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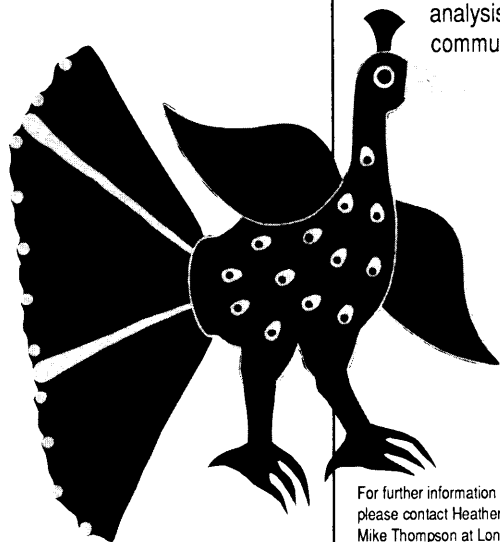
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ABOUT *CROSS CURRENTS*

Cross Currents is a semi-annual journal published by the Language Institute of Japan in an effort to contribute to an interdisciplinary exchange of ideas within the areas of communication, language skills acquisition and instruction, and cross-cultural training and learning. We are especially interested in articles on 1) Language teaching and learning, particularly regarding English as a Second/Foreign Language and English as an International Language; 2) Language teaching and learning as they apply in Japan; and 3) Cross-cultural communication issues. We also welcome reviews of recently published books in these areas.

Cross Currents was first published in 1972 with an emphasis on Japan and Japanese students of English. In order to better serve the needs of our growing international readership, we strive to publish articles concerned with teaching methodologies, techniques, and general issues which are multicultural rather than culture-specific. While we greatly appreciate theoretical articles which demonstrate thoughtful and significant research, the need for practical and highly readable articles of interest to classroom teachers remains paramount. We make every effort to include articles which are directly applicable to the classroom. Short practical articles are featured in our Bright Ideas section.

* * *

All articles submitted for consideration should be typed, double-spaced, and in triplicate, with references placed in the body of the text in parentheses with the author's last name, date of the work cited, and page number. Footnotes on substantive matters should appear at the bottom of the page on which the footnote occurs. Please include: 1) a paragraph precis of the article, 2) a short biographical sketch, and 3) a bibliography which should conform with TESOL Quarterly style. Manuscripts should be 5-20 pages in length. Manuscripts will not be returned unless return postage is included. Authors of articles accepted for publication will receive twenty reprints. Authors will retain the right to use the article in future publications, provided that *Cross Currents* is acknowledged as the original publisher; the author is expected to refer all requests to re-publish his or her work to *Cross Currents*. *Cross Currents* will not give permission to reproduce any work published here without the consent of the author.

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Summaries of the Articles

The Power of English Prepositions

Thomas Scovel

Contemporary English relies on the preposition as an important vehicle for conveying meaning and emphasis. However, the author contends that the significance of the preposition is not recognized by grammar books. This article traces the evolution of the preposition into a potent semantic and grammatical force in the oral language. The author suggests some pedagogical applications to make language learners more aware of the preposition's use and escalating importance in the English language.

CLL Revised: Addressing Socio-Cultural Factors in Language Learning

Ruth Wajnryb

Language learners sometimes are unaware of the situation and cultural nuances which are precipitated by the language they use. This article examines the benefits of a modified CLL methodological approach to integrate cultural sensitivity and language learning. This modified version is guided by the principles of CLL but is used with a linguistically heterogeneous group of language learners. It employs English as its sole medium of communicative interaction. This article demonstrates how this modified CLL approach, used with intermediate or advanced students, can create or heighten the students' awareness of the socio-cultural factors embedded in language.

Learner Problems in Self-Access Learning: A Case Study

Sorani Wongbiasag

Self-access learning is supported by teaching trends towards the sharing of the learning responsibilities between the teacher and the learner, and individualized learning. This article considers the particular problems apparent in a self-access learning centre at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand, and offers suggestions in

terms of curriculum, syllabus, and teacher and learner training, to help make self-access language learning more effective.

Widening Our Horizons Through Creative Counselling

Robert Paulet

In areas remote from education centres, the adult learner attempts to study with printed material as support. However, recent changes in telecommunication technology allow long-distance learners greater access to teachers and counsellors. Students can still work independently, but the social aspect of learning is being recognized as an important component. Contact with teachers, counsellors, and other students via cassette and telephone allow the remote learner to feel part of a community of learners.

Bright Ideas

Five Mini-Activities for the Language Classroom

Peter Duppenhaler

Mini-activities are an interesting way to challenge your students. They are suitable for almost every group and level of learner. Most only require a few minutes and are quick energizing activities during a lesson or rousing endings. This Bright Idea suggests five mini-activities which are designed to be completed in a relatively short period of time, and can therefore be repeated without student boredom. In addition, these activities are flexible enough that individuals, pairs, groups, or a whole class can do them.

Newspaper Summaries: An Integrated Skills Activity

Max Mayer

Language learners are better able to manage communication through the use of receptive strategies. However, they are often reluctant to ask questions to clarify meaning. In this Bright Idea, the author presents oral newspaper article summaries as an activity which encourages students to develop these receptive skills to accurately give and receive information.

Bringing News Articles into the ESL Classroom: Speeding the Acquisition of Comprehension Skills

David O'Reilly and Virgil Palmer

Newspaper articles provide a context for the acquisition of vocabulary and a focus for discussions. This Bright Idea suggests how to promote greater comprehension and confidence. By considering the basic structural organization of a newspaper article, students learn to seek the answers to general comprehension questions and to use context as a key to the understanding of the main idea and specific vocabulary.



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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

As winter again makes way for spring, one is reminded of the mutability inherent in man's environment. His language, too, is not hermetic but constantly in a state of transition. Change—in the roles of learner and teacher, in methodology, in the English language itself—thematically informs this Spring issue of *Cross Currents*.

Our lead article, "The Power of English Prepositions", by Thomas Scovel, looks at the changes in the semantic and grammatical importance of the preposition. The author makes a provocative argument for greater pedagogical consideration of this part of speech. He traces its historical evolution and provides many examples of the preposition's present force in conveying meaning.

In "CLL Revisited: Addressing Socio-Cultural Factors in Language Learning", Ruth Wajnryb considers a modified version of Community Language Learning as a useful methodology that addresses the socio-cultural aspects of language learning and helps integrate an understanding of culture with language acquisition. As the learning process takes place, the relationship between learner and teacher changes. The teacher, acting as a counsellor, has the learners recreate the context of an exchange in which cross-cultural miscommunication occurs. In this way, the learner gains independence, learning through their own referential and contextual information towards greater awareness of socio-cultural factors.

Learner independence is also a consideration in Sorani Wongbiasag's "Learner Problems in Self-Access Learning: A Case Study". Self-access learning is a learning approach in which the learner is allowed to make decisions about his learning process. The author considers the particular problems which impeded optimum use of the self-access study centre at Mahidol University. The results of the case study suggest reconsideration in terms of curriculum and syllabus, personnel, and the learners themselves.

Changes in telecommunications have expanded the opportunities of learners in remote communities taking distance education courses. In Robert Paulet's article, "Widening Our Horizons through Creative Counselling", the needs of adult distance learners are discussed in view of the changing technology. Counselling and support services are seen as essential for integrating the remote learner into a community of learners. New technology offers a support system which personalizes and humanizes the distance teaching system.

In this issue's Bright Ideas section, Peter Duppenhaler suggests some mini-activities which can be recycled. Their brevity retains student interest in spite of repetition. "Five Mini-Activities for the Language Classroom" provides practice with pronouns and comparison, and develops quick recall and listening comprehension.

The other two articles consider newspaper article summaries. In Max Mayer's "Newspaper Summaries: An Integrated Skills Activity", the focus of the activity is to develop receptive strategies through newspaper summaries. Students learn to take responsibility for their understanding and being understood. In "Bringing News Articles into the ESL Classroom: Speeding the Acquisition of Comprehension Skills" by David O'Reilly and Virgil Palmer, newspaper article summaries are used to develop reading comprehension and build vocabulary while developing students' confidence in their ability to effectively orally communicate information.

This issue includes one book review, Ilene Kradin looks at Zsuzsanna Ardo's *Management English*, a book published in Hungary.

The format of *Cross Currents* will be changing next issue. There will be a "Letters to the Editor" section. We invite your comments on past articles and welcome suggestions for upcoming issues. Your letters will provide us with valuable information about your interests.

Cross Currents

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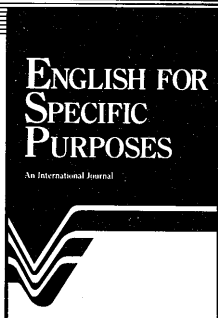
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A Selection of Recent Papers

Toward an Appropriate Technology Model of Communicative Course Design: Issues and Definitions, **N. Markee**
Essay Examination Prompts and the Teaching of Academic Writing, **D. Horowitz**

An Investigation of Stylistic Errors of Arab Students Learning English for Academic Purposes, **M.H. Doushaq**

American-English Business Negotiations: Training for Non-Native Speakers, **J. Neu**
Features of Word Omission and Abbreviation in Telexes, **H. Zak** and **T. Dudley-Evans**

An Experiment in Minimal Teacher-Training in ESP, **G. Cortese**
Formative Evaluation as an Indicator of Student Wants and Attitudes, **C. Kennedy**

From "Hard-core" to "Soft-core" ESP: A Case Study, **G. La Torre** and **A. Kaulen**

Beyond the Classroom: Monitoring at Industry, **A. Franco**

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1990 WHIM

The 1990 WHIM Conference will be held at the University of Ottawa in Ontario, Canada. Jacqueline Tavervier-Courbin, editor of THALIA: Studies in Literary Humor, will be chair; 613-744-1993, or 613-564-3411.

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The Power of English Prepositions

Thomas Scovel

One of the best kept secrets of English grammar is that prepositions have taken over the language—so much so that English has become the most prepositional language that I know of. Most grammar books ignore this development, and even the excellent modern grammars of contemporary English do not seem to recognize the extremely important role that prepositions now play in the syntax and semantics of the language. Thus, even copious and detailed grammars of English by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) and Quirk, Greenbaum, Svartvik, and Leech (1983) and Quirk, Greenbaum, Svartvik, and Leech (1985) do not emphasize the importance of prepositions in contemporary English. The purpose of this article, then, is to demonstrate the validity of my claim concerning the preposition's growing pre-eminence by briefly reviewing the historical evolution of English prepositions and by documenting their syntactic and semantic import, and then discussing a few of the ways that prepositions can be more effectively taught in EFL classes. I firmly believe that if EFL teachers are more cognizant of the role that prepositions play in contemporary English, and if they are successful in sharing this perspective with their EFL students, learners of English will have a quicker and more profound understanding of both the forms and the functions of this important world language.

Thomas Scovel, an Associate Professor at San Francisco State University, teaches ESL, Applied Linguistics, and Psycholinguistics. He has just completed a book on the critical period for language acquisition called *A Time to Speak* to be released by Newbury House/Harper & Row this year.

As most students of English grammar know, English began as a highly inflected language like contemporary German but has now lost so many of those inflections that it is grammatically more similar to an "isolating" language like Thai or Chinese than it is to most of its contemporary Indo-European cousins. For example, Old English, which was spoken in England approximately a millennium ago, marked case relationships with noun suffixes, and prepositions were either used redundantly with these noun phrases or not at all. In contrast, in contemporary Modern English, most of these Old English case inflections have been lost, and all of them have been replaced by prepositions. Consider examples (1)–(3):

- (1) He ate the noodles *with* chopsticks (instrumental case);
- (2) She is a strong supporter *of* education (genitive case);
- (3) We sent a letter *to* our friends (dative case).

Modern English has no suffixes to mark the various case relationships implied by these various sentences. Instead, the case role of the noun phrase in each of the examples is marked by a preposition. For (1), either *with* or *by* is used in the contemporary language to mark instruments. Note that the use of the instrumental case implicates the existence of an "actor", someone to use the instrument, and a "recipient", someone or something that is acted upon (Fillmore, 1968). Examples (2) and (3) represent slightly more complicated structures because the language is still in the process of progressing from an inflected marking of the genitive and dative cases to a prepositional form of indicating these case relationships. For example, in both (2) and (3), there are two ways of saying the same thing in contemporary English, although they are not always interchangeable. The "older" inflected form of the genitive or possessive uses a noun suffix (4), whereas the "newer", prepositional form uses a reversed word order with the preposition *of* (5).

- (4) She is my father's friend.
- (5) She is a friend *of* my father.

Because there are two similar forms used concurrently in the present language, the possessive is particularly troublesome to learn for all EFL students, irrespective of their mother tongue. Not only do they have to keep the word order straight, they also have to pick up the subtle differences in usage that are sometimes found in the

two forms. Although (4) and (5) are mutually interchangeable, the older inflected possessive is preferred for animate or human nouns whereas the newer pattern with *of* is preferred for inanimate objects.

The marking of indirect objects in contemporary English is almost as confusing because the language is at an historical cross-roads. English is simultaneously acquiring a new dative marker, *to*, which is used with a new word order in which the indirect object follows the direct object, while still retaining the older word order pattern in which the indirect object precedes the direct object. In this latter situation, however, the dative inflection has been lost completely, so that the only vestige of the older form, which has no preposition, is the ordering of the indirect object before the direct object. Compare sentences (6A) and (6B).

(6A) We sent a letter *to* our friends.

(6B) We sent our friends a letter.

Some traditional grammar books, ones which describe English as a bastardized version of Latin, mistakenly claim that "our friends" is not an indirect object in (3) but is an indirect object in (6). They reason that the first sentence contains a prepositional phrase with *to*, so that "our friends" is the direct object of the preposition *to* in (3), and that the entire prepositional phrase functions as an indirect object (Curme, 1961). Such an explanation not only completely ignores the prepositional nature of the modern language, it completely obfuscates the true grammatical structures of these two sentences for the EFL student, and thus makes a difficult learning situation only worse! The most important "rule" to learn from sentences like (3) and (6) is that in both sentences "our friends" received the letter and, therefore, this noun phrase is clearly dative for both the newer and the older patterns that are used in the present day language.

Prepositions have not only replaced the instrumental, genitive, and dative inflections that were once the sole markers of noun-cases, they are also used to mark adverbial and adjectival phrases. Again, we have the use of inflections such as *-ly* for adverbs or *-ful* for adjectives, but these derivational suffixes can be readily replaced by prepositions such as *with*, *by*, and, *of* as in (7), (8), and (9) respectively:

- (7) Porcupines always make love *with* care (“carefully”);
- (8) We renew our licenses year *by* year (“yearly”);
- (9) I don’t think I can be *of* help (“helpful”).

I should make one point clear at this juncture. In terms of usage, I am not arguing for the exclusive use of prepositions in these examples as more preferred or more acceptable patterns in contemporary speech. I am not saying that (7), (8), and (9), to cite three instances, are clearer, better, or more acceptable English sentences than the equivalent expressions using “carefully”, “yearly”, or “helpful”. However, it is important to demonstrate that the replacement of inflections by prepositions is an active and irrevocable process in the language, and that this gradual transformation is a natural part of the evolution of English that is frequently misperceived by grammarians and grammar books.

One of the best examples of this misperception is the popular rule that most native speakers (and some EFL students, unfortunately) are taught somewhere in their early schooling in English that a sentence should never end with a preposition. This rule was never an accurate description of the language; it was imposed on the language by Bishop Lowth in his late eighteenth century grammar which was based on Latin (Lowth, 1762). One of my favorite examples of the irrelevance of the proscription against ending sentences with prepositions is sentence (10), which was reputedly spoken by a five year old girl to her father when he brought upstairs a bedtime book which she disliked to read to her. The sentence is completely “grammatical”, indeed, it is very symmetrical in the way that discontinuous elements are tied together, and note that it ends not with one but five prepositions!

- (10) What did you bring the book that I didn’t want to be read
to out of up for?

Aside from the historical evolution of prepositions in English as modern markers of grammatical functions formerly indicated by inflectional and derivational suffixes, another clear way of recognizing the importance of prepositions in the contemporary language is to see the way they are used syntactically and semantically to mark a wide and versatile range of expressions. Note, for example, the frequent use of prepositions in the innovative phrases used especially by the younger generation of language users: “right

on"; "*out of sight*"; "*up yours*"; "*later on*"; and, "*for sure*". Observe that the last expression is an apt example of the replacement of the older *-ly* suffix by *for*; "*surely*" certainly does not have the colloquial currency of the popular "*for sure*".

Another way in which we can see the power of prepositions in contemporary speech is through error analysis. In both the mistakes made by native speakers and the errors made by EFL learners of the language, we can see an almost insidious tendency to replace other parts of speech with prepositions. It is almost as if there is an intuitive attempt by English users to employ a preposition when in doubt, and this subtle psycholinguistic strategy is another indication that English is becoming more of a prepositional language. Sentence (11) is a typical spelling mistake that I have seen made by even highly competent native writers of English (some of them well-educated EFL instructors).

- (11) I should *of* studied harder before the examination.
(I should've studied harder before the examination.)

Phonologically, the preposition *of* and the contracted auxiliary *'ve* are indistinguishable, and perhaps because there are other auxiliaries which do use prepositions (e.g. "*ought to*", "*have to*", and "*sort of*"), by false analogy, English spellers introduce the "*incorrect*" *of*. I purposely place *incorrect* in quotes because it is entirely possible that we are witnessing the birth of a diachronic change in the language at the present, and eventually, *of* might replace *'ve* and *have* as the auxiliary of the future. We see a similar type of prepositional substitution in an example from child language acquisition, where a young native speaker of English replies to a comment her uncle made about horseback riding:

- (12) Uncle: "*She's never ridden one*".
Niece: "*I've never rid on one either*".

But native speakers are not the only ones who overgeneralize in their use of prepositions. Sentence (13) is taken from a short passage of free verse which decorated the wall of a "*MOS BURGER*" fast food outlet in Japan and which was presumably written by a good, but not completely fluent, non-native user of English.

- (13) "Listen *to* the Mountain, you find *out* the Hope.
Close *to* the Ocean, you find *out* the Love.
Believe *in* the Sun, you find *out* the Dream".

Although I am not quite able to decipher all of the cohesive factors that make this text, there is a definite parallelism between the pairs of phrases, and prepositions help mark it. The writer has obviously overgeneralized the use of *out*: "find out" which means "to discover" is not as appropriate as "find" which means "to obtain". This overuse of *out* is what I would call a good error, an excellent error in fact, because the writer has not missed the mark by much, and has maintained a textual parallelism through the use of prepositions. Exceptionally gifted users of English employ this same rhetorical device in their oral and written prose, and so even though (13) is technically incorrect, it still serves as a useful model of modern prepositional usage.

Traditional grammars frequently point out that prepositions, like articles, are function words, and do not normally receive primary phrasal stress in spoken English. This might be one reason why they are difficult for non-native speakers to learn: they are difficult to hear. This explanation is somewhat vitiated by research in morpheme acquisition by children learning English as their native tongue because prepositions are generally acquired very early, even though they are just as difficult for native learners to hear as non-native learners.

Be that as it may, contrary to what certain grammars tell us, prepositions often do receive phrasal stress in English. Contrast (14) and (15): in the former, stress normally falls on the noun, "man"; in (15), in order for the sentence to be understood as "the man regained consciousness", primary stress must fall on the preposition. Note too, of course, that (15) is just another example of how many English sentences quite naturally end with a preposition. A few traditional grammarians neatly try to avoid this problem by renaming them "particles"; they would simply call *to* a particle in this example, but this argument is about as specious as an alcoholic calling a gin and tonic a "soft drink" in order to create the impression that he is not actually drinking hard liquor.

- (14) The man came too.
(15) The man came *to*.

The best example I have where prepositions are stressed in spoken English, and also carry salient grammatical and semantic information, is a sentence I heard on a radio talk show about Alcoholics Anonymous a few years ago in the United States. The speaker was asked by the talk show host what made him change his habits, and his reply was a model of concision and clarity, largely because he chose two-word verbs using prepositions to frame his answer.

- (16) It finally came to the point where alcohol wasn't doing anything *for* me; it was doing things *to* me; in fact, it almost did me *in*!

Because the key words in this sentence were *for*, *to*, and *in*, they were the only three syllables in the utterance that received stress. I defy anyone to translate this sentence into any other language with such clarity and concision. In fact, it would detract a great deal from the communicative and rhetorical power of this utterance if the two-word verbs were substituted by more erudite Latin words (e.g. "detrimental" is a relatively paucid replacement for "do to"; furthermore, it does not maintain the rhythm and parallelism of the original sentence).

Grammatically, prepositions now play an extremely diverse role in contemporary English because of their peculiar historical rise to morphological and syntactic power, and because of their communicative and rhetorical import. They are the only part of speech which can be used as any other part of speech, as the examples in (17) to (21) indicate:

- (17) I don't feel like going *in* today (adverb);
 (18) A proton is made up of *up* quarks and *down* quarks (adjectives);
 (19) It must be Friday, *for* we're all feeling tired (conjunction);
 (20) I'm sure he has an *in* with his boss (noun);
 (21) They've *upped* their prices year after year (verb).

Another demonstration of the grammatical versatility of prepositions is their use as "two-word" verbs: they are exceedingly common in English in either their "separable" or phrasal form or as "non-separable" prepositional verbs. They also are quite flexible semantically, and many of them have several divergent meanings,

depending on their grammatical context or the presence of other prepositions, for example:

- (23) He *struck out* in his attempts to get hired (“failed”);
- (24) He *struck out* on his own (“set forth”);
- (25) He *struck it out* because it offended him (“removed”);
- (26) He *struck out* at the stranger (“attacked”).

An even more remarkable example of the power of prepositions in modern English is their complex, almost unpenetrable, grammatical and semantic relationships in certain very common usages. The following sentences display this complexity in ascending order. There may be fairly straightforward historical and lexical explanations for the meaning of the first few sentences, but the last two (30 and 31), pose challenges to even the most assiduous grammarian.

- (27) An *in* house memo has nothing to do with an *out* house.
- (28) The kids were scared because someone was *after* them.
- (29) They expanded the debt ceiling *by* \$50 to \$985 billion.
- (30) The wolf thought it would make a meal *of* the donkey.
- (31) She knows she has a friend *in* her husband.

Although the meaning and grammatical relationships expressed by *by* in (29) are fairly straightforward, note how the use of a different preposition, *from* to replace *by*, would amount to a difference of \$935 billion! But the key problems are found in (30) and (31) where the prepositions *of* and *in* mark embedded clauses in the deep structure, and in both clauses there is a copular relationship between the two noun phrases. That is, *of* and *in* seem to be surface structure manifestations of the verb *is* for both sentences, so that (30) and (31) are derived, in part, from (30A and (31B).

- (30A) The donkey *is* the meal.
- (30B) Her husband *is* a friend.

How these relationships become syntactically manifested in prepositions, and why (30) uses *of* and (31) uses *in* are questions that I cannot begin to answer. They do suggest, however, that the conventional notion that prepositions are simply unstressed “function words” of limited usage is an idea whose time is long past.

Finally, prepositions are not only important lexically, syntactically, and semantically, they play a significant stylistic or rhetorical role in the language. We have already seen that from the eloquence of (16) above, but other examples abound. Following are some examples that I have recently gleaned: (32) attempts to define the true nature of appropriate bilingual education programs and was taken from a U.S. government document; (33) is an excerpt from a sermon on the importance of generosity; a friend who tried to simultaneously explain that he and his wife enjoyed classical music, but at the same time preferred to stay at home listening to it rather than to attend concerts came up with (34); from a Gary Larson cartoon, (35) is the caption of a picture of two Americans on safari, and one is imploring the other not to make fun of a large African cape buffalo; and finally, a recent newspaper sports story on the age of the Boston Celtics basketball team, (36) attempts to suggest that some of the players were as old as the coach, K.C. Jones, himself a professional athlete some two decades ago.

- (32) "They must receive substantial instruction *in* and *through* the language."
- (33) "I'm not *out of* something when I give; I'm *into* something."
- (34) "Symphonies are one genre we don't go *out for*; we go *in for* them but we don't go *out for* them."
- (35) "Goldberg you idiot! Don't play tricks on those things! They can't distinguish between laughing *with* and laughing *at*!"
- (36) "Did these guys really start out playing *with* K.C. Jones instead of *for* him—or does it just seem that way?"

Now that I have hopefully demonstrated the way in which prepositions have evolved historically into a potent grammatical and semantic force in contemporary English, I would like now to turn briefly to the questions of how these insights might be applied to the EFL classroom. If English is indeed a prepositional language, as I have argued, then how can we incorporate them more effectively in our EFL pedagogy?

For teachers who feel comfortable employing traditional drills and exercises, either because their class size or curricula require more conventional procedures, here is a simple drill that can be

used by beginning level students to practice distinguishing between phrasal and prepositional verbs. EFL students are constantly looking for a rule or pattern that will help them distinguish between “separable” phrasal verbs like (“take in”) and “non-separable” prepositional verbs like (“believe in”), but this is an irregular part of English and must be learnt by practice and intuition, just like reading *kanji* in Japanese. For Japanese EFL students looking for “the rule” for determining whether a two-word verb is separable or non-separable, the teacher could promise to give them one just as soon as the Japanese students could provide “the rule” for determining when the *kanji* for mountain is pronounced *san*, *zan*, or *yama*! In this exercise, after students have learnt the meaning of the two-word verbs to be drilled, I would have them call on each other to use the B-forms provided below. That is, one student would give a form with a noun object (A), and then call on another student to use the same form with a pronominal object (B). Then that student would, in turn, call on yet another student with a new A form.

<u>A (noun objects)</u>	<u>B (pronoun objects)</u>
take in the laundry	take <i>it</i> in
believe in our children	believe in <i>them</i>
cry over your losses	cry over <i>them</i>
put down the students	put <i>them</i> down
look over the issues	look <i>them</i> over
go down the street	go down <i>it</i>

A more meaningful exercise, but one that would probably work best with more advanced students, is to ask students to paraphrase one sentence with another, but not using the preposition that is found in the first sentence. Again, this exercise could be done among the students themselves, although it is certainly possible to use this type of drill for written homework or for part of a grammar test. Students are given the A form and they must come up with something similar to the B form.

- A: She gave a gift *to* her mother.
 B: Her mother received a gift from her.
- A: This is a policy *of* our school.
 B: Our school has this policy.

- A: She solved the problem *with* a calculator.
 B: She used a calculator to solve the problem.

For teachers who use dialogues and role plays, even intermediate level students can work with materials which contain the following prepositional patterns. They are very common in colloquial intercourse and lend an air of authenticity to dialogues.

- She's smiling. She's looking *up*. She's *up* today.
 They're sad. They're looking *down*. They're *down* today.
 Aoki has gone five *under* par. He's *on* today.
 Norman is now five *over* par. He's *off* today.

Note that these classroom procedures are useful not simply because they help acquaint the students with the correct lexical meaning, the appropriate grammatical form, or the most effective communicative intent; they are also useful because they help create a sense of understanding at a deeper level. If EFL students can eventually come up with the same intuitions that native speakers have about prepositions (for example, some pairs of prepositions reflect a fairly consistent contrast in meanings: *up* and *on* are generally positive in connotation; *down* and *off* are generally negative in meaning), they will gradually develop the same ability that native speakers use when they encounter new usages of prepositions (37 and 38).

- (37) You can't view the videotape; the VCR is *down* again.
 (38) I think the meat's *off*. Here, smell it.

Eventually, EFL students might even be able to intuitively understand more complex usages of prepositional pairs, for example, the subtle contrast in meanings between "going in" for something (39) and "going out" for something (40).

- (39) He goes *in* for surfing in a big way.
 (40) She doesn't go *out* for bridge; she prefers outdoor sports.

Observe that *in* and *out* specifically do not refer to "inside" and "outside" or "indoors" and "outdoors" in these two sentences, and it is important for English learners to recognize this deeper and more subtle underlying meaning reflected in the use of *in* and *out*. It is this precise difference that makes the use of *in* in (17) difficult for EFL students to comprehend. A wife who is feeling ill might

come out with (17), meaning that she did not feel like going *outside* to the car to drive *in* to work. If a student is aware of these almost metaphorical uses of contrastive pairs of prepositions, they will gradually understand that it is not at all incongruous to use “go *in*” when a person is sitting inside and will actually be “going *out*” to “go *in*.”

Finally, for advanced students, excellent discussion topics and composition themes can be derived from the following examples of rhetorical uses of prepositions. They are all direct quotes taken from the oral or written prose of eloquent native speakers, and are excellent examples of how important prepositions are to an appreciation and understanding of contemporary English discourse. (41) is taken from a brochure defending the importance of “Women Studies” departments on college campuses. (42) is a quote from one of Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaign speeches. (43) is taken from the same sermon on generosity which also served as the source of (33). And, finally, (44) is obviously drawn from the final sentence of the famous “Gettysburg Address” by President Lincoln.


- (41) “Many administrators and academicians do not truly understand the distinctions between a study *of* women and a study *for* women.”
- (42) “Hispanics, women, peace advocates, and environmentalists must turn *to* each other and not *on* each other.”
- (43) “What we appreciate most is not a present *from* someone, but a present *of* someone.”
- (44) “... and that government *of* the people, *by* the people, and *for* the people shall not perish from the earth.”

Although we have, of course, no tape recordings or films of the well-known Gettysburg Address, we can almost envision Lincoln punctuating those final three prepositions with phrasal stress and perhaps even hand gestures, so important are they to his eloquent definition of democracy. An excellent composition topic would be to have advanced EFL students write a three-paragraph essay on “Democracy” in which each paragraph would spell out why true democracy must be composed first, *of* the people, second, *by* the people, and finally, *for* the people. One could even argue that complete democracy does not exist if any one of these three criteria is missing.

I hope that the secret I have shared with you is both revealing and useful. I hope that the historical, syntactic, semantic, and stylistic examples I have given will convince you of the significance of prepositions in contemporary English, and I hope that some of the pedagogical applications which I have suggested will prompt you to consider ways by which you can apply this linguistic insight more effectively in your EFL teaching. But most importantly of all, it is my hope that through the use of new insights about English, and through useful innovations about teaching, you will become a teacher whom your students will not only believe, but grow to believe in.

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CLL Revisited: Addressing Socio-Cultural Factors in Language Learning

Ruth Wajnryb

Introduction

Community Language Learning (henceforth, CLL) is associated with the name of Charles Curran (1960, 1972, 1978) who devised the methodology and recorded his experiences in the field with a fervour that some would term evangelical. It was later the subject of extensive investigation and experimentation by Earl Stevick (1980) whose commitment to the methodology matched Curran's in its zeal and vehemence. Such earnestness as that exhibited by Curran and Stevick is characteristic of the spokespersons of "avante-garde" fringe methodologies in the field of language teaching (cf. Caleb Gattegno and the Silent Way; Georgi Lozanov and Suggestopedia); and one should perhaps be prepared to temper the enthusiasm imparted by exposure to such writings with the sobering pragmatism that is born of classroom realities. Nevertheless, in my many attempts to find satisfaction with a methodology that addresses socio-cultural factors and facilitates an integrated language-culture approach, it is in fact a modified version of CLL that has proved the most rewarding.

Curran's Model

The original (pure) CLL in Curran's model is a method of language teaching that focuses on the language recorded by a small group (a "community") of learners (or "clients"). The group is homogenous in their L_1 and the teacher (or "knower or counselor") is bilingual in the learners' L_1 and the target L_2 . The group

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sits in a closed circle with a tape-recorder in their midst; the teacher "hovers" on the periphery of the circle and is available to the learners on their demand; they call on the teacher when they feel they need help. Each such session produces a recording in the L_2 and this "investment" of the learners in effect becomes the course "text" for the learning program. In this manner, the teacher in the Curran model leads the learners through various crucial stages of the learning process, beginning with total dependence and culminating in "selfhood" or independence. Curran likens this process with aspects of the human life cycle, referring, for example, to the helplessness of the *foetus in utero* and to the confidence of separate independent adulthood.

Central to CLL is a core of crucial tenets or guiding principles that determines the spirit and governs the conduct of the methodology. Although I do not subscribe to them with exactly the same zealous enthusiasm as a teacher in the Curran mould, I nonetheless do concede that they account to a large extent for the success that the methodology yields. Firstly, CLL is experientially-based and -oriented. Its proponents assert that the best way to learn a language is through the experience of trying. Hence the learners *use* language, rather than *learn about* it. Secondly, it is learner-centred, on the premise that the most authentic learning environment is the one that allows learners to structure knowledge for themselves. Hence the learner-produced texts which become the foundation of the "syllabus". Thirdly, it is an offshoot of the School of Humanistic Psychology which argues that learning must engage the learner affectively as well as cognitively. Much attention is paid to the factors of anxiety, insecurity, vulnerability, and loneliness in (language) learning. Hence the "community" concept, founded on a cooperative rather than competitive spirit, and aimed at engendering communal trust in a supportive learning group. Fourthly, there is the unorthodox relationship of teacher/learner, symbolized in the terms "knower-counsellor"/"client", used to denote the relative roles. Curran explores the notions of dependence and independence in great detail for in his eyes they are crucially related to learning. He compares the enthusiasm of early success with the elation of an amputee beginning to walk with artificial limbs (Curran, 1972a p. 162-3). A related notion is that of "learner space". Curran perceives a "distance" existing between teacher and learner, one that changes significantly through the learning process. This is

central to Curran's philosophy of teaching and learning and highlights the inherently dynamic nature of CLL (La Forge, 1977, p. 298).

CLL Revisited

The modified version of CLL that I have employed is guided by the principles outlined above but embodies some crucial differences, the most important of which are detailed below. Firstly, the group is not homogenous but heterogenous in their L_1 , this factor arising from the nature of most classes in the Adult Migrant English Program in Australia today. The second difference is in the principle of bilingualism in the classroom: The L_1 's of the learners are not used at all in the learning process, English being the sole medium of interaction, both learner-to-learner and learner-to-teacher. Thirdly, most of my experimentation in this field has been with intermediate to advanced level students, and does not concern itself with the raw beginner. Fourthly, in the teaching programmes in which I have been involved, CLL is only a part (on average, one-fifth) thereof, and is therefore *not* the total methodology to which the learners are exposed. The remainder of the teaching week is taken up with more orthodox and conventional procedures, of the structural-functional or skills-based type. This again is a by-product of staffing and facility realities, rather than an ideological decision. Fifthly, CLL is used primarily for the creation and heightening of an awareness of socio-cultural factors in language, and not as a tool for grammatical instruction.

Four Phases

The procedure, briefly, has four phases: taping, reflection, analysis, and follow-up. There are some borrowings here from the Curran model, some amendments and some additions. In the first phase, the "community of learners" (in groups of about four) are left *alone* with a tape recorder (with which they feel comfortable technically,) for about 10-15 minutes during which time they record their "investment". The topic of discussion may or may not be provided by the teachers; ideally the students come to settle on their own "field of discourse". Immediately following the taping phase, the groups of learners are asked to reflect on the experience just passed and to share their reflections with the rest of the class. This phase is very important for its cathartic value, and in some

ways in akin to the “de-role” phase that should follow a role-play. The third phase occurs at a later date, once a transcription has been made of a segment of each recording. This becomes the analysis session, and it is here that attention is drawn to the socio-cultural dimension. In the last phase, the follow-up session, the difficulties highlighted during the analysis phase are given “remedial” treatment: in situations and simulations carefully contrived by the teacher, the students are given opportunity to practise language in a controlled and monitored environment.

Counselling Strategies

The phase of CLL that addresses the socio-cultural dimension is the analysis for the students’ recordings. Because our concern here is primarily socio-cultural, and because in this phase one is confronted by incidents of cross-cultural miscommunication, often conflict, it is crucial that the analysis be handled with extreme caution and great sensitivity. Much is at stake here—cultural identity, self-image, sympathy or antipathy to L_2/C_2 , receptiveness or hostility to learning, and the group dynamic of the learning community. For such reasons, counselling strategies have proven extremely effective as a means of conducting this phase.

It is a basic tenet of the counselling approach that the teacher never impose his or her idea of the error(s) in cross-cultural exchange, but instead have the learners re-create and re-establish the context of the original exchange and in so doing inadvertently, as it were, highlight the source of miscommunication. An example should elucidate this approach. Below is part of an exchange that occurred between Sophia, a Russian learner and her recording group. The field of discourse was stress and its effect on the quality of one’s life:

Sophia: I think it is very important not to be stressed in your life, because I think it is very difficult thing to live and to do something in this way that you want if you are under influence of all nervous ... Can you understand me?

Others: Yes, mm, yes.

Sophia: and I think that stress can spoil your invention and all things that you want to do ...

Below is a transcription of the exchange that took place in the analysis phase between the teacher and Sophia in the presence of the rest of the class and involving other members of the original recording group. While language-learner language has been “tidied up” a little in the grammatical sense, the meaning is a faithful rendering. The transcript does not of course indicate tone—here it is one of the teacher’s very *gently guiding* Sophia, in small calculated steps, towards an understanding of how her language choices encode meaning. Like many language learners, Sophia is not always totally aware of the impact of what she says on her interlocutors. Working with Sophia and the others, the teacher gently explores the context and the various intentions of the participants in the conversation for the purpose of highlighting the language choices made as well as the language options that may have been more appropriate.

Teacher: Sophia, you asked the others “can you understand
(very gently) me?” Why did you say that?

Sophia: I don’t know. I suppose because I wanted to know
(Shyly) if they understood me.

Teacher: Did you think they didn’t understand you?

Sophia: No, I *knew* they *understood* me, my *words*, I
mean.

Teacher: But you asked them if they understood you.

Sophia: Yeah.

Teacher: If you knew that they understood, how come you
said that? You already knew the answer.

Sophia: I don’t know.

Teacher: How were you feeling at the time?

Sophia: Embarrassed!

Teacher: Embarrassed?
(gently echo)

Sophia: Yes, I was talking and talking and I didn’t know if
they were interested in what I was saying.

Teacher: So you were worried that they weren’t interested.
(echo)

Sophia: Yeah, that’s right.

Teacher: Sophia was worried that you were not interested
(innocently) in what she was saying. Were you interested?

Others: Oh yes! yes!

Teacher: Look, they say they *were* interested!
(to Sophia)

Sophia: Yes, yes, they say that *now*, but I didn't know
that *then*.

Teacher: Oh, you didn't know that when you were speak-
ing, that's why you asked the question.

Sophia: Yes, that's right.

Others: But we *didn't* interrupt you. We let you speak.
(a bit put out) We were paying attention. We were listening
quietly.

Sophia: Yeah, that's right, it's true. But maybe you were
listening without interrupting just to be polite.
I mean, maybe *really*, you were bored and just
waiting your chance to interrupt.
I didn't want to go on and on if you were bored.

Others: But we *weren't* bored!
(protesting) We were *interested*!

Sophia: Yeah, well, maybe.
(shrugging)

Teacher: When you said "Can you understand me?"
(to Sophia) What was your intention?
What did you want?

Sophia: I wanted them to *help* me.
(frustrated)

Teacher: Help you?
(inquiringly)

Sophia: Help me! Yeah.

Teacher: What do you mean "help you"?
(feigned
confusion)

Sophia: I don't know.
(increasing
frustration) I was feeling bad—I wanted them to help me.

Teacher: Do you mean you wanted them to show their
(rephrasing) interest, to sort of encourage you?

Sophia: Yes! Yes! that's it!
(excited) Encourage! Encourage!

Negotiating Meaning

As can be seen from the above exchange, the teacher is gently, if single-mindedly, *leading* the learners towards an understanding of the problem at hand, *working through* the referential and contextual information that *they* provide, towards the goal of socio-cultural understanding and awareness. For a number of reasons, it is vital that the teacher work with and through the contributions furnished by the learners. Firstly, without precise knowledge of the context of the situation in which the original exchanges occurred, the teacher can never categorically state what the error really is for he or she does not know the *intentions* of the learner (Corder, 1981). Secondly, because we are here dealing with skills of interactive behaviour specific to the target culture (C_2), it is crucial that the teacher be seen *not* to impose his/her ethnocentric notions upon the learners. Doing so could erect an "us/them" barrier that may inadvertently reflect the harsh socio-political realities of the world beyond the classroom. Thirdly, the co-operative effort engendered by the communal contributions further welds together the sense of community and supportiveness that is central to this methodology. Fourthly, through the careful eliciting and echoing that characterizes counselling strategies, students often recognise their own errors and engage in self-correction, which is highly motivating. Fifthly, the learning that occurs is firmly embedded in a solid and known context; it is not theoretical, nor remote from the learner. Based on their own experiential encounters, the learners are engrossed in the context, not one step removed from it. Lastly, there is the "hidden curriculum" of actually conducting the lengthy analysis stage in the target language, a process itself characterized by much interactive exchange. In a sense, the medium becomes the message.

Repairing a Text

Using the technique described above it is possible to achieve the total reconstruction of learner-produced language. The counselling strategy of eliciting intended meaning (as shown in the Sophia example) is employed to rebuild a text that originally had broken down in communicative terms. An example is the following.

It begins on the subject of tennis.

Tiina: You play tennis?

Joseph: Oh, sometimes.

Yolanta: I like playing tennis.

Tiina: Are you good in tennis?

Yolanta: I like water skiing.

Emilia: Oh!!! Water skiing!!!

Yolanta: I love water skiing.

Tiina: Are you good in tennis?

Yolanta: Oh, I can't judge it! (laugh)

Tiina: Buy you can....

Yolanta: I can play and I like to.

Tiina: Water skiing with two skis or one?

Yolant: One and two.

It doesn't matter.

Emilia: Oh!!! You ski one! That's fine!!

Discussion in the analysis phase focussed on the frustrated and unsuccessful attempts of the Finnish learner, Tiina, to achieve her communicative intent; as well as on the peer irritation caused by her dogged efforts which were expressed in the "flat" tone characteristic of the "idiosyncratic dialect" (Corder, 1981) of the Finnish learner of English.

Working slowly through the text, eliciting intentions and responses each step of the way, using the combined knowledge of the learners (knowledge of their own intentions!) and the teacher (expert knowledge of the appropriate forms that realise these intentions in L_2) gradually the text is created step-by-step. Each step of the way, meaning is *negotiated* and nothing finalized without the assent and affirmation of the learner. Changes affect grammatical construction as well as intonation and stress (not indicated in text here). The enterprise is inherently co-operative and enlightening.

Tiina: Do you play tennis?

Joseph: Oh, yeah, I do occasionally.

Yolanta: I really like tennis.

- Tiina: Are you any good at it?
- Yolanta: (not hearing) I like water skiing as well.
- Emilia: Really? Wow, that's great sport!
- Yolanta: Yeah, it really is.
I really like it.
- Tiina: You know, I've been looking for someone to teach me the rules of tennis 'cause I'd really like to play.
Yolanta, you'd know the rules would'nt you?
Are you any good at tennis?
- Yolanta: Oh, yeah, I'm not bad.
I've been playing for quite a long time you know.
- Tiina: So you'd know the rules then?
- Yolanta: Yeah, sure.
I'll explain them to you if you like.
- Tiina: Thanks, that'd be great.
You said you weren't bad at water skiing.
I've heard some people actually ski on only one ski.
What about you?
- Yolanta: Oh, either one or two.
It sort of depends what you feel like on the day, you know.
- Emilia: Wow! You mean, you really can ski on one ski!
That's terrific!
You must be really good at it!

My own experience of transcribing and analyzing students' recordings has uncovered the finding that almost any chunk of learner-produced language can serve as an effective vehicle for heightening socio-cultural awareness among the participants when the principles of counselling learning are employed to this end. Below are some three further examples that serve as evidence of this thesis.

The Art of Hedging

In the first example, a Chilean man, Julio, is the central "protagonist". It is Monday morning. Julio's classmates are demanding an explanation for his absence from the student party the previous Friday. The socio-cultural issue this time pertains to the conventions surrounding the avoidance of embarrassing ques-

tions, including the giving out of and acknowledging of cues between participants in a conversation.

Jose: Julio, please tell us, what happens to you?

Julio: Um, you...mm...talking about that. (fade out)

Santok: Were you alright last Friday?

We did not see you at party...we missed you very bad.

We have been, we were angry with you.

Julio: Angry?

Santok: Because we always love you, to have here among us but you did not come last Friday, we were angry with you.

Jose: How come you didn't come on Friday?

Julio: Oh, um, you know, um—laugh—um—someones you—well, sometime—um—there are many things to do, um.

Inga: And you did not come on Tuesday too, didn't you?

Julio: Well, this looks to me like a confession (laugh)

Santok: Confession! (laugh) No! No!

Julio: (laugh)

Inga: You are supposed—supposed to come every day.

Julio: Well, yes.

Santok: We don't expect a confession from you.

Julio: Did you have a good time on Friday?

Santok: Friday? Oh very good.

We wish you were with us.

Julio: Ah, thank you. um. But next time we'll be all together.

Inga: There will be no party any more next time.

For his own personal reasons, Julio is disinclined to answer his classmates' questions; and he tries politely, diplomatically, and with good-tempered humour to deflect their questions and hedge around their "digs". They, however, are oblivious to his signals and persist relentlessly in the inquisition. The discussion that arose from the transcript focussed on techniques of deflecting and hedging, and examined both productive and receptive skills: the giving out and the correct de-coding of the appropriate cues.

A Continuum of Appropriacy

In the follow-up sessions which offer more controlled practice of issues raised in the analysis phase, the lessons focussed on a "continuum of appropriacy" in response to a question deemed "not in order". One controlled prompt was, "How much do you earn?", and the hierarchy of rejoinders decided upon was the following (in an ascending order of "confrontationalism"):

1. Use "fillers". For example, "um", "well", "you know", "sort of"...., as a delaying strategy or as a cue to topic change.
2. Convert to joke. For example, "not enough", or "the taxman sees most of it".
3. "Return the ball". For example, with a related question that tactfully changes the subject e.g. "isn't the cost of living going up?", or "that reminds me...." which signals a change of direction.
4. Casually shrug off the question. For example, "Oh, I don't want to talk about that...."
5. State directly and more formally that you don't like the question. For example, "I'd rather not discuss that, if you don't mind".
6. Embarrass the questioner. For example, "How come you're so interested?!"
7. Aggressive direct rejoinder. For example, "That's none of your business!"

Clearly this cline of responses cannot simply be presented to the learner. The cline *emerges* through negotiation and discussion; and all the contextual determinants are known or are made known to the learners: the context of situation, the personal and functional tenor of discourse, the setting and all other items relevant to meaning. This includes understanding of phonological factors such as intonation, pitch and volume, (see, for example, Loveday, 1982, on phonological slurring rules in informal contents), as well as paralinguistic and proxemic patterns. The learner cannot simply be handed phrase-book, audio-lingual style formulae and helped to memorise them. Such a "graft-like" approach, into which much functional teaching easily degenerates, is no better than the traditional linear structural syllabus that, historically, it was designed to replace.

Conversational Ping-Pong

Our second transcript centres on a Polish learner, Jan. The field of discourse is the discussion of individual cooking habits.

Renata: Are you? I think you're single—you have to cook sometimes?

Jan: Yes, I have to.

Renata: Can you?

Jan: Yes I can.

Jan K: Doesn't he enjoy cooking or doesn't have enough time to cook? Doesn't he enjoy cooking?

Renata: Not really.

Jan: Quick dishes.
I don't like spending time in the kitchen.

Nilly: For instance, steaks?

Jan: Ah, steaks, eggs, all those quick stuff.

Van Tot: And you have to live on sandwiches all the time.

Jan: No I don't like sandwiches.

Nilly: Don't you? I can live on sandwiches.

Jan K: What do you eat then?
What do you eat then?

Jan: Ahh.....I like eggs.

Nilly: Eggs.

Jan: I like steaks, lots of salads—different salads.

Renata: For how many people do you cook?

Jan: Ah, usually one...Just for me or maybe my friend.

Nilly: And you cook every day?

Jan: No everyday....because I'm going out a log....always....so
I usually eat in my friend's place.

Nilly: Oh, that's very nice.

What emerged from the analysis phase was a discussion of the television—interview nature of this conversation, which was meant to be a common exchange among equal participants, and not an interview with a central “persona”. Jan responds to questions exclusively on a propositional or ideational level, ignoring the phatic elements of the interpersonal function. Out of socio-cultural

ignorance (his $L_1 C_1$ has different rules), Jan failed to play the conversational ping-pong that would be appropriate here. Discussion of the reactions of his peers exposed that some of them found him aloof, self-centred and arrogantly disinterested in those around him: e.g., "he wanted *all* the attention and he showed no interest in us".

Failed Encounters

Another procedure that serves as a way in to promoting socio-cultural awareness through the CLL methodology, is to provide a topic for the initial taping phase. This can be designed loosely as a way of predicting and determining the sorts of socio-cultural issues that will arise. Such a topic can be quite specific, or very broad: the following transcript emerged from the topic "failed encounters" where learners talk about and record situations in their experience where, as it were, their English "let them down". Often of course, it is not their English *strictly speaking* but their socio-cultural awareness that is to "blame".

Miron: A similar situation I had yesterday when I was looking for this heater.

I was very hurry because it was, very short of time before closing shops.

So when I went to one of the stores and I didn't find anything good, anything cheap enough I just went to out and shop assistant asked me to open my bag to see if I haven't stolen anything.

I don't want to do it but I was....It was really stupid situation.

I really wanted to tell her that what I'm thinking about such matters but I had neither time, neither I have no good methods to explain her about it. I just wanted to tell her just ring for policeman. I mustn't show you everything what I have....but I just give up.

Ines: and also....

Ricardo: Did you try and say nasty things to her?

Miron: Only in this country....only in this country

Ricardo: Did you feel like saying nasty things to her or swearing at her?

Miron: Oh, it was not pleasant I must say.

Ricardo: I know but such a situation you always, you know, you feel like saying....

Miron: It happens, it happens very often in here but it was very strange.

A recording session with an emotive topic (such as the one here described) is bound to be resonant with a great deal of hostility, frustration, and anger, as students try to articulate their feelings of helplessness and powerlessness in situations where their English, as one learner once put it, "just vanishes". The subsequent reflection phase, in such instances, is crucial; and learners' freedom to talk (*without* being recorded) should not, for psychological reasons, be curtailed.

Discourse Rules

In order to be able to exploit the CLL methodology as a vehicle for awakening socio-cultural sensitivity in the language classroom, the teacher needs as an indispensable reservoir, a knowledge of the discourse rules of the language being taught. He or she needs to make conscious and explicit and "teachable" what as a native speaker he or she already knows subliminally. What would be of enormous pedagogic value here is something akin to Keller's supra-concept of "gambits" (1981), an umbrella term for conversational strategy signals and cues that facilitate and lubricate interactive discourse. Ideally, a taxonomy of such socio-cultural rules and conventions should inform the teaching practice of a CLL practitioner. Calling on such a taxonomy as a backdrop, as it were, and focussing on the actual texts produced by the learners, the teacher can cover a range of socio-cultural issues that are of direct relevance to the learners and of importance to their potential acculturation.

Some Warnings and Concluding Remarks

It should not be thought that CLL is being promoted here as the universal panacea of language teaching, ideal for all conditions, all teachers, and all learners. There are not inconsiderable shortcomings and pitfalls in the methodology; and it has provoked heated discussion in pedagogic literature. There is not the space here to attempt to counter the criticisms that have been raised, merely to refer to some of them in the form of questions. Doesn't the learner have too much freedom in the taping phase and too

little in the analysis phase? Isn't there too much pressure to produce? Isn't the structuring of knowledge in the last resort the domain of the teacher? How do you justify the time spent? What about *other* language needs? Isn't it too open-ended? Isn't it dangerous? Doesn't it require specialist training in "non-teaching" skills, like counselling? Doesn't it ignore the question of the learner's preferred learning style? Wouldn't it over-tax the teacher and hasten professional burn-out?

These and other questions have been raised as words of protest or caution in response to the methodology; and without doubt they hold considerable validity. As a gesture to counter such criticism, the following could be stated in favour of the approach. It is an experientially-based and learner-centred program in which the learner assumes responsibility for his or her own learning. The materials of the classroom are personalized and individualized and hence highly motivating. Language is firmly embedded in a context of situation and culture both of which are made explicit and known. It functions as a valuable diagnostic tool for group dynamics and facilitates a positive and communal learning environment. It highlights individual remedial areas. It appeals to both cognitive and affective domains. However, by far its most advantageous and alluring feature is its facility for promoting an integrated culture-in-language approach to learning. It is with the need for and value of such an approach that this article has been centrally concerned.

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Learner Problems in Self-Access Learning: A Case Study

Sorani Wongbiasag

Self-access learning is a learning approach in which the learner is allowed to make decisions on each step in his learning process, that is, on what to learn, on how to learn it, and on how to evaluate his own learning. This approach has been essentially supported by two major trends in language teaching and learning, namely the trend towards the sharing of the learning responsibilities between the teacher and the learner, and that towards individualized learning. A self-access centre for language learning has been established at Mahidol University in order to encourage Thai students to take up self-access learning. Its original aim was to promote extensive reading. Later on, the aim was extended to cover other areas of language skill practice, for example, listening and writing. It was felt that the students did not make the best use of the services available at the Centre. An investigation was conducted to find out the students' problems in self-access learning at the Centre. Two types of problems were found: those resulting from external factors, such as the management of the Centre, and those concerning the students themselves, such as their lack of confidence. The findings suggest reconsiderations in terms of curriculum and syllabus and in terms of learner and personnel training for more effective future planning.

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Introduction

Self-access learning is a learning approach in which the learner is given opportunities to

- decide what work he wants to do;
- find the material to fit his purpose;
- work through the material at his own pace using his own style;
- correct or assess his answers;
- evaluate his work when desired.

(Scott 1984, Sturtridge 1982)

This does not mean that the learner is left alone with all the responsibilities for his own learning. He can always get assistance from the teacher or from his friends when he requires it. The teacher, then, plays a crucial role of being a facilitator of the learning process, a consultant or a resource person rather than a classroom authority or an arbiter of classroom activities (Tumposky 1982).

If, by definition, a self-access learner is to find material to fit his own purpose, this means, first, that the material must be accessible to the learner himself. The materials must be arranged in such a way that the learner can tell whether a particular lesson or package fits his purpose. This can be done in the form of a card-catalogue system, similar to what is usually done in any library. Also, the learner must have physical access to his or her materials. The materials should not be kept out of reach or under lock and key. Finally, he must be able to do the learning activity and assess his own performance (Geddes and Sturtridge 1982).

In general, self-access materials are provided in a learning centre, which can be a corner of a room, a whole room, or a unit of rooms. It is, however, not necessarily so. In many cases, self-access learning can be conducted in regular classrooms and self-access materials can be used along with the traditional classroom textbooks. As a matter of fact, it is suggested that the traditional classroom setting may be necessary or advisable for certain self-access activities¹, or as a means of training the learner toward a self-access learning goal (Dickinson 1982, Windeatt 1980).

Background Principles

Current directions in language teaching and learning can be characterized by several features (Morley 1985), two of which may be relevant to self-access learning. They are: (1) a focus on learners

as active creators in their learning process, not as passive recipients; and (2) a focus on the individuality of learners and individual learning styles and strategies. (p.1)

The former feature shows the trend towards the sharing of the learning responsibilities between the teacher and the learner. Allwright (1978), for instance, comments that, in attempting to handle all classroom responsibilities by himself, the teacher runs the risk of creating frustration, wasting time and spoon-feeding the students in class. He, then, suggests ways of involving learners in classroom management. Littlejohn (1983) shows evidence of the learner's increased motivation when they are involved in the management of their own learning.

The latter feature characterizes what has been called the learner-centred approach. This approach recognizes the differences among individual learners in terms of learning goals, styles, rates, expectations, experience, and interests. As a result, the learner is to be given opportunities to choose only what he thinks is appropriate for himself (Littlejohn 1985).

These two main features constitute the major rationale for self-access learning. This is further reinforced by the growth in educational technology and the fundamental educational goal, which is to learn how to learn (Rogers 1969: 103).

The underlying goal in self-access learning, then, is to give the learner an opportunity to be responsible for his own learning, to choose what is appropriate for himself, to learn how to learn, and to develop his own learning styles as well as his self-confidence.

A Case Study

An example of a self-access centre which has been established for Thai students is Mahidol University's Self-Access Centre for Language Learning located on the Salaya Campus. The Centre was set up in November 1982 by the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Science, Mahidol University, with an aim, initially, to encourage Mahidol students to do extensive reading. This aim was based on the belief that "a learner will not become a proficient reader simply by attending a reading course or working through a reading textbook. For every hour of intensive reading, a learner should be doing at least another hour of extensive reading" (Williams 1986:44).

The first component in Mahidol's Self-Access Centre, therefore, was the Reading Laboratory, consisting of SRA graded readers (Parker 1969), paperback books, and references such as dictionaries and encyclopedia. Those who made use of the Centre were mainly first-year Mahidol students, most of whom lived on campus.

About a year after the Reading Laboratory was established, a listening component was added to the Centre. Due to lack of space, there were a limited number of listening booths. The listening materials available at the time were basically what the students used in class. Other than in-class materials, English songs were available on cassettes on a loan basis. The services offered for listening practice at the Centre were quite limited at this experimental stage.

More changes took place in the middle of 1984 when a decision was made to move the Centre from its previous location to the Central Library. The Centre was expanded not only in terms of space but also in terms of services. The aims were extended to cover both educational and recreational aspects of learning. The Centre's services were intended to offer the students opportunities to learn on their own, to take more responsibility for their own learning, to develop their own learning styles, as well as to spend their free time in a leisurely but useful way. In addition to bringing in a greater variety of reading and listening materials, then, the Centre's staff introduced new components such as Games, Word Building Activities, Puzzles and Thinklab (Weber 1976). Various activities such as monthly riddles and seasonal displays were organized alternately. Film and video shows were occasionally provided with the cooperation of the University's Audio-Visual Department. A German corner was also established as a part of the Centre.

The Centre is now in its fifth year and is still operating. It covers about one-third of the third floor of the Central Library. It seats 160-180 people at a time. Its hours are from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. The staff consists of a group of teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages, who volunteered to work because of their interests, and an assistant. Actively involved in materials preparation and activity organization as they are, these teachers, who also teach first-year students at Salaya, have not been able to make themselves available for learner consultation at the Centre, due to time constraints. The assistant's responsibilities are mainly non-academic, that is, to open and close the Centre at the specified time and to look after the hardware and the software in the Centre.

The Centre's major clients are still first-year Mahidol students at Salaya. English is one of their compulsory subjects to fulfill their fundamental six language credits. Their regular English classes meet 4 hours a week for 15 weeks per semester. All of the students have been assigned readings in SRA graded materials outside of the regular class time. Their reading abilities are tested, using these materials at the end of each semester. Some of them take German as a non-credit elective.

The students have access to the equipment and the materials in the Centre (except for the video tape and recorder). The Centre service that they make the most use of is the SRA reading material. Reference books and listening materials come second and third, respectively, in terms of frequency of use. (For details on the students' use of the Centre, see Wongbiasaj 1986).

Both the teachers and the teacher-organizers felt that the students were not making the best use of all services available at the Centre. In spite of the fact that the students were forced by the SRA assignment to do self-access learning at the Centre, they did not seem highly motivated to go to the Centre. It was anticipated that there might be some demotivating factors associated with the Centre or with self-access learning as a whole. An investigation into the students' problems in self-access learning at the Centre seemed necessary at this point. In addition, after the first five years of operation, it was felt that an evaluation of the Centre's services was needed so that future plans and directions could be set for the Centre. A survey was, then, conducted to collect information necessary for the planning and the improvement of the Centre's work.

The Survey

The survey was mainly aimed at investigating problems and constraints that may obstruct or impair the running of the Centre as well as the organization and implementation of self-access learning in general. Part of the survey focused particularly on learner problems in self-access learning at the Centre. It aimed to find out why the students were not motivated to go to the Centre. Only this part of the survey is discussed in this article. The research question relevant to this part was:

What are the problems the learners have in conducting self-access learning at the Centre?

The learner problems were investigated from three different angles: from the learners' points of view, from the teachers' view points and from the teacher-organizers' perspectives. Therefore, the investigation involved 3 groups of subjects: a group of first-year students of the Faculty of Science, Mahidol University at Salaya, a group of teachers who taught these students, and the teachers who organized the self-access learning at the Centre. The first group were 269 in all (comprising 153 females and 116 males) constituting 23.74% of all Mahidol First-year students. They were selected through systematic random sampling. The second and the third groups consisted of 6 and 8 teachers, respectively. They formed the total population of the subjects.

The instrument used with the learner group was the questionnaire. Its preparation started in February 1986. The questionnaire was piloted in July 1986 and was group-administered to the learner group all at one time in the second week of August (which was the 9th week of a 15-week semester during the first term of 1986.) The questionnaire was administered in the second half of the semester to give the students opportunities to familiarize themselves with both the Centre and the self-access approach. In the questionnaire, the students were asked to decide if an issue being raised was a problem they found in self-access learning at the Centre. And if it was, they were also to rate the degree of seriousness of the problem on a five-point scale. The final section of the questionnaire was an open-ended question asking the students to specify other problems that they had in self-access learning at the Centre. The data from the questionnaire was processed using the SPSS program. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be 0.81 (alpha model).

Structured interviews were conducted with the teacher and the teacher-organizer groups during the 1st and the 3rd weeks of August, which were the 8th-10th weeks of the semester. (For details of the content and the preparation of the questionnaire and the interview, see Wongbiasaj 1986).

Findings and Discussion

The problems the students had in conducting self-access learning at the Centre were found to be of two main types: those concerning the management of the Centre and those concerning the students themselves (e.g. their study load, their attitudes, etc.).

The former type of problems will be called the external problems since they seem to have arisen from factors external to the students. The latter type of problems, on the other hand, seem to have come from the students themselves and thus will be called internal problems. The external problems are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Scores Showing Problems Concerning the Centre Management From Learners' Viewpoints*

Problem	Mean Score (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. the Centre's lack of publicity	3.84	1.21
2. unavailability of teacher-consultant at the Centre	3.31	1.22
3. inconvenient hours	3.19	1.46
4. inadequate lighting	3.12	1.42
5. insufficient amount of equipment	2.85	1.38
6. insufficient amount of material	2.84	1.40
7. damaged or incomplete material	2.54	1.19
8. complicated material content	2.33	0.97
9. uninteresting material content	2.17	1.04
10. inadequate space at the Centre	2.10	1.19
11. noise from outside making it hard to concentrate	1.93	1.09
12. uncomfortable atmosphere	1.89	1.09
13. damaged equipment	1.89	1.02
14. out-dated equipment	1.68	0.94
15. inconvenient location	1.66	1.04
16. inconvenient arrangement of the plate	1.58	0.88
17. too much material in the Centre	1.47	0.73

N = 263 (only those who had used the Centre's services at least once during the specified semester)

*from a five-point scale ranging from 1 meaning 'the issue being raised is not a problem to me' to 5 meaning 'the issue being raised is a very serious problem to me'. It is taken that an issue whose mean score is over 2.5 constitutes a problem that is worth considering.

Table 1 shows that what the students found to be the most trouble some of all the external issues was the Centre's lack of publicity, which resulted in their missing opportunities to participate in the Centre's activities ($X = 3.84$). This was followed by the problem of having no teacher-consultant at the Centre to give help when necessary ($X = 3.31$). The next two problems, which received approximately equal ratings, were the inconvenient hours and the inadequate lighting ($X = 3.19$ and 3.12 , respectively). The problems of not having enough equipment and materials were ranked at about the same level of seriousness ($X = 2.85$ and 2.84 , respectively). The students also specified in the questionnaires that the equipment and the materials which were found to be insufficient in number were mainly tape recorders and tape cassettes. Other issues, such as those concerning the atmosphere of the Centre, the space and the arrangement in the Centre, were regarded as constituting slight problems by the students.

The students' responses were mostly confirmed by the information collected from the teachers' and the teacher-organizers' interviews. When asked what they thought would constitute problems for the students in using self-access learning at the centre, both groups gave the following ranking.

Table 2: The Teachers' and the Teacher-Organizers' Viewpoints on What Constitute Learner Problems Concerning the Centre Management*

Issue	No. of responses	
	Teachers	Teacher-Organizers
1. lack of publicity	4	3
2. lack of teacher-consultant at the Centre	3	4
3. insufficient amount of equipment and material	3	4
4. damaged equipment and material	2	5
5. inconvenient hours	1	6

N of Teachers = 6

N of Teacher-Organizers = 8

*The issues raised by the two groups were 24 in all, only the top five of which are presented in this table.

Table 2 shows the 5 items that received the most attention from the teachers and the teacher-organizers as being potential causes of learner problems concerning the Centre's management. It should be noted that the 5 items from the teachers/teacher-organizers' perspectives, as shown on Table 2, coincide with all but one (item 4) of the first 7 items of the students' list, as shown on Table 1. This may mean that the learner problems had been known to either the teachers or the teacher-organizers or both to some extent. The inconvenient hours, for instance, were mentioned by most of the teacher-organizers. They seemed well aware of the demand to have the Centre to stay open after 4:30 PM and also during weekends but administrative constraints, such as lack of budget and personnel, were mentioned. The same answers were given in response to demands for more equipment and for a teacher-consultant to be permanently stationed at the Centre. The problem of lack of publicity, however, did not seem to be very well known to the teacher-organizers. Less than half of the group realized that it constituted problems to learners in self-access learning. The teachers, on the other hand, tended to recognize the importance of publicity. Two-thirds of them reported having introduced their groups of students to the Centre and having shown them how to use the SRA readers. This, however, was probably not enough. The teachers suggested having a formal orientation at the beginning of the semester as well as ongoing public announcements concerning the Centre activities throughout the year. Lack of publicity was believed by the teachers to be the main factor for the students' low response.

The second type of problem, the internal factors, had to do with the students themselves. The students reported the following information in the questionnaires.

The mean scores of the items in Table 3 range from 1.55 to 2.93. This shows that the students regarded these problems as being less serious than those of the external type, which were shown in Table 1. The data in Table 3 does not seem to show that the students hold strong negative attitudes toward self-access learning, as they did not rank the issue of lack of trust in the effectiveness of the approach very high on their internal problems list. What the data seems to show is that there may be a large number of students who were not ready, mentally and technically, for self-access learning, especially when it is done in English. The first item on the

Table 3: Mean Scores Showing Problems Concerning the Learners Themselves*

Problem	Mean Score (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Being weak in English, I don't think I can do self-access learning in English effectively.	2.93	1.29
2. I don't know what problems I have in learning English so I can't help myself.	2.87	1.31
3. I would like to try self-access learning but don't know how to start.	2.86	1.34
4. I have such a heavy study load that there is no time for extra hours of language learning.	2.63	1.26
5. Without a teacher to check the answers, I don't know if I am right or wrong.	2.58	1.26
6. I don't understand the instructions on the cassette or worksheet.	2.56	1.14
7. I can't find cassettes or worksheets that I want at the Centre.	2.55	1.28
8. I don't trust self-access learning to be an effective way of learning.	2.53	1.09
9. I am not used to studying by myself without teacher's supervision.	2.25	1.20
10. I can't train myself to concentrate outside the classroom.	2.02	1.18
11. I don't know how to operate the equipment at the Centre.	1.55	0.73

N = 263

*from a five-point scale ranging from 1 meaning 'the issue being raised is not a problem to me' to 5 meaning 'the issue being raised is a very serious problem to me'. It is taken that an issue whose mean score is over 2.5 constitutes a problem that is worth considering.

list seems to suggest that the students may, to a certain extent, suffer from lack of confidence. This is not likely to have come from unfamiliarity with the self-access learning approach itself, as the unfamiliarity did not seem to be the students' major problem (item 9, $X = 2.25$; item 10, $X = 2.02$). As a matter of fact, many of them must have been through a lot of self-study sessions when they studied for the entrance exams. Their lack of confidence may have come from having to perform in a second language. This point is supported by an informal talk with a couple of students, who admitted that they got nervous and insecure everytime they had to follow instructions in English. It is also supported by the fact that some students, due to lack of confidence in themselves as well as in their friends, preferred teacher correction to self or peer-correction (Wiriyachitra and Wongbiasaj 1986). Self-access learning may be less appealing to students who lack confidence in their use of English.

On the technical side, the students reported that they were unable to identify their problems ($X = 2.87$) and they did not know how to start self-access learning ($X = 2.86$). These procedural and technical problems were unexpected, considering their claim that they were quite familiar with self-study. It seems unlikely that, with such familiarity, the students still have not mastered the learning techniques necessary for self-study. A more likely explanation is that they have mastered the self-study techniques in other subjects (e.g. science, math, car-repair, gardening, etc.) using the first language but these techniques may not be readily transferable to the second language self-access learning (Dickinson and Carver 1980). If this is the case, the students need to be taught techniques for second language self-access learning, such as how to identify their own problems, how to set their learning objectives, how to choose appropriate materials, and how to evaluate themselves. An alternative explanation for the students' unpreparedness is that the techniques the students have mastered in the first language may be transferable, but the students may not have been aware of the possibilities of transferring them to second language self-access learning. If this is true, they need to be made aware of such possibilities.

Apart from the problems of being mentally and technically unprepared, the students reported that their study load was one of the obstacles to self-access learning at the Centre ($X = 2.63$).

Hidden behind this problems is the widely-accepted view that for most of the science-oriented students at Mahidol University, language learning always comes last on their list of priorities. Since they usually had heavy schedules and difficult subjects to study during the day, by the end of the day, they did not feel like going to the Centre to learn a not-so-important subject, such as English. Of all the problems the students reported having, this may be the most difficult to deal with because it involves not only negotiations with subject-teachers to rearrange the students' schedule but an attempt to convince the students of their future potential language needs as well.

Implications for Future Planning

The results of the study seem to suggest the needs for those in charge of self-access learning at Mahidol University to reconsider three important aspects.

Reconsideration in terms of the first-year general curriculum and the English syllabus

As has been mentioned, one of the obstacles to the students' use of the Centre was their regular study load. If they were to spend more time on self-access learning, the study load simply must be reduced. This implies changes in the first-year general curriculum. Another major point is that self-access learning is not necessarily done for language learning only. It can be applied across the curriculum. That is, students can be encouraged to use the self-access approach in learning other subjects as well. This may result in better understanding of the significance and the usefulness of self-access learning in the students' life. Moreover if self-access techniques are transferable from L_1 to L_2 , the cross-curriculum application will render the students better skill practice.

Another point that deserves an emphasis is that self-access learning is not necessarily done at the Centre, independently of regular classroom learning. As Basil (1985:100) suggests,

Self-access combined with classroom teaching provides an opportunity for learners to meet some of their individual language needs and gives them an introduction to self-directed learning.

For students who are unfamiliar with the procedure, or who suffer from lack of self-confidence, self-access learning at the

centre, combined with classroom training, may be the most appropriate approach. If self-access learning is to be integrated with regular classroom sessions, several changes must be considered. The English syllabus content, for instance, must include self-access learning techniques as well as language forms and use. The content scope should be flexible to allow the students opportunities to choose according to their problems and needs. Also, the teaching techniques must be adjusted, for the student must be given the opportunity to participate in and to share responsibility for their own learning. The teachers may have to reduce their classroom control and try to encourage more learner involvement. The assessment techniques and the grading system may also need to be modified. Success in using self-access techniques needs to be measured (if it is measurable at all) on a par with language accuracy and fluency.

Reconsideration in terms of learners

It is obvious from the results of the study that the students needed training in order to handle self-access learning effectively and efficiently. As a matter of fact, in general, there are very few students who come equipped with all self-access learning skills (Holec 1985:10). The kind of training Mahidol students needed can be divided into two types: technical and psycho-social. This, again, coincides with what Holec suggests. The former type of training includes helping the learners to identify their own individual problems, helping them make decisions at various stages of the learning process, and helping them with their own evaluation. The latter type of training ranges from encouraging the learner to commit themselves to helping them modify their conception of learning (Holec 1985).

Reconsideration in terms of personnel

As a result of the need to give help and support to the learner, a teacher-consultant is an inevitable component in a self-access centre. This point is supported by the fact that Mahidol students regarded lack of a teacher-consultant as one of their most serious problems in using the Centre. As the teacher-consultant's functions require delicate and specialized skills and knowledge (Cousin 1982), he or she, too, needs to be trained. On-the-job training may also be necessary for classroom teachers in general, for, as has previously

been mentioned, their classroom roles need to be changed radically. Their training has to include both technical and psycho-social aspects. The latter particularly is essential, for, as Holec states, "the teacher, like the learner, has to modify his conception of the teacher's role, which means that he too is susceptible to the psycho-social problems which such a change brings about" (1985:14).

Another group of personnel that may need an orientation, if not specific training, to the self-access learning conception is subject-specific teachers and administrators. Such an orientation can come in different forms ranging from a formal seminar or conference to an informal getting-together with the language teachers. These people need to get a better understanding of the self-access learning approach if they are to give support and encouragement to the students and the language teachers.

This is neither an easy nor an overnight process. It also corresponds with the suggestion that self-access learning should be an integrated part of regular classroom teaching.

Conclusions

In this study, two types of learner problems were found: those resulting from external factors such as the management of the Centre and those relating to the students themselves such as their technical unpreparedness and their lack of confidence. The latter type of problems can certainly be dealt with by giving the students some training, which may mean an integration of the Centre's work with classroom teaching. Learner training, however, is not the sole solution to the problems, since a full-scale self-access learning program requires cooperation across the curriculum. Long-term, wide-scope training is needed for all parties concerned because self-access learning involves a modification of the conception of learning, especially for those who hold on to the belief that learning is the teacher's business, not the learner's.

NOTES

¹ Carver and Dickinson (1982) suggest a list of self-access activities which can be done in class so that teachers who are interested in self-access learning approach "...can work towards the promotion of self-direction within the conventional school framework" (p. 143).

Some of these activities (e.g., self-correction, pairwork, groupwork, project work) are not new to most language teachers. Other (e.g., trouble-shooting, use of pupil-teachers) are less familiar and may be more challenging.

² Several suggestions on techniques for training students towards self-access skills (e.g. identifying their own problems, setting their learning objectives, record-keeping, self-correction, self-rating) have been given in, for instance, Dickinson and Carver 1980, Carver and Dickinson 1982, and Geddes and Sturtridge 1982. The psycho-social training, on the other hand, has not been extensively dealt with in the previous literature. This may be because this type of training is more subtle and has a lot to do with the individual student's personal characteristics, such as their age, their cultural background, and previous learning experience. Also, it may be advisable to think of the two types of training, technical and psycho-social, as being integrated rather than as two separate components.

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Widening Our Horizons Through Creative Counselling

Robert Paulet

What?
Is the systems approach a thing of the past?
Is the past a thing of the now?
Must we solve today's problems with yesterday's tools?
Are we only concerned with the how?
Is the future so tame that we need just to claim
Our solutions are there in the sky!
Or do we believe, to continue to breathe,
That we need to begin asking why?
(Lemons, 1984)

Counsellors have traditionally supported and challenged clients to maximize their potential in a variety of settings. Recent changes in technology and attitudes to adult education will expand the opportunities for counsellors to assist individuals taking distance education courses in isolated communities. Professionally trained individuals, however, will have to become familiar with a unique delivery system and must be willing to share their responsibilities with a new team of professional helpers. This article will examine some of the exciting opportunities and depressing realities in this area by focusing on the needs of adult distance learners; selected case studies of student service operations in Canada, and England; and technology currently used to provide counselling and support services to distance education students.

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Many educators have considered counselling and related support services an indispensable part of traditional campus-based post-secondary education. However, in distance education, counselling and student advocacy are only beginning to be recognized as an important part of the educational experience of the learner. Representatives of many distance education institutions contend that their goal is to promote an attitude of independence. To reach their goal, they develop learning packages which enable students to work on their own, with a minimum of contact with the educational institution. Unfortunately, as Dan Coldeway pointed out, "most students lack the experience to adapt readily to a totally andragogical system" (1982:91). Dedicated instructors expend vast amounts of time and energy devising learning packages which will allow students to become completely independent of teachers and other students. They appear to have forgotten the importance of the social aspect of the learning experience. At the university level, the pursuit of this ultimate achievement of instructional designers is not only futile but misdirected. It is vital that the concept of a university as a community of scholars—in distance education studying as external students—must be maintained. As Smith and Small stated, "external studies will, by definition, continue to be essentially a form of independent study but should never be a sentence to solitary confinement" (1982:137).

Let us shift our focus from the challenges relating to the learning system to those relating to the type of learner that typically takes distance education courses. Studies have shown that the majority of distance learners are adults (Paulet, 1985). While it is true that many adults are self-sufficient, many are not. Their most recent educational experiences typically may be part of their distant memories. They generally have a greater variety of educational backgrounds which ranges from less than high school graduation to a university degree. They are not familiar with distance education. Their study skills, if they exist, may be rusty or inappropriate. Usually, they are part-time distance education students working in a variety of full-time activities. Consequently, they are constantly forced to choose between dealing with the demands of their studies and a host of other pressing demands in their environment.

Like all students, they approach educational institutions with a goal or aspiration in mind. Morgan, Taylor and Gibbs (1982) identified three main types of orientation to study (personal,

vocational, and academic) which alter the ways students view their studies. Student satisfaction may be greatly affected by their ability to obtain courses and programmes that fulfill their prior expectations.

Students may be plagued with a variety of problems unrelated to course selection. Many are concerned about difficulties with administrative considerations, such as examination systems and course content, design, and deadlines.

Having established that the students need a support service that can personalize and humanize the distance teaching system, let us examine the role of the counsellor in serving these individuals. This examination will focus on the challenge to counsellors and the opportunities available to flexible professionals establishing their rights and responsibilities in this new medium of service.

Counsellors are aware that the nature of their service is dictated, in part, by the employing institution serving the client. Distance learners require current information related to opportunities available throughout the entire post-secondary system, for example, course registration, intake dates, and final examinations. Students in many isolated areas are frequently required to make arrangements for their own examination supervisor or proctor.

Educators continue to disagree on the definition of counselling and the role of the counsellor. There is clearly an overlap between advising and counselling both in the skills required of staff who perform these tasks and the purpose of each function. Both advisors and counsellors help students cope with their environment and acquire self-understanding. However, there are a number of significant differences and these peculiarities are relevant to the distance learner.

Currently, advisory services are more prevalent in distance education programs than are counselling services. Advisors typically help students request information in such areas as program alternatives, financial aid, and so on. Advisors tend to be more problem-centered whereas counsellors are person-centred, developing confidence and helping the student make personal choices.

In general, educational institutions have been reluctant to hire counsellors to work in the distance education setting despite the fact that adult learners face many personal and social problems when they return to education.

Although counsellors are rarely hired to work in distance education programs, a number of successful institutions have developed a variety of student support services. The nature of these services frequently depends on funding, organizational structure, and philosophy of the institution. Brief summaries of how selected institutions have developed creative ways of helping students are described in the next section.

A distance teaching institution which is part of the network of the University of Quebec, Tele-universite, has developed a unique staff role, the *animateur* (facilitator). He or she organizes workshops for small groups of students to serve a specified region (Caron, 1982). The animateur may also be asked to support students participating in teleconferencing. Unlike a tutor, the animateur is usually a non-academic specialist.

Community representatives (peer-counsellors) at the University of Western Ontario provide information and support to off-campus and distance education students. These modestly paid individuals perform the following duties:

- (a) discuss problems of university courses with students;
- (b) pass on information concerning the academic channels and contacts on campus;
- (c) share personal experiences regarding managing university courses or programs with students;
- (d) help identify strategies for academic planning;
- (e) give the faculty of part-time and continuing education feedback on issues that relate to off-campus centres;
- (f) act as an ombudsman between student and Part-Time Continuing Education.

Athabasca University, serving over 8000 working adults in all parts of Canada, has developed an elaborate support system. The Alberta institution employs about 160 part-time tutors who assist students with course content. They also help the student maximize his or her potential educationally and personally by providing information and support.

The Open Learning Institute (OLI), instituted by the British Columbia government in 1978, (serving approximately 15,000 students) has no counterpart to the Athabasca University counsellor role. The emphasis in the advisor role at OLI is on information-giving, academic advising, liaison and promotion, and administrative activities. About 120 tutors were hired on part-time six-month

contracts and 8 tutors were retained on part-time 12-month contracts. Working from their homes, they maintain regular contact with students through the mail and by telephone. While they are only required by contract to initiate one introductory telephone call, most tutors make at least three calls during a course. Teleconferencing is used by some tutors to reduce the sense of isolation felt by students.

While Brandon University has been involved in distance education delivery for only three years; it is well recognized for its off-campus teacher training programs in Africa, England, and Canada. The B.U.N.T.E.P. program (Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program) with its regional coordinators has been studied by many universities. The P.E.N.T. (Project for Native Teachers) program received the most distinguished teacher training award program in North America in Florida in 1983. Counselling and support services are available in the well-recognized programs in the university and need to be developed for all other distance learners at Brandon University. A student in the B.U.N.T.E.P. program can receive counselling on a regular daily basis if necessary as each B.U.N.T.E.P. centre has a specially trained coordinator or centre administrator as well as access to a regional social worker and administrative support staff. The P.E.N.T. student can also request counselling by phoning the P.E.N.T. office in Brandon. Other distance learners must be content with asking a secretary to relay a message to their instructor. Students trying to receive assistance have also been frustrated by the disconnection of the only answering service set up to serve them. The removal of a free telephone line for students in Manitoba made it more expensive for students taking guided independent study courses. Some recent attempts have been made to improve the support system. Weekly phone calls from the instructors and regular teleconferencing sessions have proven useful. The student services office has agreed to relay messages and provide some telephone and personal counselling services for students interested in distance learning. There are plans to list the courses in the Brandon University Calendar so that potential students in Northern Manitoba can be aware of available distance education courses through the traditional channels. A recent study (Paulet, 1985) has indicated that students are satisfied with the instruction and the quality of the print and audio-visual packages. They requested additional local and group tele-

phone counselling sessions. The study also showed that the request for education courses is more than 300% higher than the previous year. One can only imagine how high this figure would have been with additional support services in place.

The next best thing to being there, is counselling through technology! While there is a growing interest in providing student support services through the use of technology; these services in distance education are delivered primarily through print, telephone, and in-person contacts.

Authors try to make their print materials "user friendly". Students taking OLI's PREP 001 course receive self-administered diagnostic tests and programme planning information on such topics as study skills and examination preparation.

While some institutions use audiocassettes as a vehicle for communication between the tutor and the student (for example, Waterloo), most institutions use audiocassette tapes to supplement and enrich the print learning package. Feasley (1983) pointed out why they are gaining in popularity. Audiocassettes have several advantages: they are readily available, relatively inexpensive, portable, and students can stop and replay them at will. On one Athabasca University tape, designed to provide advising and counselling services, four students registered at the University talk about their experiences as adult distance education students.

The telephone is used a great deal in distance education because it provides fast, effective communication links between students, tutors, advisors, administrative staff, and counsellors. However, the effective delivery of tutoring and counselling services by telephone requires excellent communication skills. The following factors, identified by Mikiman (1984) should be remembered by all counsellors working with distance education students:

the counsellor (and tutor) has to rely on auditory cues such as voice tone, tempo, and inflection; voice quality and speech attributes; and language syntax and semantics in order to initiate and enhance communication effectiveness in telephone contact (p.407).

A number of universities in Canada use audio, video, and computer teleconferencing. Carl (1983) described the DUET (Distance University Education via Television) system at Mount St. Vincent University in Nova Scotia. DUET uses cable television and video teleconferencing to deliver both distance education and to

support students by providing the opportunity for interaction amongst students at the receiving centre and interaction with the instructor at the broadcast classroom. He also pointed out that the broadcast classroom contains speakers for the telephone lines so that the instructor and students on campus can hear and speak with the students at the receiving centres.

Effective counsellors are aware of the importance of empathetic and congruent communication with their client. Counsellors have developed the ability to avoid the superficial and to explore the hidden and real message. Only truly creative counsellors will be able to effectively use computer conferencing, broadcast television, and videotex to provide support to distance learners.

Counsellors have an opportunity to enhance the educational opportunities of adults struggling to maximize their potential in remote and isolated communities. They can help schools reemphasize the basics, as well as expand the traditional three Rs to include communication, higher-level problem-solving skills, and scientific and technological literacy. Indeed, now is the time for counselling distance education students in a technological world!

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Bright Ideas

Five Mini-Activities for the Language Classroom

Peter Duppenenthaler

I have used the following mini-activities with great success. Students find them to be both challenging and interesting. Most only require a few minutes and are ideal as quick "pick-me-ups" during a lesson or as rousing endings. Because they are all designed to be completed within a relatively short period of time (usually within 5 minutes), they can be used a number of times without students becoming tired of them. Most are flexible enough to be used with students individually, in pairs, groups, or with the class as a whole—a real advantage in mixed-ability classes. In addition, the use of these activities encourages cooperation among the students and helps to develop a sense of class spirit. Although designed for teaching English, they can be easily adapted to the teaching of other foreign languages.

1. Next in Order

How many times have you asked a student for the day of the week and then watched him or her mentally tick off the days in order until he or she gets to the right one? This often happens with younger learners but even many advanced or older learners tend to follow (although less obviously) this method. "Next in Order" is an interesting way to review the alphabet, the days of the week, and the months of the year. In addition, it serves to alert students to the dangers of only being able to arrive at Z after having first silently gone through the entire alphabet from A to Y.

Begin by asking the students to tell you the days of the week (months of the year or letters of the alphabet). Then, tell them that you are going to say one of the days of the week and you

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want them to tell you what the next day is as quickly as possible. Demonstrate a few times by saying something like, "I say, 'Monday' and you say...", and then begin. As soon as they have the idea, speed up and move out of sequence (e.g., Teacher: "Monday," Students: "Tuesday"; T: "Friday," S: "Saturday"; T: "Wednesday," S: "Thursday"; and so on). Keep it moving as fast as you can. Students should not be given enough time to run through the series. Imagine a ticking metronome with you saying the name of a day on "tick" and the students giving the next day on "tock." Stop after a couple of minutes and either go on to ask for the previous day (or month or letter of the alphabet) or save this for another day.

2. *Pronoun Practice*

The proper use of pronouns always seems to be a big problem. This mini-activity is designed to give your students a lot of quick recognition practice. As with the other mini-activities, it can be used a number of times, and in this particular case, the more the better. This means that you will have to be sure to limit the activity to a few minutes at any one time. The vocabulary can be changed as needed (i.e., to include new items or to review particularly troublesome ones). Simply make up a list of nouns (be sure to include both singular and plural), read each noun, and ask the students to say either "he," "she," "it," or "they," depending on which fits the word. For example, if you say "man" the students (as a class or individuals) should say "he." Be sure to write the words out (developing a small card file is ideal) before you come to class. You have to be able to say the words one after another as quickly as possible in order to maintain the pace this activity needs to be interesting. The following is a sample list to get you started: hand, fingers, man, book, pens, nephew, sister, woman, park, niece, children, uncle, cousins, women, mother, father, husband, grandfather, feed, nephews, table, hammer, foot, car, truck, women, homes, trees, golf, child.

3. *Eat/Drink/Wear/Use*

This mini-activity is a variation on "Pronoun Practice." The procedure is exactly the same. However, the students must now tell you if each word fits into the "eat," "drink," "wear," or "use" category. Again, the list should be adjusted to fit your students' levels and needs; but speed is important in maintaining interest.

As in "Pronoun Practice," say the word and have the students answer with the appropriate category. The following is a sample list: meat, fish, hammer, clock, pen, hat, shoes, tea, milk, door, poultry, food, dictionary, boat, ham, fingers, brain, coffee, lights, socks, belt.

4. *Larger/Smaller*

This mini-activity is a simple way to review numbers. Again, speed is what makes it interesting, especially for advanced level students. This means that you will need to prepare your list of numbers in advance. Say any two numbers and ask the students to tell you if the second number you said was larger or smaller than the first. Pairs like 13/30 and 12/20 are always interesting. As a variation, you might want to try the same activity using pairs in which a cardinal number is paired with an ordinal number.

5. *Count the Words*

English spoken at normal speed by native speakers usually comes across as just a blur of sound to beginning ESL/EFL students. Here is a mini-activity to help your students make some sense out of that blur. Say any short sentence (maximum of 10 words, no contractions but do use reductions) that is well within your students' ability to understand if it is written out for them. Say it at normal speed and with normal intonation, and ask them to tell you how many words there are in the sentence. You should say it as many times as they require to get the correct number of words, but always at normal speed. They do not have to be able to tell you what you said, just the number of words. It sounds like a simple thing to do but just think back to when you began to study a foreign language. It is a great way to start training your students' ears and to give them some confidence in their ability to make some sense out of what they hear.

Newspaper Summaries: An Integrated Skills Activity

Max Mayer

Introduction

In the field of ESL/EFL, there has been much discussion in recent years on the topic of productive and receptive skills and strategies. A good deal of research on productive skills has been carried out (see Faerch & Kasper 1983) but the area of receptive skills has only recently been looked into in any concrete way. This is an area which is becoming increasingly important for second language learning, especially in Japan. As teachers we can help students to find more effective receptive strategies as well as presenting them with notions, functions, and rules. Receptive strategies help students to manage communication and to have some degree of control over the L₂ input they receive.

An activity which I have found to be very useful for presenting students with the opportunity to work on receptive strategies and practice communication management skills is oral newspaper summaries. This activity integrates reading, listening, speaking, and academic skills, such as note taking and summarization. The student presenter stands in front of the class and, with the aid of a worksheet, presents his or her summary to the class. During the summary, the other students are encouraged to interrupt the speaker, ask questions, and request clarification. In essence, the speaker comes to understand that it is his or her "responsibility" to present information accurately and the listeners realize that they must "get" the information completely with all that this entails.

Objectives

The students with whom I am using these summary exercises attend classes 18 hours a week. They are pre-university students desiring entrance into Temple University Japan or possibly another American university. They are enrolled in the Intensive English Language Program of Temple University which prepares them for university by teaching them the linguistic and study skills which they will need.

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Besides the development of communication skills, this activity has several other objectives, the first of which is to encourage students to build up the habit of reading in English. It is difficult to say which skill is the most important for success at the university; they are all important. However, the influence of reading on developing competence in writing and building vocabulary has been documented (Krashen 1984). A second objective is for students to concentrate on correct pronunciation during the presentation. In my experience, Japanese students of English have a tendency not to enunciate clearly with the result that the listener often has difficulty understanding what is being said. This exercise forces the speaker to speak clearly so that the listeners are able to understand the content of the presentation.

There seems to be a consensus regarding how difficult it is in Japan to get students to ask questions, or to interrupt for clarification, in general to take control of communicative situations in any meaningful way. As mentioned above, the most important objective of this activity is to train students to manage communicative situations in English, and to equip them with the language and skills they need to control the flow of information they receive. In order to encourage my students to do this, they are told that they will have a quiz on the content of each presentation. A part of the preparatory work for the summary activity is to give the students the gambits (or functional phrases) they will need in order to control the communicative situation so that they can understand the information being presented. There are gambits for both speaker and listener (see appendix, Fig. 1). For lower level students, it is advisable to do preparatory activities in which they can practice using the gambits. Examples of such activities are: 1) having students present summaries in small groups before giving the presentation to the entire class; 2) doing information-gap activities; 3) giving instructions which require students to ask for clarification, repetition, and so on. Since the students know they will be tested on the material, they begin to ask the speakers to slow down, to speak more clearly, and to explain the meanings of new words.

Procedure

The first thing I do is to relate to the students the need for reading. I usually ask if they read the newspaper or any magazines or books in English. At most levels here in Japan, the answer is

"no." I then explain that they need to expand their vocabulary and begin reading in English to prepare them for the reading they will have to do in university. I tell them that English newspapers are readily available in Japan, and that they should take advantage of this opportunity to read regularly. Next, I tell them that I would like them to begin reading articles in the newspaper. The articles which I want them to read are short narratives which are usually on the first few pages of the paper. I explain to them at this time the different sections of the newspaper and the different focus that each deals with. Since one of the purposes of the exercise is to get them into the habit of reading; to start them on editorials or political comments at this time would only reinforce their negative feelings about reading. Therefore, the students are told to stick to the smaller news reports at the beginning of the paper. Subsequently, I assign each student a particular day of the week to give his or her summary. Depending on time constraints, I usually do two to four summaries a day. If classes are small and meet often enough, students can give more than one summary a week. As was previously mentioned, it is advisable to do some preparatory activities with lower-level students. I do a model presentation, one that I have prepared. I present it to the students as I expect them to present theirs to the class. After the summary, I ask if there are any questions. This is a crucial point in the process. If the students do not ask me any questions I will then arbitrarily pick one or more students to tell me what I have just summarized. In most cases they will not be able to relate back to me specific points of the summary. I then ask the students why they are not able to give me back the information. Possible answers might be "I did not understand you," "You spoke too quickly," "I didn't understand some words." I will then show them the necessity of stopping me at those points when they do not understand something and asking for clarification or stopping me from speaking too quickly and so on.

The next step is to give the class a summary sheet (see Appendix, Fig. 2) which contains several questions to guide them through the summary. When a summary is presented to the class, it is this sheet that will be used and not the original newspaper article. This work sheet keeps the students from simply writing fully copied paragraphs.

Before the first summary is given each day, I mark off a special space on the black/white board for new vocabulary. If, during the course of the presentation, listeners ask the presenter to explain a new word, he or she is required to write this word on the board. It is also the responsibility of the presenter to be able to explain the definition of the word. If her or his explanation is not sufficient, I will interject and try to help define the word. Students are required to use appropriate gambits to interrupt the speaker when they do not understand what is being said. This forces both listeners and speakers to be aware of the need for clarity during the activity. The speakers are also stopped when pronunciation has passed a critical point where meaning has been lost. In addition, when ideas are vague, questions must be asked for clarification.

In the beginning the activity is usually awkward and confusing for the participants, both speakers and audience. At this point, it is *essential* that the teacher intervene frequently because there is usually very little communication management on the part of the students. Initially the teacher is the facilitator for both speaker and listeners. The role of the teacher as facilitator gradually diminishes as students become aware of the necessity for negotiating meaning. After a few weeks, a rhythm is set and both listeners and speakers begin to get involved. The teacher's role then becomes minimal, and he or she becomes more of a monitor of the proceedings. However, the teacher will always have to maintain close vigilance on the proceedings as students sometimes tend to lapse into old habits if not constantly reminded of the need to maintain their responsibility in the process.

Once the rhythm of the exercise has been established, the whole procedure runs quite smoothly. I have used this activity with students who met for 4 hours a week and am presently doing it with students who meet for 18 hours a week. In both contexts, the groups arrive at a point where they really are controlling the communication, with both listeners and speakers actively involved.

A further useful exercise is to have the students take notes during each summary. After the presentation, the teacher takes each student's article and summary sheet and when several summaries have been presented, a quiz is given on the content of the summaries. Students are permitted to use their notes during the quiz. Since the students know there will be a quiz, they realize the necessity for taking good notes and asking questions. It is

important that students also be tested regularly on the vocabulary which crops up during the summaries. There are usually 2-3 new words per summary.

Conclusion

What is interesting about this activity is the authenticity of the exercise for the students, as well as the integration of several skills. Reading, speaking, and listening are all utilized in one task which at the same time both supports and reinforces the confidence of the students. Of course most students are nervous in the beginning, but it is up to the teacher to make them realize that the whole process is helping them to speak and understand English better and that the classroom environment is a supportive rather than a threatening one.

An important point is that within a short time the presenters focus on their own language output; they begin to understand that they have a responsibility to the listeners and that they must make themselves understood. The listeners, on the other hand, begin to realize that they are responsible for understanding the information which is being summarized. They see the language as it is, something to be used to convey information, not studied for its own sake. They realize that there is an interaction between the speaker and the listener which can be controlled and utilized to comprehend the information being given. This latter area of communication management is of the utmost importance for my particular students. Training them to become active participants in the learning process is crucial for their success at the American university to which they are planning to go.

APPENDIX

(Figure 1)

Expression Sheet

Remember when you give your summary in front of the class to be sure that you are speaking clearly, loudly, and pronouncing your words correctly. You should have looked up all new words in the dictionary and be able to explain the meaning of them to the listeners. Have good eye-contact with the listeners so that you can see if they are listening to you or not. You can stop at times to ask them if what you are saying is being understood.

When you are listening to the speaker give his/her summary be sure to stop him/her if you do not understand a word, or if he/she is not speaking clearly or loudly enough.

Below are some expressions which you can use to interrupt the speaker or ask if people are understanding what you are saying.

Listener Expressions

1. Excuse me, can you repeat that, please.....
2. Sorry, what did you say?
3. What was the last word you said?
4. I'm sorry I didn't understand you, can you please pronounce that more clearly.....
5. Can you speak more clearly, slowly, loudly.....
6. Sorry, you are speaking too quickly.....
7. What was the *1st*, *2nd*, *3rd* word, please?
8. Could you please repeat that whole sentence.....

Speaker Expressions

1. May I begin?
2. Can I start?
3. Are you ready?
4. Did you understand what I just said?
5. Am I speaking too quickly?
6. Do you want me to write _____ on the board?
7. Do you want me to spell _____ ?
8. Are there any questions?

(Figure 2)

Summary Worksheet

Student's Name _____

Title of Article: _____

Source of Article: (Name of newspaper) _____

Date of Article: _____

Please answer the following questions concerning the article you have just read and will use for your presentation in class. If a question is not relevant leave it blank. Use one or two complete sentences to answer the questions.

- 1) What is the main idea of the article?

- 2) Who is/are the main person/persons in the article?

- 3) Where did/will the events in the article take place?

- 4) When did/will the events in the article occur?

- 5) What were the effects of the events in the article?

New Vocabulary

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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Bringing News Articles into the ESL Classroom: Speeding the Acquisition of Comprehension Skills

David O'Reilly and Virgil Palmer

Introduction

Often overlooked but ideal as an ESL tool, newspaper articles can speed the acquisition of language skills. Typical news articles that appear in every English daily newspaper offer valuable instruction to upper basic to advanced level students. They can serve many purposes in the classroom and are, in essence, language paradigms. If an instructor is aware of the basic structure and its classroom potential, the efficacy of using newspaper articles as a teaching tool is enhanced.

Pre-reading

Articles are typically written for a ninth grade reading level. They can therefore challenge the abilities of upper basic students of English and are also appropriate for advanced students. Sentences are kept simple as is the choice of words. This is axiomatic; journalists are taught that fewer words are better, and that a simpler, shorter word is preferable to a larger, less familiar one. Further, the structure employed, known as the "inverted pyramid," dictates that the most important information comes first. This allows students to understand the main idea and most important points of this form of communication without reading the whole story.

An additional benefit in using newspaper articles lies in the transfer of skills as they naturally occur. What began as a reading comprehension exercise leads to vocabulary building and discussion and listening practice that are completely student-generated. Confidence is gained which encourages students to take more responsibility; thereby resulting in more student-centered learning.

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When teaching Japanese students of English, it becomes apparent that learning and comprehension often stops as soon as an unknown word is encountered. This results in frustration for both the student and the teacher. Since communication depends on more than the verbal component, i.e., facial expressions, body language, contextual elements, etc., such regressions and lapses take on a greater significance than they actually warrant. For this reason, it behooves the teacher to spend an adequate amount of class time preparing the students for this specialized reading task. This is especially true in conversational English classes where the focus is on the verbal rather than the written component. Students of conversational English are usually adults whose school days are in the distant past, and probably have forgotten the reading skills acquired then. Therefore, these students have the greatest need of pre-reading preparation to ensure that this experience does not end in frustration.

The 5 W's and the Inverted Pyramid

Reporters are taught that their work is a craft and not literature to last for ages. They know, moreover, that native speakers with the most basic of reading levels should be able to comprehend the writing. Thus, news articles lack complex sentence structures, long paragraphs, and ambiguous adjectives which are so much a part of expository and academic writing. It is indeed English writing at its simplest.

But more importantly, a basic structure exists which, when recognized, makes articles even easier to understand, and makes them an invaluable companion to any ESL syllabus. Opposite and antithetical to academic compositional writing, the most important information of an article appears in the beginning, usually the first few paragraphs, save for "delayed leads," editorials, and critical reviews. The headline, lead sentence, and sometimes the first few paragraphs answer the 5 W's questions: who, what, where, why and when. The *who* of the 5 W's refers to who was involved in the newsworthy event, either as a participant, observer, victim, or otherwise. *What* simply refers to the subject or topic of the article, the event. The geographic location of the action or event is covered by the *where* question. *When*, the date and time of the event or action, is answered by the dateline or within the article. Finally, *why* usually refers to the importance of the action or event, the reasons which make it newsworthy.

Information and details of lesser consequence are then given in descending order of importance. Hence, this is the inverted pyramid of journalist reporting—it is an inversion of academic writing, where the most important part, the conclusion, comes at the end. There are, of course, variations on this theme depending on the publication or writer. For example, magazines are usually more expository in nature, and present more of a linguistic challenge, but the above is the classical construction employed in “nuts and bolts” journalism.

A final note on structure, it is common knowledge that reading an entire article is unnecessary for the reader insofar as the essential elements are concerned. In this way news articles parallel communication when linguistic ability is inadequate for total comprehension.

The Six Commandments

Before tackling a newspaper article, give students a set of guidelines. This will serve to bolster their confidence in comprehending unfamiliar written material. Any set of guidelines should include the following:

1. Skim

Skimming, or quick reading, provides a rudimentary idea of the article. Students never have enough time to read all the information available in a newspaper. Consequently, skimming enables them to select the more interesting articles and disregard others. Students should skim the page of a newspaper to answer the following questions:

Is this article interesting?

Should it be read in more detail?

What is the main idea?

2. Anticipate/Predict

The title of an article, together with any accompanying pictures, provide ample information about its content. Consequently, students should be encouraged to use them in making predictions about the article. This will add to the information gleaned from their initial skimming exercise.

3. Context

Context, or the situation of a word, provides clues to interpret its meaning. Dictionaries are often more of a hindrance than a help. Their use makes reading a painfully slow and boring task. Instead, students should use context to make educated guesses when confronted with unfamiliar vocabulary before resorting to a dictionary.

4. Main Idea

It is unnecessary to understand everything in an article. Encourage students to be content with the main idea rather than total comprehension. Otherwise they will spend too much time on trivial details.

5. Explanation Words

Students should be aware of explanation words such as: is a kind of; is used for, etc. These indicate that what follows is a definition of the preceding word or phrase and, therefore, aids comprehension.

6. Transition Words

Transition words, such as first, next, but, therefore, etc., give information about the organization of the article. They indicate that the following phrase or sentence adds to, contrasts, or concludes the previous statements. Understanding their use speeds reading and comprehension.

Context Clues

Perhaps the most important skills required and, consequently, those that require constant reinforcement and a disproportionate amount of class time, are the use of context and prediction/anticipation to understand unfamiliar vocabulary and situations.

Instructors must stress that communication is more than words, that understanding every word is not imperative. This is precisely where the use of news articles are most beneficial.

Students need to experience the wisdom of commandment #3 before they accept it. Consequently, a number of contrived exercises are usually necessary to demonstrate that these skills really work. One popular and useful lesson is the "Nonsense Article." The instructor writes a simple news article and inserts a number of nonsense words in place of key vocabulary. The context of the

words, their form, the grammar of the sentence, and the students' personal experiences are employed to reduce the number of possible alternatives. In particular, students are told to take risks. They have to be willing to err, an especially important skill when transferred to the verbal realm.

At the outset the following "Hints" are given to the students:

Reading Hints

1. Use a dictionary only if a word is crucial to your understanding of the main idea.
2. Use the meaning of the other words in the sentence or paragraph and the meaning of the sentence or paragraph as a whole to reduce the number of possible meanings.
3. Use the grammar and punctuation of the sentence to give you clues about the relationship between words.
4. Sometimes you can ignore words completely; they may not add to your overall understanding of the reading.
5. Be content with a general idea of the word. The exact definition is not always necessary.

Divide students into pairs and instruct them to read the article and answer the questions that follow it:

POLICEMAN BANZIKED AT LOCAL SHILLIBOG

(API-TOKYO) A policeman was banziked last night when he tried to break up a violent agro between two ziffered men at a local shillibog.

The policeman was rushed to the city botschwain where he received 10 stitches to a large zunket about his eye.

Both men were later primsilled by the police and were charged with assault.

The shillibog owner said that the men had shallied about 10 bottles of sibble before the agro ocured.

This is the third such agro at this shillibog in one month.

Police say that the owner had been warned not to sell sibble to ziffered customers.

Questions:

1. Circle the "nonsense" words and write their real meaning above them.
2. Explain how you guessed their meaning.

Article Shuffle

As a final preparatory activity, search for an article that conforms closely to the ideal form. Cut it into paragraph blocks and disarrange it. In pairs the students have to rearrange the article into its original form. To be successful, they need to pay close attention to the relationships between the groups of sentences and also use the skills for article reading. These relationships are indicated by transitional language that the students should recognize. Although a rather simple activity, it focuses the students' attention on the clues found within an article that aid comprehension.

Methodology

After extolling the principles of newspaper articles and the 5 W's, and impressing upon the students that reading and understanding every word is not a requisite, let the students choose an article from a current paper by skimming the front page. Advise them to select an article that is short, simple, and comprised of the news article framework. Satisfying these criteria is of the utmost importance. After selecting an article, have them work either individually or in pairs to analyze the article to answer the 5 W's questions. During the first exercise, it is usually a good idea to announce after the first few minutes that the headline probably answers the who and what questions.

Afterwards, have all the students discuss their ideas about the 5 W's as a group. Be sure to point out that the answers were probably found in the first part of the article, and that intensive reading of the latter part was unnecessary. The exception in some instances would be the 'why' question. Sometimes 'why' is so apparent that it is taken for granted and not mentioned; other times the further details given in an article account for the 'why' because the topic or issues are complex and resist an easy answer. This activity confirms the notion that comprehension does not require reading and knowing the meaning of every written word. Obviously, more than just linguistic exercise is derived here: it is also effective analytical practice.

Follow-up Activities

Using News Articles to Illustrate Numbers and Trend Language in Context

The above exercises and activities lend themselves to follow-up activities with secondary and tertiary effects that will reinforce the comprehension concepts previously iterated. For example, a good lesson for building up a student's ability to hear quantitative information is to use an article containing a lot of numbers and language indicating trends in the classroom. Simply make blank spaces where the figures and associated language, for example, "increased sharply", "stayed at the same level", or "plunged rapidly", occur in the selected article. Give the cloze passage to the students, and then either read it or play a tape recording of the article to the class. It may be necessary to read or play it twice. Even better would be a combination of the teacher reading the article, followed by a recording. Thus, students get the benefit of hearing two different voices. The main purpose of doing this activity is to increase the students' ability to aurally comprehend numbers and words which indicate trends. However, have them analyze the article in terms of the 5 W's before the first reading. This activity will strengthen the concept that knowing or comprehending every word is not a requisite for understanding the main idea and major points. They will become believers when they succeed at identifying the 5 W's despite possessing an incomplete article full of holes.

Newspaper Summaries

Teaching students to give oral presentations is a component of many ESL programs. One way to integrate the above skills with presentations is to have students give a summary of a newspaper article.

Students are instructed to choose a short article of interest. If the class level is advanced, articles may be of any length. However, basic to intermediate students often are overly ambitious in their selection of suitable article. This often leads to frustration and failure if their chosen article is too long or complex. Lower level students must be instructed to select brief, concise articles. Teachers can eliminate misunderstandings by assigning articles used by students in previous classes.

Following a formal model for making presentations, the students give their summary of the article's most important ideas as well as their opinion on why it is newsworthy. Again, students who have been trained to use the suggested reading and analytical strategies will have the capacity to transfer these skills to effective use during the presentation. Preparation time spent by the students will be better used, allowing them to focus more on organization and speaking skills and less on a misguided search for non-essential information.

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Book Review

MANAGEMENT ENGLISH. Zsuzsanna Ardo. Budapest: Allami Könyvtérjeszto Vallalat, 1987. pp. 166.

Ms. Ardo has written a book for "upper-intermediate and advanced students of English as well as native speakers who are interested in practical management problems." Even a casual glance at most of the current textbooks indicates that her book fills a need for a more creative and humanistic approach.

Management English is an innovative book which uses a unique design and invitingly friendly composition to bring the language learner into active participation. Ms. Ardo has found a way to attract even the most jaded student who, at the upper-intermediate and advanced level, has probably seen a good many textbooks. Visually, it is a delight to the eye: it has witty illustrations; unusual typeface styles; drawings; and, a pleasing non-traditional format. For the advanced or upper-intermediate learner who has been exposed to various texts, it should provide a welcome change of pace. As a textbook for EFL students, or for native speakers studying business, it has much to recommend it. However, it is definitely not suited to lower level learners as it presupposes an advanced level of English.

Critics may feel there is a minimum of language taught in *Management English*. This is true if one envisions as necessary pages of grammatical exercises and stock phrases for each given situations. However, *Management English* is a book where language is put to use and expanded through practical exercises. Activities range from working alone to pairwork, groupwork, classwork, home study, and feedback. The variety of approaches within each unit challenges linguistic abilities, stimulates the intellect, and should elicit an enthusiastic response from both student and teacher. The book is designed for speakers and learners of English "who want to manage their lives with sensitivity and success." One stated aim is to build "co-operation and empathy." The author "assumes [that] a friendly, relaxed atmosphere" is necessary to promote this aim, which will ultimately lead to the "growth of mutual understanding." The warmth of the author and her awareness of how to involve the student in his own progress are evident from the first page.

The content is comprehensive and shows a clear understanding of, and an interesting approach to, management problems. Many management skills are discussed. Techniques are identified to make meetings more effective, including purpose definition and advance clarification of the purpose. As clarification is a skill all language learners are reluctant to use, its importance in a business situation serves to amplify the need to make it a part of all communication. Other management problems which are dealt with include: how to avoid turning your presentation into a disaster, time management, identifying your personality type for a more effective role in problem solving, using intuition and logic for decisions, and techniques for effective decision making. These techniques are as suitable to the effective management of one's life as to situations. The activities, both thought-provoking and motivating, and student-centered so that the teacher can spend more time focusing on the students' performance.

Management English is comprised of fifteen units, a "Clues" section, and a unit key. Unit one begins with definitions. For example, definitions for the word "management" build on learner activities to increase vocabulary. It leads, quite naturally, to finding other definitions, fine tuning a composite definition, interviewing others on their ideas of management, and reporting findings. This is followed by "Food for Thought" and questions for reflection. Unit Two, "Why Work?," uses a mini-poll, pair work, work in fours as well as information gap activities. Almost all units have a "Food for Thought" section and in Unit Two it asks for a collection of the relevant qualities of an "Optimal Performer." This leads to a summarization activity which brings all of the previous work into perspective. "First Impressions" gives practical advice on the importance of appearances. Students conduct a mini-poll with fellow classmates and the teacher. A survey using agreement and disagreement and the defense of opinion is another part of this unit. Paragraphs requiring extraction of the essential information and summarization statements are also used. These are some of the most important techniques needed for advanced learners of second languages and, happily, they can be found in this book in a variety of activities. Subsequent units tackle topics such as "Your Resume," "Dressing for Business," "Presentations," "Time Management," "Problem Solving," and "Decision Making." Students using this book are, according to Caroline Bodoczky, Director of

Studies, Babilon Studio, Budapest, "developing their skills of discussion, persuasion, sales talk and logic" along with their study of English.

New vocabulary is built into each unit along with an introduction to idioms and their use in communicating between cultures. Extensive reading, a part of later units, sets up "priming questions" so the student focuses on the gist of paragraphs to extract important information. In each unit, the attitude is friendly and supportive to the learner, involving the human quality as well as interest in the technical aspects of language learning. The language used shows an in depth understanding of English, and the use of idiomatic expressions adds to its naturalness. In addition, it employs specially selected materials and charts from internationally known business publications, such as *Business Week*, *International Management*, and *Time*.

Management English can be used by a wide variety of students in many different situations and has the advantage of teaching language along with practical application to the students' future work needs. The principles of sound business management presented in this novel format will enhance the students' appreciation of the practicality of language learned in this way.

As a teacher who teaches these concepts in a business English format, I was excited at the prospect of using many of the activities found in this book. It may be chosen for use as a course book or as a supplement to other classroom material. For either of these purposes, it provides the student with a well thought out and interesting English for Special Purposes textbook.

Management English is used in conjunction with *Management English Listeners*, a workbook with "two audio cassettes of simulated authentic conversations and interviews with professionals and managers from a variety of cultural backgrounds." Unfortunately, these were not available for examination at the time of this review. As this is a pilot book, the author welcomes comments and provides a feedback questionnaire in the back of the book for interested readers.

Ilene Kradin

Ilene Kradin is currently an English teacher/consultant at Japan Oxygen Company Ltd. in Tokyo. She has a B.A. in Fine Art from Montclair State College in New Jersey and EFL Certification from Gordon Seminar in Haifa, Israel. She has taught in the United States, Israel, and Japan.

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Announcements

BARCELONA SUMMER '88: MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE. July 4-29, 1988. This year's theme is "Professionalism and Research", courses for teachers of English to speakers of other languages. The Mediterranean Summer Institute includes courses in professional language teaching skills; innovative language teaching practices and new media applications; teacher training; and a wide range of research areas and techniques. For Institute brochure with programme enrolment details and further information, please write to: E.P. Mills, ESADE, Av. Pedralbes, 60-62, 08034 Barcelona, Spain.

Call for Papers: CROSS CURRENTS. *Cross Currents* welcomes manuscripts concerning all aspects of second language teaching and learning. For the next issue, we have a special interest in articles concerning sociolinguistics and language teaching. Please submit manuscripts no late than November 15, 1988. As always, we welcome articles on 1) language teaching and learning, especially regarding English as a Second/Foreign language; 2) language teaching and learning as they apply in Japan; 3) cross-cultural communication issues; 4) teaching techniques ready for classroom use; and 5) book or video reviews. Please direct all manuscript correspondence to: General Editor, *Cross Currents*, 4-14-1 Shiroyama, Odawara, Kanagawa, Japan 250.

JALT '88. October 8-10, 1988; Kobe, Japan. The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) will hold its Fourteenth Annual Conference on workshops, demonstrations, and papers dealing with a wide range of topics relevant to language teaching, learning, and acquisition. For further information, please contact: JALT, c/o Kyoto English Center, Sumitomo Seimei Bldg. 8F, Shijo-Karasuma Nishi-iru, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600, Japan.

Call for Paper: The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) is accepting proposals for papers, demonstrations, and workshops relevant to language teaching, learning, and acquisition for its Fourteenth Annual Conference. For further information, please write to JALT, c/o Kyoto English Center, Sumitomo Seimei Bldg. 8F, Shijo-Karasuma Nishi-iru, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600, Japan.

SUMMER WORKSHOP FOR JAPANESE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH. August 7-12, 1988; Odawara, Japan. The Language Institute of Japan (LIOJ) is holding its 20th Anniversary Summer Workshop for Japanese Teachers of English in Odawara, Japan. This week-long residential workshop will include language study, special lectures and programs, and seminars on a variety of teaching methods and techniques. For more information, please contact: Language Institute of Japan, 4-14-1 Shiroyama, Odawara, Kanagawa 250, Japan. Telephone: (0465) 23-1677.

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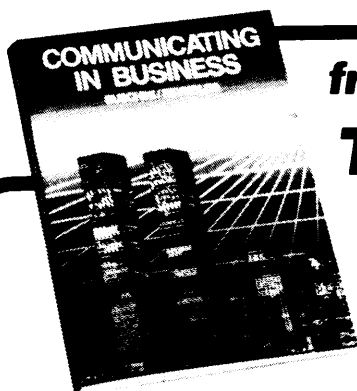
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