're ever going to be testing whether people can make requests or whether people can do this or do that. But, I do think that we may very well find that forms of test are evolved, or forms of assessment are evolved, which try to get more fully at how successfully people can communicate in a language, rather than what proportion of grammatical elements, what proportion of phonological elements, or lexical elements they know...

If I can just explain what I mean by that. I mean that when you take our conventional modern multiple-choice-type objective tests (they don't have to be multiple-choice, but they very often are), you simply arrive at the end with a score. It may be broken down into different parts so that you can say such-and-such a percentage on the grammar test (or structural) test and such-and-such a percentage on the pronunciation test. But, whether the scores are given individually like that or whether they're put into one global score, you have no actual means of knowing what that percentage means in terms of real ability to communicate.

If I am asked (as I sometimes am here at the university), whether such-and-such a student has a good enough command of English to follow a course in microbiology, or whatever it is,. . .if I give him one of our existing forms of test in which I get a percentage at the end of the day, I can only vaguely say, "Well, he seems quite good at English," or something like this, according to his percentage. Whether he can actually perform certain of the tasks which are going to be required of him as a student of microbiology, I have no idea whatsoever. I don't even know whether he will be able to make sense when he talks to his supervisor,, ..whether he will understand his supervisor,

And so, I think what is going to happen is that testing is going to be more concerned with that kind of question in the future, than with the questions that have occupied us in the past.. .That 's what I mean by communicative testing. It's more likely to be of the form: Can people perform such-and-such a task and to what degree can they perform them? I think that's the sort of direction, probably, that testing will take.

In addition to developing a communicative test, what else would you say that the notional/functional movement has to do in the future?

I would probably say that the need is for us to stand back and to take a more objective view of what we are doing. At the moment, there is a lot of very exciting, inspiring, original thinking about actual activities in classrooms, actual techniques to be shown through the materials that we use when we are teaching. People are responding, I think, with a great deal of enthusiasm to the stimulus that the notional/communicative movement generally has imparted to language teaching. Now, I don't necessarily want to express any skepticism about this, but, if language teaching is to be more than just a matter of fashion, then it seems to me we have to attempt to assess rather more rigourously than we are doing at the moment the success of what we are doing.

It seems to be the case that practicing language teachers have taken up

the ideas with great enthusiasm and have judged that what they are doing is of immense benefit to their pupils. If we are to study language teaching in an objective fashion, in a scientific fashion, we need to give some more substance, I think, the the beliefs on the part of practicing teachers and on the part of people, I suppose like myself, who tend to propagate the ideas that people are trying to put into effect.

The feeling is that what we need alongside of all the actual exciting development of language teaching material and technique is a considered program of careful research which will, for example, help us to understand how far the new approaches can achieve the same degree of success as achieved with other modern approaches to language teaching, structural approaches, while also achieving something further. Or whether, in the end, some kind of compromise will have to be affected between the strictest kinds of functionalism, on the one hand, and these rather more. traditional, structural approaches, on the other. It may be that, in the end, we shall find our language teaching is indeed a bit of a mixture of the two.

But, at the moment, we're doing it all by instinct and perhaps not enough research has gone on to the question of evaluating how successful this all is. Teachers are convinced, but I think, if we are to convince skeptics --which perhaps we ought to be setting out to do as well, then we would like to have objective evidence that it works and evidence that people can't easily reject. And that is what I feel perhaps is the need. Perhaps it's the need for people like myself to carry this out, people who are in universities. Perhaps this is the job of universities. It isn't perhaps the job of the ordinary practicing language teacher who is seeking to bring the greatest benefit to his pupils. The practicing language teacher is perhaps convinced that this approach does bring immense benefits. It would be up to people like myself to demonstrate objectively that this is the case.

re·views

'Wha' ja say?'

Jonathan Holliman

When pressing the button on the tape recorder, I often found myself asking what I was trying to achieve and what I was asking the students to do. It was for me the most confusing area of language teaching, so I immediately tried out many of the ideas that Mike Rost suggested in his presentation. I can now report that after only a few weeks students are responding in a way which previously would have taken me months to achieve, not to mention the added confidence I have from understanding what I am supposed to be doing.

The presentation, which included many examples, exercises and practical tips, gave a general overview of the listening and speaking process and illustrated which particular classroom activities help or hinder it. Recent analysis of how people de-code aural messages, the processing of information in the brain, etc., can clarify what is actually happening in the classroom. As a result, it becomes obvious that it is necessary to really teach "comprehension" and help the student understand what is happening between the time the tape is played and the time to produce a spoken response. In Mike Rost's classes the objective is for students to be able to listen to and contribute to a conversation with a native speaker for 10 - 15 minutes and give a spoken report or summary on a non-technical subject heard from a 15 - 30 minute tape. Thus, spoken reproduction or response is, according to Rost, an integral part of "listening comprehension. "

In designing listening comprehension material, it is first necessary to recognize the kinds of threshold levels that students have somewhere between complete understanding and nothing at all. This threshold is not only governed by the linguistic level of the students but also the speed of the tape, the accent of the speakers, the number of speakers, etc. However, it is certain that from whatever level the students start, they will always get something. Even without any knowledge of English, a student may be able to tell how many people were talking, whether it was an argument or an interview, or even the situation in which the conversation was taking place. In fact, it was convincingly demonstrated that due to natural redundancy in speech and the ability of a listener to predict or complete what the speaker says, it is possible to grasp up to 90% of the meaning from as little as 20% of the actual message.

It seems that by shifting to a wider view of comprehension and getting the student to understand and respond at many other levels besides the specific content, the student will be assisted to approach the kind of listening process that the native speaker/listener automatically builds up from childhood.

The listener actually processes (or de-codes) the message at various levels, which Mike Rost lists as:

Context Level - (the background situation: the place, the number of people, attitude of the speakers, tone of voice, etc .)

Function Level - (what is being achieved by the spoken exchange: giving information, complaining, agreeing, etc.)

Time/Sequence - (when did something occur and which came first)

Content Level - (the details of the message: who, what, when, where, etc.)

Probability - (what is going to happen next; what is the implication)

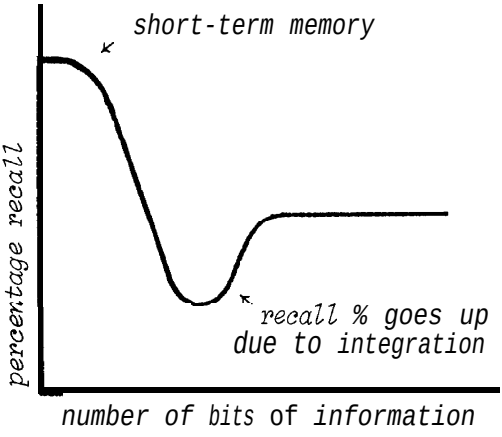
Theme Level - (what is it related to; why did he say that)

Applicability - (how can I use this information in the future)

Culture - (how does this reflect cultural differences; does the way of expression have a different cultural implication)

Because students generally learn English through a written medium and with an emphasis on grammar/translation, they tend to adopt similar learning strategies in listening. Most listening texts and materials also tend to adopt this approach and emphasize a level of understanding which encourages students to concentrate on the content level. Students thus tend to catch the content as a series of disjointed words or phrases. Spoken reproduction then follows the same pattern, sometimes little more than a yes or no answer or a few words in incomplete sentences.

To move away from excessive concentration on the content level and to help students develop more comprehensive listening ability, processing at other levels can be specifically encouraged. Students can be assisted to identify functions and predict what the response in a conversation might be, then compare their guess with the actual taped response. They can also analyse the time and sequence of events by correctly arranging randomly listed information or clues given beforehand. By getting students to try and visualise the actual situation in which a taped dialogue takes place the context level can be described. It has been found that helping students to process information at various levels improves their comprehension at each level. Conversely, excessive concentration on the content level means that students depend on their short-term memory to produce facts and does not assist the integration of those facts, which is the basis of longer-term memory. This integration of the message, or the process of finding a pattern to meaning and storing that pattern, is one of the essential aspects of listening comprehension and is the process which is chiefly responsible for enabling students to adequately paraphrase or summarize from an aural cue.



If the percentage recall is plotted against the number of bits of information given in the listening passage the percentage goes down rapidly once the limit of short-term memory has been reached. However, after a time the percentage starts to go up again and then level off due to the process of integration. As was demonstrated, the organisation of the listening material itself can aid integration. For example, random lists of unrelated words are the most difficult to remember but related words or sentence patterns are much easier. Students often develop their

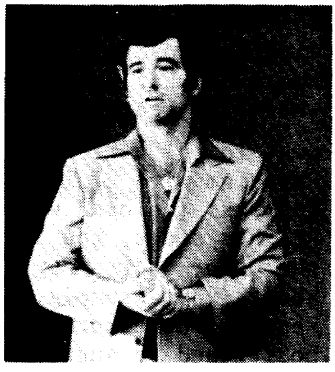
own strategy for memorization, one of the commonest being translation into their own language. By developing the student's skill at integration, including recognition of patterns and sequence, guessing from the context, etc., it is possible to improve listening comprehension and reduce the amount of translation.

The process of integration can be further assisted by designing the listening material to include more pauses, redundancy, sentences which are bound more directly to each other, obvious clues to the context, and so on. Students can also be assisted with ways of expressing what they heard. Such expressions as "I'm not sure, but I thought he was talking about. . . ," or "I heard the man ask..but I didn't catch the reply," etc. can be given to overcome disjointed sentences. It also appears necessary to me to make sure students understand the usage of verbs such as talk, say, ask, tell, etc.

The teacher need only stop and think about which activity is encouraging which level of processing or what extent of integration to realize that most listening comprehension materials could be much better designed to systematically achieve real listening comprehension objectives. Mike Rost's presentation was an excellent practical contribution to the theoretical basis as well as the methods which can be adopted in the classroom.

The Hourglass Paradigm

Stanley Sorensen



An explanation and demonstration of what Tom Pendergast, Jr. calls his "Hourglass Paradigm" was given at the October meeting of JALT's Kanto branch in a day-long workshop.

At first, Tom discussed the three kinds of variables affecting language acquisition with examples of how several approaches had different effects on the language learning process. The first variable discussed was presage, or conditions such as motivation, age, prior knowledge, anxieties, etc., which the student brings into the learning situation. The second variable was the *environmental* condition, or the learning situation itself. The number of students, the physical conditions of the learning situation, and the intensity of the learning are important factors here. The process variable, which includes the learning method used and elements of the teacher's personal style, was mentioned next. This variable is the one over which the teacher should have the most control and responsibility, as the choice of method will sometimes have a strong influence on the student's heuristic response to the program. For example, the use of a listening comprehension approach in the early stages of a program would not necessarily get the students speaking right away, but it would reduce the pressure and complexity of the learning situation and thus give the students more energy to concentrate on acquiring strong listening skills from which transfer to speaking, reading and writing could be facilitated at a later time. Of course, every learning situation presents a unique combination of environmental and presage variables, so the choice of which process to use will vary according to the needs of the students and the resources of the teacher.

Next, we were introduced to four systems which make up the Hourglass

Paradigm. They consist of two listening comprehension approaches (The Learnables, developed by Dr. Harris Winitz of the University of Missouri, and Total Physical Response, developed by psychologist James J. Asher), and two innovative approaches (The Silent Way, developed by Dr. Caleb Gattegno, and Counseling-Learning/Community Language Learning [CL/CLL], developed by the late Fr. Charles A. Curran of Loyola University).

After going over the claims of each system, we broke up into four different groups and were given learning experiences using the Learnables and Total Physical Response. In the Learnables, we merely listened silently to a tape, guided from picture to picture in a small booklet by the voice of a native speaker in English, French, German or Spanish. The meaning of what was being said was apparent from the pictures, and because there was a great deal of repetition, we soon began to understand and anticipate what was going to be said. Next, we had a chance to enjoy the more active method of Total Physical Response where the teacher used the imperative to elicit such physical responses as standing up, sitting down, walking to the door and touching various objects. Again, we remained silent except for giggles and bursts of laughter that came after some of the more ridiculous commands. The constant repetition and variation of the commands helped us build rapid comprehension of the target language.

Following these two experiences, a feedback session was held where we shared our feelings about what happened. These feedback sessions are particularly useful in helping students get in touch with themselves and become aware of what they are doing--a very important consideration in a system where the learner must take responsibility for his own learning.

In the afternoon, we went into the more advanced stages of the Hourglass Paradigm with a discussion of the Silent Way and a demonstration of the algebricks (colored wooden rods), the sound-color chart, and phonic code charts. At this stage, the learners begin producing the language on their own, using the color charts for pronunciation and the rods to create situations to talk about. For example, two green rods and one red rod could be used *to* represent the utterance, "two green rods and a red one." Or, the rods could be positioned to suggest a more advanced statement such as "The red rod is between the two green ones." And with the addition of more rods of differing lengths and colors, very complex situations can be created.

The final part of the workshop consisted of a demonstration of Counseling-Learning. While Tom described Community Language Learning, members of the audience repeated in their own words each point he made, thus giving him assurance that he was being understood and helping the whole group follow the discussion. Using this process, Tom took us through the five states of development a learner goes through in the CL/CLL method. First, the learner is in a state of total dependence on the "knower-expert." He is like a fetus; unable to operate at all in the target language. As the learner develops into the second stage, he begins to kick a little and starts taking risks with the language. In the third stage, the learner is born into the ability to produce the language to some degree by himself. In the forth stage, the learner is no longer satisfied with his dependent relationship with the knower-expert and begins to respond to others as a knower himself. Through refinement of the learner's skills, he begins to approach the native speaker level in the fifth stage.

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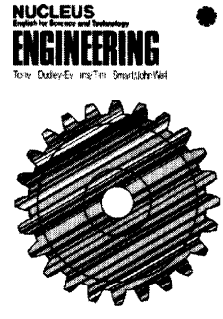

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The CL/CLL method itself consists of creating a situation where the teacher takes a supportive role among a group of students and allows them to direct the course of their interaction among themselves and only gives assistance when needed. In this manner, a great deal of tension is reduced as the students are not under pressure to produce any expected result. Of course, students in the first stage require a great deal of help, but as their level of competence increases, the students become knowers and begin to assist each other.

As a final demonstration of this method, several knower-experts and learners were recruited from among the participants, and a short session was held involving the simultaneous learning of German, French and Japanese. Although we did not have time to get a community feeling going, we could see how the members of the group began to formulate their own strategies for learning the languages, thus taking responsibility for this aspect of their learning. Again, a feedback or reflection on what had happened in the session was conducted with the participants sharing their feelings about their experience.

In presenting his complete language learning curriculum, Tom Pendergast made it clear that his system did not necessarily constitute the best approach to language learning. However, I feel our experiences as learners in this workshop helped many of us take a fresh look at some interesting and innovative methods we just might like to use with our own students.

'The Noisy Way'

Jan Visscher

Are language-oriented games a welcome release from the "slings and arrows" of language teaching? Or, should they be an integral part of the language learning process? Or even, as S.J. Savingnon maintains, "the very core of the language program?" These important questions were put to the Kansai Chapter audience at the very beginning of Bernard Susser's presentation, "The Noisy Way: Teaching English with Games." The second half of Mr. Susser's title clearly indicates what he feels the function of games should be, and the bulk of his presentation and demonstration was a powerful vindication of games as a viable and vital mode of language learning.

Most of the games presented were communicatively oriented and designed to guide the participants toward the achievement of clearly defined tasks. They were also largely self-corrective, i.e., the learners did not have to depend on an outsider to tell them whether they were right or wrong. This raised in practical terms another question which Mr. Susser had posited during his introduction, namely, the extent to which linguistic errors should be corrected. Answering his own query, Mr. Susser pointed out that overcorrection during these activities would be counterproductive because it would shift the emphasis from task achievement to linguistic considerations. It is also a moot question whether a teacher, given the excitement generated by many of the games and the large number of groups playing simultaneously, could possibly provide linguistic corrections that would be any benefit to the participants.

A description of all the games would give only the palest reflection of what actually went on and will, therefore, not be attempted. In general, however, they ran the gamut from those involving basic language requirements and vocabulary review to description games which posed highly sophisticated communication problems. Only the first will be detailed here.

In this game, each participant was given a slip of paper with a new identity as a member of the target language's society. This included basic personal information such as name, occupation, residence, hobbies, etc. By moving around and asking questions, each player had to find other family members who were identified in the same way. Each family consisted of five members, and the object of the game was for the family groups to get together. For beginning language learners, this game offered several aspects rarely found in the usual classroom situation: it took them out of their role as students by giving them a new identity; it gave a clearly recognizable purpose to asking routine questions such as, Where do you live?“, "How old are you?"; and it required deductive reasoning when, at the end of the game, each family had to establish its internal relations (aunts, sisters, grandparents, etc.) from the vital statistics provided. It had one drawback, however: preparation involved a minute and exact working-out of a vast number of combinations and permutations. One mismatch would mean that the players could not complete the task and, therefore, destroy the ostensible purpose of the game.

Mr. Susser had prepared an extensive reference list which was distributed to the audience before the presentation began. Perhaps this was the single most important gift the audience could take home, and Mr. Susser deserves many thanks for having done so much leg- and head-work on behalf of all those interested in using language learning games. But the list did not obviate, as the speaker suggested it might, the need for actually attending the presentation. Had we followed his suggestion, we would have been deprived of Mr. Susser's wit and enthusiasm which made the games real and thoroughly enjoyable experiences, rather than mere titles on a page.

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