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CAN WE TEST FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY?

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Functional Testing and Functional Theory

In recent years functional testing has increasingly attracted the attention of testing theorists and researchers, and has begun to find wide use in educational practice. Depending on how broadly we conceive the idea of 'language function,' we can find tests of this general sort being used for a wide range of purposes, from assessing basic English skills of new refugees (e.g., survival skills, job-related skills, placement in basic educational programs), to assessing language skills of applicants for professional jobs (e.g., candidates for foreign service positions). Increasing interest in functional tests is related to developments in linguistic research (linguistic pragmatics and sociolinguistics); in learning theory (the idea of second language "acquisition"); and in education (the notional-functional approach, and a general movement towards naturalistic methods in language education). Recent literature on language teaching and testing shows a lively interest in functional or communicative approaches, and debate about their nature, validity, and place in educational programs (Wilks 1976; Hrumfit and Johnson 1979; Carroll 1980; Canale and Swain 1980; Farhady 1980; Finocciaro and Sako 1983; Harrison 1983; Alderson 1983; Shohamy and Reyes 1985; Terrell and Rrashen 1983).

Functional testing by definition is directed at assessing a person's ability to use language, in social, communicative situations, for purposes of getting things done: exchanging information, making one's needs and wants known and getting them satisfied, interacting socially, and appropriately, with a

variety of other people--all through the medium of language. In contrast other, earlier types of testing have focused on correct or appropriate language form. So for example, language tests have been designed to measure knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (syntax and morphology). Burt and Dulay (1978) list these three, together with functional use, as the four *aspects" of language which a test might seek to measure.

A test of any of these four aspects of language may be implemented by test tasks that are termed *integrative* or "naturalistic." In such a strategy a test attempts to create a normal communication situation, and to judge the language produced in that situation for communicative adequacy and/or formal correctness. Such integrative tests are traditionally contrasted with *discrete point" tests, wherein each item or question is designed to assess a particular skill or bit of language knowledge, defined very narrowly, and usually in formal or grammatical terms. For example a discrete point test might present sentences for completion:

(1) Yesterday I (talk) _____ to Bill.
(2) Today I bought two new (book) _____

Clearly these questions assess only knowledge of specific grammatical morphemes (regular English past tense and plural, respectively). Larsen-Freeman (1975) has discussed discrete point items of this type.

It is important not to categorize every test that targets specific structures as *discrete point,* in the extreme sense illustrated by hypothetical test items (1,2). A test might be designed, overall, to create a naturalistic communication situation when it is administered, and yet individual items might be constructed to elicit specific target structures. Few current-day tests fall clearly at the polar

extremes of a single scale--"discrete point' to 'integrative" (Farhady 1979). Burt and Dulay (1978) suggest a useful typology of tests along two independent scales: 1) natural communication versus linguistic manipulation; 2) structured communication versus nonstructured communication. Extreme discrete point items like (1,2) would be classed as "structured communication," since specific knowledge (in this case, grammatical knowledge), is targeted; and "linguistic manipulation,' since the focus is on formal linguistic operations, rather than on normal communication.

Functional tests typically fall towards the natural communication end of Burt and Dulay's communication/manipulation scale. One could imagine linguistic manipulation tests of functional usage. For example one functional language skill is control of appropriate social register and politeness conventions. A linguistic manipulation item might require a test subject to transform a sentence °I want you to help me" into something appropriately addressed to his/her boss or teacher. Control of conventional linguistic forms of politeness or deference to social superiors could then be assessed. What this example shows is that functional testing is not the same as natural communication testing by definition: The former refers to an aspect of language skill being tested; the latter, to a style of test task imposed on subjects. But functional tests usually employ natural communication tasks in fact. The reason for this is not hard to see. If we wish to test discrete points of grammar (or rather, conscious knowledge of discrete points of grammar), we can do this effectively with a linguistic manipulation task: simply present some word or expression, and require the subject to perform some specified operation on it. Suppose on the other hand that we wish to test functional language skill--the ability to use language for specified purposes, in specified social and communicative contexts. To test purposive, social, or communicative language skills we would likely design test tasks

that imitate the normal application of such skills as closely as possible--and only with natural communication tasks will we be able to do that. In terms of the technical vocabulary of testing, a natural communication design would be more "face valid" (Clark 1978) or more "authentic' iSpolsky 1985), as a test of functional language skill.

Turning to Burt and Dulay's second scale (structured communication), we can find functional tests of either type. The clearest example of a non-structured functional test might be the well-known oral examination of the Foreign Service Institute. This involves a naturalistic conversational interaction, judged according to a holistic scale that rates overall quality or effectiveness of communication. Another example, in the written mode, would be the writing sample of the Test of English as a Foreign Language, with its six-level holistic grading scale for rating subjects' English writing ability (Greenberg 1986). Such tests are "non-structured' in that 1) they do not attempt to elicit specific, pre-determined linguistic forms or acts from subjects, and 2) they are scored holistically, not analytically.

A structured design for a functional language test would work like this: First we would elicit naturalistic performance of some sort, e.g., a monologue, a conversation, or role-playing in a minidrama. Then we would evaluate that performance in terms of some pre-conceived set of functional categories. For example, in the course of the performance did the subject successfully ask questions; give or understand instructions; make promises; apologize; observe appropriate politeness conventions; etc. Contrast this analytic scoring with the holistic style described above, wherein overall quality of the performance is rated on a unidimensional scale.

Much of the recent interest in functional testing has centered on such analytically-scored,

structured communication designs. This follows from developments in linguistics, and in the theory and practice of language education. The latter field has seen a shift in recent years to the 'natural approach" to language teaching (Krashen and Terrell 1983), including a focus on teaching 'communicative competence•, in addition to strictly formal or grammatical competence (Hymes 1972; Brumfit and Johnson 1979; Canale and Swain 1980). Communicative language courses are frequently designed in terms of structured categories taken from pragmatic theory (e.g., speech-act categories: Austin 1961; Searle 1969), or sociolinguistic research (e.g., notional-functional syllabuses: Wilkins 1976, 1979; Yalden 1983). Now one major purpose of testing has always been to evaluate student achievement: how much has been learned of what has been taught. Thus if a course curriculum is designed in terms of pragmatic or notional-functional categories, then a structured sample of those categories could serve as a test of achievement in that curriculum. (Of course, whether or not such a test also measures overall functional proficiency depends on whether or not the curriculum successfully teaches overall functional proficiency. More on this below.)

Structured functional testing is also a direct response to developments in linguistic theory. Tests are usually constructed to reflect some theory of the skill being tested--i.e., to be 'construct valid" with respect to the categories (constructs) of a theory. In linguistics, theories of pragmatics have enjoyed recent vigorous development, analyzing language use in context into structured systems of "speech acts,' "illocutionary acts," or notional-function types. When such structured pragmatic theories are applied to the development and construct validation of functional language tests, the result is a structured communication test organized in terms of the analytic categories of the theory.

Alderson (1983) notes these influences on recent functional test design, and adds some important warnings about functional testing, on which I wish to expand. In answer to the question 'who needs or wants communicative language tests?', Alderson offers the following observations:

> 'Teachers do, because they are doing communicative language teaching and they need the tests to go with the teaching'. But if they are doing communicative teaching, the development of communicative...tests should be no problem: all they have to do is sample the syllabus... If the tests aren't [communicative), then perhaps the syllabus isn't communicative either (p. 87).
>
> Academics want communicative tests because they feel that tests should relate more to what we know, now about language in use and communication. In other words, tests should correspond more closely to our theories of language use. Yet tests are merely ...operationalizations of theories: theories put into practice... Now if the operationalizations have not yet proved to be satisfactory, the fault may be...in the theory--it does not allow for operationalizations, because it is inadequate, incomplete or simply too vague (pp. 87-88).

Here Alderson is addressing a certain uneasiness on the part of educators and researchers about the quality of existing functional communication tests: Do they really test functional communication? Do they tell us about a person's overall proficiency in using the target language? And if, as critics have claimed, there is reason to doubt that they do, then what is the source of the problem? In answer to this last question Alderson suggests that the problem may not lie in how well existing tests reflect linguistic

theory or educational practice, but in how well existing theory and practice represent functional communication. If true, this is a serious objection, because it implies that a great deal of basic research must be done before our theories of language use can support development of valid functional tests. In this paper I wish to argue that to a great degree it is true--that Alderson's warnings are well-founded.

Farhady (1980) states succinctly how functional teaching and testing depend on theoretical assumptions about language use:

> The most recent trend in language teaching, referred to as the notional-functional approach, assumes that people use language to handle a limited number of functions in communicating with one another. Since these categories of communicative functions can be identified, classified, and taught, they can also be tested (p. xvi).

That is, functional course- or test-designs (at least those of a structured sort), presuppose a functional theory which exhaustively classifies all the things we do with language into a limited number of taxonomic categories. It seems to me that Farhady is correct in his claim that functional approaches must make this assumption. But it is anything but obvious that the assumption is true.

Broad Functional Categories

Are there in fact a limited number of discrete types of linguistic functions? Clearly this depends on what we regard as a 'type of linguistic function'--i.e., on how our pragmatic theory divides up the world of language use. To take an extreme example, Halliday (1978:187) postulates a "semantic component" that is subdivided into just three broad

functions:

1. ideational (language as reflection) comprising

   a) experiential
   b) logical

2. interpersonal (language as action)
3. textual (language as texture, in relation to the environment).

Now if *semantics" is exhaustively divided into three discrete components, it might seem that we could construct a three-dimension test of semantic competence, with one subsection of the test to measure each functional component. But if we set out to construct test items to measure any one of these components, we are immediately struck by how very broad they are. Halliday, for instance, speaks of the "innumerable" choices available within the interpersonal component. In his example (pp. 187-188) one might:

- offer a proposition
- in contradictory-defensive "key'
- assessing its probability as certain indicating an attitude of regret
- with the intention of convincing someone.

Halliday is certainly correct about the open-endedness of this list of choices. But if it is open-ended it may not help us much in constructing a test of the interpersonal component of Halliday's system. In order to test a field we must be able to sample that field adequately. And to be sure we have sampled adequately we must have exhaustive knowledge of what is contained in the field. But if there are "innumerable" categories available within the field, then we cannot have such exhaustive knowledge. The only way out of this trap--short of abandoning hope of testing the field at all--is to develop and defend

some theory which will group the innumerable choices into a numerable (and preferably small) set of distinct containing categories. Then these categories could be operationalized into a limited number of dimensions--items or subsections--in a test of this field of knowledge.

Halliday's theory offers broad and attractive insights into language use, and has been influential in providing direction for Sunctional research. But the broad 'macro-categories' of this theory do not offer much in the way of immediate practical application to teaching or testing, and neither Halliday nor anyone else has suggested constructing courses or tests just in terms of these categories.

This example illustrates one horn of a dilemma that we encounter in trying to specify a limited number of language functions on which to develop functional tests. If we define 'language function' very broadly, then there may indeed be a limited (and small) number of distinct functions that exhaust the topic of 'language use.' But each function may be so complex in structure and so flexible in application that it cannot serve as a basis for specific strategies of test design.

Narrow Functional Categories

The natural response of course is to try to develop a finer-grained analysis of our broad macrofunctions, looking for more detailed categories, more amenable to operationalization in a functional test. Many such taxonomies of speech acts or language functions have been proposed. Excerpts from one of them, Van 5k (1979:113-115), are given below for illustration.

1. Imparting and seeking factual information
   1.1. identifying

1.2. reporting (including describing and narrating)
1.3. correcting
1.4. asking

2. 2.1. expressing agreement and disagreement
2.2. inquiring about agreement or disagreement
2.3. denying something
2.4. accepting an offer or invitation
2.5. declining an offer or invitation
2.6. inquiring whether offer or invitation is accepted or declined
2.7. offering to do something
2.8. stating whether one remembers or has forgotten something or someone
...

3. Expressing and finding out emotional attitudes
3.1. expressing pleasure, liking
3.2. expressing displeasure, liking
3.3. inquiring about pleasure, liking, displeasure, dislike
3.4. expressing surprise
3.5. expressing hope
3.6. expressing satisfaction
3.7. expressing dissatisfaction
3.8. inquiring about satisfaction or dissatisfaction
...

4. Expressing and finding out moral attitudes
4.1. apologizing
4.2. granting forgiveness
4.3. expressing approval
4.4. expressing disapproval
4.5. inquiring about approval or disapproval
4.6. expressing appreciation
4.7. expressing regret
4.8. expressing indifference

5. Getting things done (suasion)
5.1. suggesting a course of action (including the speaker)
5.2. requesting others to do something
5.3. inviting others to do something

5.4. advising others to do something
5.5. warning others to take care or to refrain from doing something
5.6. instructing or directing others to do something

6. Socializing
6.1. to greet people
6.2. when meeting people
6.3. when introducing people and when being introduced
6.4. when taking leave
6.5. to attract attention
6.6. to propose a toast
6.7. when beginning a meal

Such taxonomies offer a way around the difficulty of figuring out how to test three or four broad macro-functions. Detailed and specific functional categories such as these may be more useful in constructing functional test items: It is hard to imagine how to write an item to test the 'interpersonal language function,' but much easier to formulate an item that tests ability at apologizing, greeting people, or accepting an invitation. Furthermore it will be easier to evaluate performance on a test based on these narrow functional categories. It should be relatively easy to judge whether a particular performance counts as a successful promise or apology, an effective request, or a conventionally appropriate greeting. For many of these language functions there are particular language forms that conventionally count as performing that function. Van Ek (1976) cites one or more such conventional forms for each of the above language functions, e.g.:

1.4. asking: ... question-word sentences with: when, where, why, ...

2.1. agreement: I agree; that's right; all right; ...

4.1. apologizing: I am very sorry; sorry!; please forgive me; I do apologize; excuse me; ...

5.2. requesting others to do something: please + VP; would/could you (please) + VP; ...

5.4. advising others to do something: you should + VP; you ought to + VP; why don't you + VP; ...

6.3. when introducing people and when being introduced: this is...; I'd like you to meet...; may I introduce you to...; ...

If a test subject produces one of these forms we may be fairly certain that (s)he knows at least one way to perform the corresponding function--asking, agreeing, apologizing, etc.

While a fine-grained functional analysis may help solve some practical problems in constructing and scoring functional tests, such tests will still not be trouble-free. For one thing, many language functions are difficult to elicit naturally. Let us see why this is important.

Eliciting Functions Naturally

A functional language test designed around specific functional categories faces the same problem as any test that tries to judge control of pre-selected categories: We must hope that the subject actually attempts to produce some of those categories. If (s)he makes no such attempt, then our scoring strategy breaks down. For example if a subject's performance does not include an attempt to make a promise, we cannot necessarily conclude that (s)he does not control the linguistic function of •promising.*

Perhaps (s)he simply did not have occasion to try to make a promise. Thus, to evaluate control of predetermined categories--forms or functions--a test must take some care to see that the subject actually attempts to produce those forms or functions. In a linguistic manipulation test this is *easy:* We simply tell the subject to produce the desired form or function. But if we wish to maintain a natural communication situation, we cannot be so straightforward.

Ideally, an item on a natural communication test will attempt to create an 'obligatory environment' for production of the desired target--that is, a situation where the subject must produce the target, or else violate linguistic rules of conventions. For example a question with a present participle verb form requires a *response* also containing a present participle. Thus the question (3) can receive the answers in (4), but not those in (5)--(where # indicates a conventionally incorrect response, resulting in an ill-formed discourse).

(3) What is he doing?

(4) (He's) playing baseball.

(5) $(He) play(s) baseball.

'Baseball.

tAt bat.

But if we target more complex linguistic forms it becomes difficult of impossible to set up such obligatory environments. And unfortunately, many language functions also resist efforts to find obligatory environments. The function of asserting or supplying information can be obligatorily elicited by simply asking a question. But turning this around, how can the function of questioning be elicited? It is hard to imagine a way to do this. h test like the

Ilyin Oral Interview, which otherwise maintains reasonably natural communication, lapses into linguistic manipulation in one such case, with items such as 'Ask a question about this picture using the word what (a, etc.)." As for promising, no doubt there are reallife social situations which call for a promise to be made; but it is hard to imagine reproducing such a sitgation convincingly in the context of a language test. The problem is a serious one for tests that are scored analytically in terms of preselected functional categories. Until it is solved we must either 1) resort to unnatural, inauthentic test task; 2) be satisfied with analytic scoring in terms of whatever linguistic functions the subject happens to attempt; or 3) fall back on holistic strategies of evaluation.

Testing Functional Proficiency: How Many Functions are There?

The above discussion questions whether a functional test can maintain a natural communication situation, and still successfully elicit particular language functions for analytic evaluation of a subject's functional skill. A second problem concerns whether a test designed around a specific, limited set of functions can claim to give a valid picture of a subject's overall functional proficiency. A proficiency test, in contrast to an achievement test in a particular curriculum, purports to measure a person's overall knowledge or control of some field, no matter how it was obtained. One way to validate a proficiency test ('construct" validity) is by comparing it to some theory about the field being tested, a theory which tells us, more or less exhaustively, what the content of the field is--what someone must know or do to control the field as a whole. So a functional language proficiency test would be construct valid if it measured a representative sample of the functional categories in a theory that adequately described

overall language use. The trouble is that current functional theories are clearly not complete. Some investigators even express doubt that a taxonomic theory, which classifies language functions into a limited number of categories and subcategories, can ever exhaustively describe language use. *For* example Wilkins (1979:88-89) lists eight language functions, subdividied into 27 subfunctions, but admits that 'As yet, it is true, we do not fully understand how many of these functions are realized and it is certain that there is a good deal of linguistic diversity involved' (p. 90). Yalden (1983:167-169) gives a checklist categorizing language use into three types of 'meaning' (ideational, modal, phatic), subdivided into 13 language functions, and further subdivided into 51 subfunctions; but she cautions us that 'These checklists are neither definitive nor exhaustive' (p. 161, emphasis Yalden's). Finally, Van Ek (1979:113-115) presents six functions, subdivided into 68 subfunctions (41 of which are illustrated above), but doubts that such lists can ever cover all language use: 'The list of functions is far from exhaustive. In the first place it is unlikely that it is possible to draw up a complete list. Secondly, the list represents a deliberate selection for IThresholdl-level. At higher levels more functions would be added' (p. 113).

These observations should not necessarily be taken as criticisms of functional language research: Any active research field typically admits the incompleteness of current models. Nor do I claim that functional taxonomies are of no current practical use in education. Assuming that the taxonomies capture some important language functions, they can serve as the basis for teaching useful language skills. The problem arises when we try to construct functional proficiency tests on the basis of admittedly incomplete functional taxonomies. If current taxonomies are incomplete, or worse, if the list of language functions is open ended (as Van Ek 1979 suggests),

then we are on dangerous ground in claiming that a sampling of any particular taxonomy gives a good picture of a learner's overall functional proficiency--his/her ability to do all of the things with lgnguage that a native speaker is ordinarily able to do.

Above we encountered one horn of a dilemma: Defining 'language function" very broadly insures that a short list of functions can be found to cover all of language use. But such functions may be so broad for vague) that they give us little help in designing functional tests or syllabuses. Now we see the second horn of the dilemma: If we define 'language function' narrowly, then each function might better provide a practical basis for educational applications, but there might be an endless list of functions. Then a proficiency test based on such functions would suffer problems of sampling and generalizability: Testing a few such narrowly defined functions might not tell us much abut a subject's overall functional skill.

Test Validation by Native-Speaker Judgment: The Problem of Variability

Another way of validating a functional proficiency test is to compare its results to a different, highly face-valid estimate of functional proficiency, such as native-speaker judgment. This approach is more realistic than waiting for a definitive functional theory to come along, so it is important to apply such evaluations to any test that claims to measure overall functional proficiency. Canale and Swain (1980) mention this as a crucial research issue. They ask:

> What evidence is there that learners achieving significantly higher scores on such tests are perceived by native speakers as having adequate communication skills in the

> second language? What evidence is there that learners achieving significantly lower scores on such tests are perceived by native speakers as not having adequate communication skills in the second language? Investigation of the construct, content, and concurrent validity of various communicative tests now available will be useful in determining the extent to which levels of achievement on such tests correspond to adequate or inadequate levels of communicative competence in the second language as perceived by different groups of native speakers for different age groups of learners (p. 37).

Even if we adopt the reasonable approach of evaluating functional proficiency tests through native speaker judgments of functional appropriateness, it is still uncertain just who should make the judgments, and what criteria they should use. Many investigators have pointed out the extensive sociocultural and situational variability of language use (Canale and Swain 1980; Alderson 1983; Burt and Dulay 1978), and the implications of this variability for functional test (and course) design: A functional test (or syllabus) designed around, and judged valid by, specific speakers in specific situations may not measure (or teach) functional competence characteristic of the speakers in other situations. Such a test or course might then be valid within a limited functional range, but not as a means of measuring or imparting overall functional proficiency. Burt and Dulay (1978) comment:

> Assessment difficulties caused by intergroup variability are especially prominent in the case of a multicultural population spanning a wide socioeconomic range ... however, learning the functional uses of

> linguistic structures comprises an important component of language development. This aspect of linguistic development might be assessed more fairly and accurately by criterion-referenced instruments designed for a particular locale or curriculum (p. 183).

In view of the cultural and situational variability of language use, it might be wise, as Burt and Dulay suggest, to retreat from trying to measure overall functional proficiency. As a less ambitious and more realistic goal we might try to *assess* functional proficiency in more narrowly defined cultural contexts, or to use functional measures as tests of achievement in specific functional curricula.

Form and Function: The Flexibility of Language

In addition to sociocultural variability there is another sort of variability that must concern us in developing or evaluating functional language tests. An essential fact about language use is its flexibility. It is difficult to predict exactly what someone will say in any given context, and often difficult to predict even the general nature of the response (Chomsky 1959). Recognition of this flexibility can be seen in most current pragmatic and functional research, where one major theme is to point out the variability of the relation between form and function: Depending on context, any given form may be used to perform a variety of functions, and any given function may be performed by a variety of forms. Figures 1 and 2 are taken from Yalden (1983:4), and illustrate variability in both directions:

Function	Sentence forms	Realization
	(a) Imperative	Please finish that letter, Miss Jones.
	(b) Conditional	Perhaps it would be best if you finished that letter.
Ordering	(c) Infinitive	We do expect you to finish that letter.
	(d) Modal	You must finish that letter, I'm afraid.
	(e) Participial	You should have no difficulty in finishing that letter.

Fig. [1]. Function to form (Allen, 1977)

Sentence forms	Realization	Function
	(a) Give me some water.	Ordering
	(b) Release me now.	Pleading
Imperative	(c) Buy Canada Savings Bonds.	Advising
	(d) Don't go in there.	Warning
	(e) Try this one on.	Suggesting

Fig. (2]. Form to function

Now observed performance on a test ought to be generalizable, i.e., it ought to tell us about some knowledge or skill beyond just that observed performance itself. For instance, returning to examples (3) and (4), it is of little interest to know that a subject can answer 'Playing baseball' in response to a question "What is he doing?' But it is more interesting to know that (s)he can correctly answer a what-question containing a present participle verb form. To get to this conclusion from the observed performance (4) requires a leap of inference: that a test item (3) and an observed response (4) provide a valid index of an ability to answer participial what-questions.[7] For this example the leap of inference is a small one. But where individual test items claim to assess control of some language function, the many-to-one relation of form makes the inference much less secure.

Suppose, on a functional language test, that a subject successfully uses some form to perform some function. What can we conclude from observing this? Most conservatively, that (s)he can use that form to perform that function. But a functional proficiency test sets its sights higher: measuring ability to execute a specified function, not just ability to use one form to execute it. We really only observe the use of one form to perform the function, but this is supposed to index the ability to perform the function using many (ideally, any) of the forms that can be so used. Clearly, the more different forms that can be used to perform a given function, the greater the leap of inference (from observed production of one form, to control of all available forms). If there are only a few forms corresponding to each function (say, five grammatical structures that can be used for ordering, as in Yalden's example above), then we might sample two or three of them and get a pretty good picture of a subject's control of "ordering.' But a little reflection will show that things are much more complicated than this. Consider the

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following examples, which extend Yalden's illustration of Figure 1. To perform the function of "ordering* (someone to finish the letter), we might utter any of the sentence forms in Figure 3:

Function	Sentence forms	Realization
	(f) Explicit performative	I order you to finish that letter!
	(g) Clause complement	I thought that you'd be finished with that letter by now!
	(h) Clause complement with subjunctive predicate	I order that you be finished with that letter by noon tomorrow!
	(i) Question, positive and negative	Have you finished that letter yet? Haven't you finished that letter yet?
	(j) Tag question, positive and negative	You haven't finished that letter yet, have you? You've finished that letter, haven't you?
Ordering	(k) Adverbial subordinate	When you've finished that letter, just let me know.
	(1) Conditional	If you ever finish that letter, just let me know.

	(m) Conjoined clauses	I'd let you go to the movie, but you haven't finished that letter.
	(n) Conjoined VPs	You'll finish that letter, or stay home from the movie!
	(0) Passive	That letter should have been finished by now.
	(p) Comparative	I'd have finished that letter sooner than this.
	(q) The X, the Y	The sooner you finish that letter, the better.
	(r) Cleft	It's you that should finish that letter. It's today that you should finish that letter.
	(s) Pseudo-cleft	What you should finish is that letter. What you should do is finish that letter.
Ordering	(t) Left- and Right-dislocation; Topicalization	That letter, you must finish it! You must finish it, that letter! That letter, you must finish!

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Cu)	Right-node-raising	I thought that you would **have, but I** see that you haven't, finished that letter.

Fig. 3. Function to form, extended

It seems clear that with a little imagination we might make any syntactic structure in English perform the function of ordering that the letter be finished. There need not even be any lexical connection (i.e., any mention of letters and finishing). Given the right context, even the following would do the trick:

(6) Grandma would sure like to hear from you.

(7) I'm going to run down to the post office now'

(8) Whatsa matter, all the pens run outa ink?!

Here we begin to get a feeling for the vast flexibility of language in use, and the difficulty of predicting what forms might actually occur in some context. Even specifying a particular function, such as "ordering,' there are not just five possible forms, nor a dozen. Rather, the list seems open-ended, limited only by our ability to think of different grammatical structures and imagine contexts in which they may be used to order. Thus the leap of inference required for evaluating performance on a functional language test--from production of a particular form to overall control of a corresponding function--is as extreme as it could possibly be.

Someone might object that I have set the goals of functional teaching and testing unrealistically high: Of course we would like to teach native-

speaker-like communicative competence, and to test overall functional proficiency; but a course or test that imparts or assesses partial functional competence still has some value. A learner who can use one or two forms for ordering is a lot better off than one who can't order at all, even if (s)he doesn't control all possible forms for ordering. This objection has some merit, especially if we limit our view to survival-level skills, and language production (rather than perception). For survival-level expressive purposes, the main thing is to be able to get things done linguistically, to execute each function in some way. For this, control of one or two appropriate forms is perhaps enough. But functional competence also requires receptive skills--the ability to understand what other speakers are trying to do with language. when a learner emerges from the classroom (s)he can't expect each function to be represented only by one or two formulas, but will be faced with all of the enormous flexibility in the relation of forms to functions. It is important, at least for receptive competence, that the learner be able to understand the functional intent of anything (s)he is likely to hear.

Limiting Test or Syllabus to Forms that are 'Commonly Used'

As a practical solution to the problem we might propose to find out which forms are most frequently used to perform each function. Then we could teach them (and test them) in order of frequency, as the most efficient way to minimize the learner's risk of encountering something unknown. This would require recording many actual language exchanges and counting up how often native speakers actually use each possible form to execute each function, thereby arriving at a rank order that represents what the learner is most likely to hear. The literature on functional teaching and testing contains many calls for this

kind of inductive research, as a means of determining appropriate content for a functional syllabus or test. For example Harrison (1983) says:

> The control necessary for reliable assessments should *arise* from the tasks which are to be achieved, the exchanges which are made, and the communicative problems which have been solved. One way of establishing these sequences is to find out by recording (and possibly transcribing) exactly what a fluent native speaker says in the circumstances set by the test (p. 82).

In this quote Harrison seems to assume that a given situation uniquely specifies what a fluent speaker will say--contrary to the above arguments and to most recent research in linguistic pragmatics. Canale and Swain (1980) allow the speaker some latitude of choice, but similarly assume that we can find out through empirical observation what is 'most frequently' said. They recommend:

> Description of the communication needs of a given group of second language learners based both on factors particular to the learners ... and particular to the speech community (or communities) in which the second language is most likely to be used (e.g., what peers talk about most often, what grammatical forms and communicative forms they use most frequently among themselves and with non-native speakers or strangers (p. 36).

It is difficult to go on record as opposing a call for further research. Nevertheless I have some doubt that this approach--extensive observation of actual speech situations and inductive calculation of what speakers say in those situation--will yield useful results. Such research would be similar in both

goals and methods to the behaviorist program of trying to predict exactly what someone will say in any given situation through observing situations and the utterances that occur in them. This sort of program was long ago abandoned in linguistics, and for very good reasons. Consider the following (partially overlapping) points:

- Language use is not just parroting of prefabricated chunks of language, memorized and associated with a given situation. Rather, language use is flexible and creative.

- As a result, there is probably little uniformity or predictability in what a speaker whll say, even in two identical-seeming situations.

- What we say depends to a very large extent on what we want to *say,* not just on what linguistic conventions allow us to say. This remains true even when we specify a practical situation or linguistic function quite narrowly; e.g., in the above example there seems to be latitude for limitless creativity and imagination in choosing forms of words to order someone to finish the letter.

- As we also saw in the 'ordering' example, the list of things a person might correctly and appropriately say in a given situation or to execute a given function is not short, and may not even be finite.

- The fact that some possible choice from this open-ended list is uncommon does not necessarily mean that it is marginal, that it serves to perform its function less effectively (or less correctly, naturally, beautifully, etc.), than any other choice.

- As a result of the previous two points, no one of the many equally correct and appropriate things to say may be common at all. If a speaker has many (perhaps infinitely many) equally effective choices then the likelihood of his/her choosing any one of them--and so, the frequency with which any one of them is likely to occur for observation--is close to zero. Thus no one choice of form may be at all common, or detectably more common in actual occurrence than any other choice.

At the root of all these objections is, once again, the vast flexibility that language makes available to us in choosing what we will actually say in a particular situation, or to accomplish some particular function. For convincing elaboration of these arguments, and many more, see Chomaky (1959)--a vigorous polemic which effectively drove behaviorist methods and assumptions out of linguistics for many years.

If these objections carry any weight, then our program for limiting the forms that appear on our functional syllabus or proficiency test breaks down. If we cannot pick out the 'most important' forms by discovering the "most common' or "most frequent• ones in actual use, then we have no principled way to decide what forms we should focus on when we go to teach or test a particular language function.

Even if this sort of inductive research does not seem very hopeful, the road to better functional language tests has to lie through more research, and development of clearer theories of functional language use. I will end this paper by mentioning one line of research that may offer some help in constructing functional language tests of a certain sort.

Some Research for Situationally-Based Functional Tests

Some functional tests are structured not around *speech act' functions such as those described above, but around broad 'situational" functions. (Many 'basic skills' or "survival level" tests are designed in this way.) So for example a test might try to assess whether someone has the linguistic skills required to get a prescription filled at the drugstore, ride the bus to a particular location; buy food at the grocery store or clothing at the clothing store; go to a doctor and explain what is wrong; deal with a job interview; etc.

Now designing a test around these broad functional situations poses the same problems discussed above, and perhaps in even more extreme form:

1) Can we convincingly and naturalistically recreate these situations in the context of a test?

2) If a test subject fails to negotiate some communicative situation posed by a test, does this indicate a specifically linguistic deficit, or a difference in cultural expectations about how communication should be organized?

3) What particular language forms do we choose to test, as characteristic of a specific situation? Can we really predict what language is likely to occur in a given situation? A number of investigators have expressed doubt that we can, and *indeed,* it seems very unlikely--again due to the vast flexibility of language in use. We may drill or test a pre-literate subject on a grocery-store interchange:

(9) Excuse me, where's the corn?

(10) It's on aisle 6A.

But supposing, in the real-life grocery store, the reply comes back:

(11) Fresh, frozen, or canned? [9]

Or again, from Yalden (1983:38): 'There is always an element of the unexpected in spontaneous conversation. ... We may not expect an argument at the post office, but it is not impossible.'

4) How many linguistically distinct situations are there? Do they group into classes, so that testing, say, the "drugstore' situation tells us something about competence in the "grocery store' situation--even if we do not test the latter? Generalizing from performance in one communicative situation to skill at other, untested situations is just the "leap of inference" discussed above, translated to the case of situation-based functional tests.

As regards point 2), sorting out linguistic versus cultural factors in miscommunication will require sociolinguistic research on communication between members of two specific cultural groups. For example Gumperz (1984) identified cultural sources of miscommunication in counseling interviews between British social workers and Pakistani clients. Large amounts of similar research will be required to support situationally-based functional tests: Even if we limit ourselves to testing American English in American social situations, we will still need to identify the cultural expectations of each ethnic group that we expect to test.

The questions raised in point 4) call for basic theory-development and research into how communication is organized in general over diverse social situations. What is at issue here is whether there are

functional similarities across different communicative situations--similarities that will allow us to generalize success or failure in one situation to a prediction of success or failure in other, comparable situations. One example of relevant work is provided by Merritt (1976a, b; 1983). Merritt examined language use in what she called *service encounters*--interactions between a server and a customer at a serving post, such as the cash register counter in a store or shop. Merritt (1983) presents a brief study of the use of ok by participants in service encounters, and finds evidence that the word does not just indicate agreement or acceptance, but functions as a signal by the speaker, releasing the hearer from making the next move (linguistic or non-linguistic) in the service encounter. Though this example is very narrow in focus, the usefulness of this kind of research lies in the fact that it geneiBlizes over a wide range of functional situations. Thus if a test assesses a subject's control of this communicative function of ok in one service-encounter situation, we can reasonably draw conclusions about his/her control of this function in service encounters across many different situations. h great deal more work of this sort will be required to adequately characterize 'service encounter' language in general, not to mention other situational types of language. Such research is essential to support adequate situationally-based tests of functional language proficiency.

Notes

[1] Of course a test of phonology of syntax might also benefit from a task design based on natural communication. In particular, if we wish to assess a subject's ability to pronounce or construct sentences in a target language in real-time, real-world communicative situations, we would again choose natural communication over linguistic manipulation tasks. See Burt and Dulay (1978); Dieterich and Freeman (1979).

[2] Yalden (1983:62) introduces this useful term, to describe the three broad categories of Halliday's semantic theory.

[3] The list offered in Van Ek (1979) is a somewhat abridged version of that found in Van Ek (1976).

[4] For example, in English a whrquestion comes close to being an obligatory environment for a "complete sentence" response, i.e., a clause with subject and tensed verb:

- Why did he leave?
- Because he was tired and wanted to go home.

But one might evade the SUBJECT + TENSED VERB target structure and still he consistent with the conventions of English usage, by answering with a bare infinitive:

- To go buy some cigarettes.

As far as I know there is no obligatory environment (maintaining natural communication), that requires production of, say, an imperative form, or a sentence containing a subordinate clause.

[5] Burt and Dulay (1978:183) make this same point about the function of "apologizing..

[6] Canale and Swain (1980) make a similar point as regards functional ('communicative') teaching: that drilling certain language functions does not insure control of other, equally important functions. They point out that; "'ft is not clear that a communicative approach is more or less effective than a grammatical approach (or any other approach) in developing the learners' flexibility' in handling communicative functions and interactions on which they have not been drilled. ... This question of flexibility in handling unfamiliar communication situations is important given the complexity, subjectivity, and creativity that characterizes such situations' (p. 37).

[7] The 'criterion' statements of criterion-referenced tests are just claims about what broader inferences we are supposed to be able to draw from observed performances.

[8] Except for those situations where we really do use prefabricated language, e.g., in greeting and parting: "Good morning'; *How do you do?"; "See ya later!"; etc. However most of our everyday language use is not like this.

[9] I owe this apt example to Steve Mierzejewski, Portland State University seminar, 1984.

[10] Merritt (1983) cites examples of the use of ok from service encounters at a library; gift shop; snack truck; photography store; university cafeteria; savings bank; movie ticket both; jewelry store; delicatessen; drug store; and department store notions, hosiery, and cosmetics sections.

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SOME CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO ARAB STUDENTS

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Mohammed is a Saudi student in an intensive English program who does fairly well in oral skills but whose literate skills are lagging one or two levels behind. He does his homework and comes to class, but his handwriting is rather poor, his spelling is weak, and his reading and note-taking are very slow. What is the problem?

The problem may involve not only linguistic obstacles but also cultural considerations that result from the student's historical and religious background. Ethnocentrism may also affect learning strategies on the student's part and teaching strategies on the teacher's part. This paper will explore some of the problems that Arab students often have in learning English and it it will discuss some *ways* of alleviating them. It is hoped that this will be a springboard to further discussion of how better to help Arab students learn English.

Historical Considerations

It should be noted at this point that "Arabs *refers* here primarily to Arabs who are brought up monolingually, such as Saudis, in contrast to North African Arabs who acquire French in schools and thus have a second language already. Also, the reader should realize that 'Muslim' and 'Arab' are not synonymous terms. Arabs comprise only one-third of the 900 million Muslims in the world. In addition, about 5% of the Arab population is non-Muslim. Nevertheless, Islam is definitely an important factor in considering Arabs as language learners, since often even Christian Arabs regard Islam as a part of their cultural heritage (Rodinson, 1981).

Arab culture spread throughout the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and even as far as China during the great flowering of Islam during and after the 7th century. However, the Crusades, which began in the 11th century, brought an end to this flowering, and indeed, signaled a turning inward. During the Crusades the Franj (Europeans) slaughtered the inhabitants of many cities and plundered the towns. In Jerusalem, the city that is holy to people of three major religions, they burned the Jews in their synagogues and destroyed the monuments of saints, including the tomb of Abraham. They even expelled other Christians--Greek Orthodox, Georgians, and Copts. 'The memory of these atrocities, preserved and transmitted by local poets and oral tradition, shaped an image of the Franj that would not easily fade' (Maalouf, 1984, 30).

The Europeans were distrusted even though they learned Arabic. Moreover, the local inhabitants resisted the language of the invaders, perhaps because 'to learn the language of the conqueror seems a surrender, even a betrayal' (Maalouf, 1984, 264). Furthermore, after the Crusades, the Arabs refused to open their society to ideas from the West. Even today, Westerners perceive Arab society as closed--and, in fact, the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah are closed to non-Muslim foreigners.

Some of this distrust has persisted into modern times, resulting in a dilemma for Arab individuals and society alike. Progress and modernism are often equated with the West, and thus are suspect. The individual is expected to affirm his cultural and religious identity by rejecting modernization, symbolized by the West, or possibly risk loss of identity by taking on new ways. Maalouf comments that 'the Arab world has [not] ever succeeded in resolving this dilemma. Even today we can observe phases of forced Westernization and phases of extremist, strongly xenophobic traditionalism' (1984, 265).

The Arabic Language

Arabic is a language that is closely related to the religion that guides Arab society. When the Prophet Mohammed received the word of God, he wrote it down in Arabic. Still today the classical Arabic of the Qu•ran is studied by Muslims all over the world and is understood by most Arab-speaking people (Rodinson, 1981).

The importance of oral, and later written, language in Arab culture can be seen in the high prestige of poetry in the history of Arabic literature. Poets were, in fact, very influential as tribal leaders in ancient times. "The poet was not merely lauded as an artist but venerated as the protector and guarantor of the honour of the tribe and a potent weapon against its enemies' (Bakalla, 1984, 117).

In both spoken and written Arabic, there is an enjoyment of rhetoric, often with "a lack of concern for the relation between words and concrete facts" (Rodinson, 1981, 168). In the Arabic linguistic tradition, main points are overasserted and exaggerated, often resulting in repetition, increased use of the superlative, and frequent restatement. Paragraph development in Arabic is in fact a relatively recent concept to Arab writers (Rharma, 1986). Paragraphs include a series of parallel developments connected by coordinating conjunctions, emphasizing sequences of events and balance of thought (Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic, 1983).

Arabic is structured very differently from English. Arabic grammarians at one time identified 19,000 to 21,000 roots, each with over 100 derivations (Berque, 1983). In fact, in Arabic dictionaries, the reader must look up the root in order to find the derivatives. Many Arab students do not have dictionary skills in their own language, let alone in English (Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic, 1983).

Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic (1983), in an informative article about specific problem areas in teaching English to Arabs, discuss, among other things, a number of important points concerning verbs. For example, the verb 'to be" exists, but is not used often ("My name Fahad"); the two basic tense distinctions are the perfect and imperfect aspects, which refer to the completion or incompletion of an activity, rather than the time of the completion; and certain particles are used to indicate modal or temporal meaning, used with fully conjugated perfect or imperfect verbs ("1 didn't went to school') (Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic, 1983).

Relative clause formation can be another problem area for Arab learners. The use of relative clauses in Arabic is similar to their use in English but the formation is different. These differences include the lack of relative pronouns in Arabic, with a relative article being used instead of a definite antecedent; the relative clause construction being coordinate rather than subordinate; and the presence of a relator in the relative clause that acts as the subject or object of the clause and refers to the antecedent ("1 like the movie that I went to see it') (Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic, 1983).

Another article that delineates specific grammar points that are problematical for Arab learners is by Perkins (1984), who investigated Arab interference in the AL/GU test and drew up a list. The points are too numerous to discuss in detail, but a few examples include comparative degree of adverbs; 'has to' versus "must"; embedded "wh"-questions; 'might" plus verb; and the use of 'for' and "since'.

A recent article by Ball (1986) highlights one of the basic problems that many Arab students have: difficulties in handwriting. Ball points out that perceptual and motor skills are inextricably linked, and that difficulties with the English graphic system

often result in difficulties in reading, difficulties in keeping pace with the class, poor note-taking skills, embarrassment over difficulties with handwriting, and inaccuracies in spelling and grammar caused by attempts to speed up or by lack of care. Ball suggests having a place for graphic structure within a curriculum. She also advocates the use of authentic materials for analysis and training for visual clues which differ from those in their own culture.

The Teaching of English in Arab Countries

The teaching of English in North America is very different from that in Arab countries. In Saudia Arabia, for example, English teachers emphasize rote learning and memorization of sets of drills, questions, answers and sentences, which have to be repeated in a written exam. There are often few language labs. In addition, the teachers often use Arabic more than English in the classroom. The curriculum is strictly set by the Ministry of Education, with the exact timetable as to which text and chapters to use. As a result, many students often feel that "most of the teachers were concerned with finishing their assigned responsibilities within the time allowed, whether learning was achieved or not" and 'passing the final exams was more important than learning the language' (Altwaijri, 1982).

This previous schooling may also affect how the student performs in placement tests. Farhady suggests that 'officials and test developers ... pay close attention to the type of the test as well as the language and educational backgrounds of the examinees in order to avoid unfair decisions on the basis of test results' (1979, 170).

Dhaif (1984) has suggested that there is often a lack of coordination between teaching materials and

the learner at a cognitive/behavior level. He explains why he thinks so:

> One reason why such a mismatch continues to exist is perhaps that the learning strategies developed by the learner are usually deeply rooted in the learner's cognitive repertoire and are therefore difficult to alter overnight through the English language class. They are also the by-products of a set of cultural and educational factors (1984, 224).

One of the Arab learning strategies is what is often construed as cheating. Arab students tend to collaborate on their work. Ragnole (1976) ascribes this in part to "asabiyyah', 'a combined loyalty, courage, and will based on a strong sense of social and tribal affiliation and solidarity' (1976, 39). This involves brother helping brother--in the ESL context, helping in class or at home. There is also a certain amount of saving face involved, since Arab students do tend to have many problems in their written work.

North American Perceptions of Arabs

What do we know about Arabs and their culture? Often what we "know" is the stereotypes, and these are usually negative. The following passage probably covers many of the common ones:

> Given the long history of political, economic and indeed military conflict, the West has always had its Islamic 'bad guy' to color popular culture--be he Salah ad-Din throwing the Crusaders out of Palestine, the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman, banging on the gates of Vienna, a Barbary pirate chasing English and French ships out of the

> Mediterranean, an 'oil sheikh' brandishing the so-called 'oil weapon', or, as the culmination and personification of the Western world's current prejudices and fears, the image of a Palestinian guerrilla, wrapped in his kaffiyeh, with Kalishnikov in hand, threatening to bring international civil aviation to a standstill (Naylor, 1983, 392).

Some other myths perpetrated about Arabs are identified by Shaheen (1983): Arabs are fabulously wealthy, they are barbaric and backward, and they have harems of women in flashy Middle Eastern costumes. During the World War I era there was a romantic image of the Aaab as a Bedouin (Suleiman, 1983). Suleiman, however, suggests that Arabs are victims of the latent and overt racism of North American popular culture, i.e., the cowboys (whites, the good guys) against the Indians (non-whites, the bad guys).

In surveys done of textbooks in the public schools in North American in the last thirty years, investigators have found that there are many misconceptions about Arabs due to inaccurate, misleading, or incomplete statements, omissions of important facts about Arabs, and information that was not brought up to date in new editions of text books (Jarrar, 1983). Ultimately, says Shaheen, these negative and inaccurate images, which are presented to us daily in political cartoons, textbooks, television, the news, magazines, and even childrens' cartoons, affect public opinion and foreign policy and, on an international scale, act as a barrier to peace. In our own context they may act as a barrier to good teaching and learning.

Often teachers have little time and energy to deal with the problems of stereotypes, culture transition, or cognitive styles, or they may just not

consciously recognize them as problems. Sometimes teachers' own ethnocentrism 'prevents them from assessing the stress zones among cultures and equipping their students with useful insights about such problematic areas' (Alpetkin, 1981, 281). Alpetkin also suggests that the teachers' lack of knowledge of the students' cultures 'easily leads to the formation of a protective shield of ethnocentric approaches based on the only frame of reference they possess--their own culture' (1981, 281).

Addressing the Challenge of Arab Learners in the Classroom

The teacher can begin to develop her own awareness of Arab culture by reading the newsletter from the Saudi Embassy, some of the Islamic tracts given to her by her students, or the poems or short stories of classical or contemporary Arab authors (translations by Johnson-Davies are usually very good--see Appendix for some suggestions). These can be used as materials in class from time to time as well. Since poetry is so important in Arab culture, incorporating it into classroom activities occasionally could spark Arab students' interest. Often classical Arabic poems deal with the theme of homesickness (Bakalla, 1984), a theme that can be the springboard to a discussion of culture transition or life changes in general. Proverbs also seem to work well (Bakalla, 1984). These are often in texts, in collections, or can be elicited from the students.

One way of finding out how to help the students is to ask them. One study done among Middle Eastern students indicated, for example, that they wanted more grammar explanations and exercises, more vocabulary exercise, and more emphasis on listening, speaking, and reading skills (Altwaijri, 1982). There is a fine line here, however, between what the students say they want or are used to, and what we as trained

professionals know about language acquisition and teaching methodologies. As the facilitators in the process of language learning and acquisition we must perform a delicate balancing act.

Another way of eliciting information is to use the problem-posing method introduced by Freire and developed in this country by Wallerstein (1983) and others. Through this approach English is seen as a 'language of action" to help the students develop the critical thinking needed to help them in their situations (Wallerstein, 1983). Cooperative approaches, such as group writing (Abdel Ghani, 1986), or other group work (Beer, 1985) can be capitalized upon occasionally both in class and for homework.

To tackle handwriting, if it is not a part of the curriculum, perhaps the student could be encouraged to undertake tutoring by a person who can teach a stroke-style calligraphy, such as Italic script, in order to make use of the fact that Arabic is a stroke-style script. Another way of getting around poor handwriting, to some extent, as well as to facilitate spelling and writing skills, is to teach and encourage Arab students to use a word processor. Some teachers who have used this approach in Saudi Arabia have found that the impersonality of the microcomputer lessens embarrassment on the part of the users when they make mistakes and allows them to accept more criticism. Also, the mechanical aids inherent in the word processor, such as spelling, outlining, style sheets, or grammar and usage aids, are helpful for poor or beginning writers (McGreal, 1986).

Conclusion

This paper has discussed some of the cultural considerations that Arab learners of English may have. These include attitudes that derive from historical events, attitudes about the Arabic language,

some of the structures of Arabic that may affect the acquisition of certain English forms, and the previous teaching of English in the native country. Ethnocentrism on the teacher's part was also discussed, and a few suggestions were made as to how to address some of these challenges. There are, of course, many other issues regarding Arab students that were not mentioned here: how to deal with problems with directionality, the effects of culture transition, attitudes toward women as teachers, and more specific learning and teaching strategies. Arab students need something that they do not seem to be getting, and so present a challenge to their teachers in many ways. More cultural information on both sides will help both Arab learners and North American teachers to meet those challenges.

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APPENDIX

The Saudi Embassy will send you its newsletter if you write to them directly at Information Office, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 601, New Hampshire Avenue *NW,* Washington, D.C.

Denys Johnson-Davies has translated many Arabic stories and poems. An excellent collection of short stories from authors throughout the Arab world is called, simply, Arabic Short Stories (New York: Quartet Books, 1983). This is actually a relatively new genre for Arabic writers, but this particular collection gives a flavor of the various styles and cultures.

There is always The Arabian Nights, of course, though this is rather dense reading. Some of the stories from there have even been incorporated into our own repertoire of folk tales--Ali Baba and Aladdin, for example.

Check your library under the "Arabic" headings and you will probably find something interesting or useful to read.

SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY
SCIENCE OF SNAKE OIL?

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Measured by frequency of mention in TESOL classrooms and literature as well as by the four reprintings of Principles and Practices in Second Language Acquisition (Krashen, 1982), Stephen Krashen's second language acquisition theory appears to be one of the more successful formulations of ideas concerning the manner in which one arrives at competency in a second language. The unfortunate aspect of the Krashen theory's popularity is that, from a scientific perspective, it is equivalent to a hoax of high order on the community of second-language professionals.

Endemic to his second language acquisition theory are a failure to appropriately represent scientific convention; a failure to provide supporting empirical evidence; a failure to provide source citations for statements pertinent to the area of investigation; a failure to fully disclose the findings and positions of sources cited as supporting the theory *when* full disclosure would invalidate that assertion; and a failure to consider alternative ideas and theories which could complement or contradict second language acquisition theory.

The opening remarks preceding the theoretical model of second language acquisition theory presented in The Natural Approach (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) reflect the tenuous nature of second language acquisition theory: "In stating this warning, we are only informing the reader that language acquisition research follows the generally accepted rules of science . . . Before the reader becomes too discouraged, however, let us assure you that the hypotheses presented here are well supported by empirical data and are thus far (sic) unblemished by damaging counter examples' (p. 25). Such assurances of authenticity

smack a little of medicine-show hype--legitimate scientific efforts seldom, if ever, require such product claims--and raise the question of whether second language acquisition theory is indeed science or snake oil.

IS SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY A THEORY?

Gregg (1986) observes that in the opening passage of The Input Hypothesis (Rrashen, 1985) 'Rrashen . . . offers what (he calls] 'perhaps audaciously', a theory of second language acquisition (p. vii), u and notes *There are perhaps more fitting words than 'audaciously'; and in fact Rrashen usually drops the article and talks simply of second language acquisition theory, a locution that makes the complex error of suggesting that his theory is a theory, that a second language acquisition theory exists, and that his theory is it* (p. 117).

As Gregg suggests, what is presented by Rrashen as a theory is not a theory. What are presented as hypotheses are not hypotheses according to scientific convention. In Chapter I of Principles and Practice of Second Language Acquisition (Rrashen, 1982), Rrashen informs us that 'As is the case with any scientific theory, it [second language acquisition theory] consists of a set of hypotheses, or generalizations, that are consistent with experimental data' (p. 2). The first sentence of Chapter II states, 'This chapter summarizes current second language acquisition theory.' The second sentence reads, 'To do this, it first describes some very important hypotheses" (p. 9). And, those hypotheses are all that are provided for theory with the exception of a summary that notes:

> Our review of second language acquisition theory thus far can be summarized as follows:

1. Acquisition is more important than learning.

2. In order to acquire, two conditions are necessary. The first is comprehensible (or even better comprehended) input containing i + 1, structures a bit beyond the acquirer's current level, and second, a low or weak affective filter to allow the input 'in' (p. 32).

A theory, however, as understood by most scientists, is a formulation about causal relationships underlying certain observed phenomena. Theory is distinguished from hypothesis. Theory implies the existence of supporting evidence for its general principle; hypothesis implies an inadequacy of evidence for an explanation that is tentatively inferred from the theory. Hypotheses are formulated to test theories; theories do not consist of hypotheses. One source explains, 'Theories allow the results of a large number of observations to be summarized in a way that accounts for existing data, predicts new observations, and guides further research' (Coon, 1983, p. 32). Another suggests, 'Theory is a system of generalizations that specify lawful relationships between specific phenomena and their causes" (Smith, Sarason, and Sarason, 1986, p. 35). Not to belabor the point, but make it clear, 'Theories are general ideas--integrated sets of principles--that explain and predict facts. A good theory must organize facts into a coherent structure. It also makes testable predictions, called hypotheses, which can be used to check the theory and suggest new explorations and applications. Theories are explanations about why behaviors occur* (Worchel and Shebilske, 1986, p. 9).

IS SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY RELIABLY DOCUMENTED?

Within his discussions of second language acquisition theory, Krashen makes provocative statements, such as 'Some second language theorists have assumed that children acquire while adults can only learn" (Krashen, 1982, p. 10), and then provides no clue as to who these 'some second language theorists' may be. It could be helpful to the enmired student to be able to consult those sources. It would also add to Krashen's credibility if he would document his statements. Assertions made within one context are not clarified at that moment but are mysteriously noted, "as we shall see later . . ." However, no reference is then provided as to just where we may later encounter this tidbit. A frustrating example is 'As we shall see later, this natural order appears only under certain conditions (or rather, it disappears only under certain conditions!)' (p. 13). Not a clue is given to what those conditions are or to where they are discussed. Is a lack of circumspection also evidenced by the appropriation of "I hope to convince the reader . . . there is nothing as practical as a good theory!" (p. 3) ▪ a statement which has already been attributed to both Kurt Lewin (Myers, 1986, p. 10) and F. C. Bartlett (Wingfield, 1981, preface)?

IS SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY OBJECTIVE?

Besides confounding the concept of theory and neglecting documentation, Krashen restricts his interpretations of data to those explanations which augment his ideas and ignores alternative perspectives. For example, children's grammatical errors are used to illustrate the child's reliance on language acquired without the contribution of conscious grammar,

thus confirming the strength of the hypothesis of subconscious acquisition (Krashen, 1982, p. 104). Another equally plausible, though not provided, explanation is that children's grammatical errors could result from their overgeneralization of consciously applied grammar rules as when the child who used the words 'went' and 'came" correctly switches and begins saying 'goed' and "corned' after learning that "edw forms the past tense for many verbs. Children's grammatical errors could also simply reflect their incomplete language schema. These latter interpretations, however, interfere with Krashen's notion of the acquisition-learning distinction. In contrast to the narrow development of second language acquisition theory, legitimate science conscientiously considers and explores all possible causal relationships including even those which challenge a favored speculation.

IS THERE EMPIRICAL SUPPORT FOR SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY?

Besides his selling us snake oil, I have the impression that Krashen is also leading us on a snipe hunt. The snipe we pursue is the elusive empirical data supporting second language acquisition theory. Barry McLaughlin (1978) similarly questioned this absence of evidence. In his reply to McLaughlin, Krashen (1979) ruminates, "Oddly, M claims that ' . . . he does not provide evidence . . .' If M means that there is not enough evidence to satisfy him, fair enough. There has been enough evidence for me . . . If he truly thinks I have not provided evidence, it seems to me that we are working with such different ideas as to how progress is achieved in science that real communication between us is impossible' (p. 159). Why doesn't Krashen just give us the data? The appendix to the Krashen reply consists of a listing and brief description of his hypotheses. The final sentence of the article reads, 'Empirical

data supporting these hypotheses can be found in Krashen 1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1979b, 1979c.' Somehow we are still on a snipe hunt.

ARE SUPPORTING SOURCES ACCURATELY PRESENTED IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY?

The Learning-Acquisition Hypothesis

Each of the five components of second language acquisition theory reflects the same flimsy fabrication of a snipe-hunt leader high on snake oil. In each we find elements of a medicine show: specious arguments, a glossing over of the issue of empirical support, a complete disregard for competing ideas, and most sadly, factual misrepresentations tailored to lend credibility to second language acquisition theory as well as a glaring omission of contradictory evidence which directly addresses Krashen's theory of second language acquisition.

The first hypothesis, the acquisition-learning distinction, is, according to Krashen (1982), "perhaps the most fundamental of all the hypotheses to be presented here. It states that adults have two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language. The first way is language acquisition, a process similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language. Language acquisition is a subconscious process . . . The second way to develop competence in a second language is by language learning . . . We will use the term 'learning' henceforth to refer to conscious knowledge . . (p. 10).

Krashen then sidles up to other theorists and implies that they are of similar faith. He reveals that 'The acquisition-learning distinction is not new with me. Several other scholars have found it useful

to posit similar kinds of differences . . . 'implicit' and 'explicit' learning . . . and mechanisms that guide 'puzzle-and-problem-solving performance' and mechanisms that guide 'automatic' performance• (p. 50). One of the references to these other scholars could not be located in the bibliography; so a similar passage in The Natural Approach Krashen and Terrell, 1983, p. 27) was consulted and it referred us to Bialystok (1979) and Lawler and Selinker (1971) (p. 48).

Going first to Bialystok (1979), we find that, contrary to Krashen's implication, she is not making an acquisition-learning distinction. Her introduction of the "implicit-explicit" concept states that

> theoretical distinction is made between information about the language which is represented in 'explicit knowledge' on the one hand and 'implicit knowledge' on the other. The assignment of information to either of these sources depends neither on the content nor on the method of instruction; information relating to phonology, syntax, semantics, and so on could appear in either and information learned through a textbook or through a conversation is equally unbiased for its representation. The distinction, rather, depends on the ability of the learner to articulate or consciously act upon the governing rule (pp. 81-82).

She does not at all address the issue of whether the information was learned or obtained subconsciously, which is the crux of the acquisition-learning distinction. The idea that she may be making an acquisition-learning distinction is further discredited when she remarks, °. . . a more advanced level of study in the target language may mean that more of the information about the language has become automatic and hence

place a larger proportion of the language under implicit control' (p. 90). This indicates that, with usage, 'explicit knowledge' may become "implicit knowledge' which is incompatible with Krashen's thesis of two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language.

Consulting Lawler and Selinker (1971), we find a similar mismatch of concepts. They too are not distinguishing between how language is acquired, but distinguishing between cognitive factors affecting language performance in relation to time: 'Heuristically, it seems we can postulate for our purposes two distinct types of cognitive structures: (1) those mechanisms that guide 'automatic' language performance and (2) those mechanisms that guide puzzle-or-problem-solving performance.' In a footnote they clarify that by "automatic' they are referring to 'performance (language drills included) where speed and spontaneity are crucial and the learner has no time to consciously apply linguistic mechanisms' (p. 35). Like Bialystok, they mention the possibility of rules activated through the puzzle-or-problem-solving mechanism moving into the realm of automatic performance with practice: 'For some of the latter, the time factor will diminish with practice until it reaches automatic application.' They observe that some 'individuals . . . can learn a particular verbalized rule and apply it automatically without difficulty.' Both observations are again inconsistent with the acquisition-learning distinction.

It is intriguing that Krashen missed these rather significant ideas since a main heading of Chapter IV of Principles and Practices in Second Language Acquisition declares, 'Learning Does Not Become Acquisition' (Krashen, 1982, p. 83).

IS THERE EVIDENCE CONTRARY TO THE ACQUISITION-LEARNING DISTINCTION?

Despite the guarantee that "the hypotheses presented here are well supported by empirical data and are thusfar [sic] unblemished by damaging counterexamples" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, p. 25), there does appear to be evidence to the contrary. Memory research indicates that certain kinds of memory processing appear to be automatic; that is, the event to be encoded is noticed by the individual, but not attended to or thought about. However, language processing is not commonly considered to be subconscious or unlearned: Some types of automatic processing *such* as your encoding of space, time, and frequency, seem innate to the human information-processing system. But, other automatic processes, such as your encoding of word meanings, are learned* (Meyers, 1986, p. 247). Hetherington and Parke (1979) and Tagatz (1976) emphasize that a child plays an aggressive role in language acquisition and that it is not passively acquired. "Children compile specific information from what they hear and formulate hypotheses concerning the nature of this language. Children are instrumental in the language development process . . . not only do they formulate, test and evaluate hypotheses concerning the rules of languages, but they also actively compile linguistic information to use in the formation of hypotheses" (Tagataz, p. 90). De Villiers and de Villiers (1974) report that children's metalinguistic awareness, their thinking and talking about language, emerges around age five.

If our judgment of whether a process were conscious depends upon our remembering that process, we lose sight of all those events of which we were momentarily conscious but did not take into memory, or, if we did, we did it so unelaborately that retrieval requires very specific cues and may occur only by accident. Language events attributed to subconscious learning by Krashen could have been

consciously learned at some point in time and the learning event itself could have been forgotten.

Thus, a subconscious language-acquisition process is, if extant, very difficult to distinguish from a conscious process; the process of encoding word meanings is evidently learned; and children, whose language according to Krashen is acquired subconsciously, demonstrate conscious language learning and metalinguistics. For these reasons it appears that the acquisition-learning hypothesis' central distinguishing feature of two distinct and independent ways, subconscious and conscious, of developing competence in a second language may be relatively antithetical to the memory and linguistic literature.

The Monitor Hypothesis

The monitor hypothesis, a correlate of the acquisition-learning distinction, states that "conscious learning is available only as a 'Monitor', which can alter the output of the acquired system before or after the utterance is actually spoken or written. It is the acquired system which initiates normal, fluent speech utterances' (Krashen, 1982, p. 16). We are informed that 'formal rules, or conscious learning, play only a limited role in second language performance,' and 'these limitations have become even clearer as research has proceeded in the last few years." His claim is that this research (which happens to be Krashen's interpretations of case studies) reviewed in Chapter IV, 'strongly suggests that second language performers can use conscious rules only when three conditions are met' (p. 16).

Krashen syllogistically poses these 'three conditions' of using conscious rules as demonstrative of the limitations of conscious learning, thus adopting credence for his monitor hypothesis which implies

they would be limited. This is like saying, 'Nothing is better than heaven. An olive is better than nothing. Therefore, an olive is better than heaven.' Or, in the parlance of second language acquisition theory, *Three conditions limit our use of formal rules. The monitor hypothesis indicates our use of formal rules is limited. Therefore, the monitor hypothesis explains our limited use of formal rules.•

Considering these three conditions Krashen identifies as necessary, though not sufficient, for using conscious language rules from the perspective of memory studies, one finds they simply describe conditions required for performing any mental maneuver using our working memory (Craik and Lockhart, 1972). The first condition, time, is required because we seem to be a lifeform sentenced to sequential activities and it takes time to hold, sort, and manipulate data. When we have overlearned a procedure or a rule, that is, used it so often that we no longer have to reason or think it out, we require less time for processing (Coon, 1983, p. 238). Sometimes we process so quickly that it may seem instantaneous or subconscious. 'One cannot always identify the amount of time required for processing as an index of the processing depth. A semantic interpretation of a highly familiar, expected stimulus may be achieved fairly quickly, while a structural analysis of an unfamiliar, unexpected stimulus, may require considerable time' (Wingfield, 1981, p. 2B7). The second condition, focus on form, means that if we want our form to be correct, we must focus on it or give it attention. This is another prerequisite for using short-term or working memory for tasks which have not yet been overlearned. There was a time when tying our shoelaces required tongue-clenching concentration. The third condition is that we must know the rule or know the procedure. That also is an understandable condition in that we can't process procedures of form for which we do not have a blueprint

or rule. A rule is a mnemonic which reminds us how to do something.

In our quest for empirical data supporting the monitor model, we are again directed to the work of Bialystok (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, p. 31). However, as we have already discovered, Bialystok's model of second language learning (1979) is not compatible with Krashen's. In Bialystok (1978) this fact is even more explicitly demonstrated: "Three functions are assigned to the Explicit Linguistic Knowledge source. First, it acts as a buffer for new information about the language. For example, new words or vocabulary items which are presented in a classroom, or encountered in any other explicit situation, would at first be represented in Explicit Linguistic Knowledge. After continued use, the information may become automatic and transferred to Implicit Linguistic Knowledge, but the initial encounter, because of its explicitness, requires that it is represented in Explicit Knowledge* (p. 72). We still remember, do we not, that Krashen insists "Learning Does Not Become Acquisition" (Krashen, 1982, p. 83).

WHY DOESN'T KRASHEN REPORT EMPIRICAL STUDIES INVESTIGATING THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS?

Bialystok and Frohlich (1978) tested Krashen's idea that aptitude is most important for formal language learning while attitude has its greatest effects on language acquisition (Krashen, 1977; krashen and Terrell, 1982). They postulated, 'If Krashen's hypothesis is correct, then Aptitude should be a better predictor of success on formal tasks and Attitude of success on functional ones" (p. 329); however, the study results indicated the opposite: "One of the predictions was that Aptitude would explain achievement in formal tasks and Attitude would be

more effective for functional tasks. This differentiation did not occur. Aptitude was an important predictor of success on four achievement measures and the one task affected by Attitude was, in fact, a formal task' (p. 334).

Bialystok (1979) objectively assessed Krashen's notion "that 'hard' rules are 'acquired' and 'easy' rules are 'learned'," but, as in the 1978 study, the assessment did not support the notion: 'If Krashen's hypothesis concerning easy/hard rules is correct, then the easy rules would be learned and stored in explicit knowledge and thus require the delay, or at least, benefit more greatly by the delay than would the hard rules which were acquired. There was no congruity between the judgements of the 18 informers and the performance of the subjects on this distinction' (P. 90).

Do we recall once more the product warranty which assured us that the hypotheses presented here are well supported by empirical data and are thusfar (sic] unblemished by damaging counterexamples' (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, p. 25)? One again wonders how Krashen could have failed to observe that in two of these studies Bialystok actually applied empirical investigatory technique to his hypotheses, mentioning him by name! He confidently notes (Krashen, 1982, p. 98) that "Several papers . . . present evidence that is quite consistent with the claim that only 'easy rules' are learned by most people,' but, wouldn't you know, he forgot to reference these 'several papers.'

The Natural Order Hypothesis

Of the other four main ideas of second language acquisition, the natural order hypothesis is the best documented. It states that 'acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order.

Acquirers of a given language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early, and others later' (Krashen, 1982, p. 12). Krashen cites Brown (1973) and the de Villiers (1973) as well as others, including Dulay and Burt (1974), whose studies reveal a natural order for children acquiring a second language. He neglects to mention, though, the severe criticism these studies have received on methodological grounds from Larsen-Freeman (1975) and Rosansky (1976).

The Input Hypothesis

The input hypothesis reflects a consideration of data derived form linguistic investigation; however, the studies cited by Krashen as supporting his input hypothesis do not necessarily support the input hypothesis, but are only interpreted by Krashen *as* doing so. The hypothesis, as summarized by Krashen, states that:

1. The input hypothesis relates to acquisition, not learning.

2. We acquire by understanding language that contains structure a bit beyond our current level of competence (i + 1). This is done with the help of context or extra-linguistic information (Krashen, 1982, p. 21).

Most of the argument for the input hypothesis revolves around the studies of caretaker speech; however, the conclusion drawn from the caretaker-speech findings is that "the fact of 'motherese' is much better established than the long-term impact of these speech patterns on children's language acquisition' (Hetherington and Parke, 1979, p. 267). Even Krashen acknowledges this: 'While there is not direct evidence showing that caretaker speech is indeed more effective than unmodified input, the input

hypothesis predicts that caretaker speech will be very useful for the child' (Krashen, 1982, p. 23). This acknowledgment coupled with the prediction of the input hypothesis places us in an intellectual circle. Krashen uses the caretaker studies to support the input hypothesis and then when they actually do not, he *uses* his input hypothesis to indicate they should.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The affective filter hypothesis, first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), claims, according to Krashen, that 'the effect of affect is 'outside' the language acquisition device proper. It still maintains that input is the primary causative variable in second language acquisition, affective variables acting to impede or facilitate the delivery of input to the language acquisition device' (Krashen, 1982, p. 31).

No attempt is made to present empirical support for the affective filter hypothesis. We are simply informed that the hypothesis 'is consistent with the theoretical work done in the area of affective variables and second language acquisition, as well as the hypotheses previously covered in this chapter' (Krashen, 1982, p. 31). Then, in his usual style, referred to by Gregg as 'intolerably sloppy' (1986, p. 119), he neglects to cite any of the theoretical work with which it is consistent; however, in the following paragraph, he does refer *us* to his own 1981 publication for further enlightenment.

The fact that there are other and perhaps more credible explanations for the effect of affect than the affective filter hypothesis can also be found in memory research. Within memory studies, there is not a shred of evidence for the existence of any kind of affective filter which impedes the delivery of input

to the 'language acquisition device.' Studies on state-dependent memory, reveal that messages people learn in one mood--be it joy, sadness, anger, or fear--are most easily recalled when they are again in the same mood (Meyers, 1986, p. 257). This finding indicates the encoding of the message, which could be a language lesson, includes the state or mood, and, thus, the state becomes a condition for optimal retrieval. The message can be acquired; a possible obstacle to retrieval is that the retrieval code or stimulus also involves the state. 'What is learned when drunk or high is generally not recalled well, but it is recalled better when again drunk or high" (Meyers, p. 257). Studies of arousal or excitement and recall yield similar results (McMahon and McMahon, 1986, p. 285). Holmes (1974) further addresses the effect of anxiety on memory and notes that when we are anxious, we direct extraneous messages to ourselves, such as "I will never learn all these words. I will never be able to speak this language . . ." and, in so doing, occupy our attention with self thoughts rather than the material we want to be acquiring. None of the foregoing challenges the idea that, for many purposes though perhaps not air traffic control or other high stress activities, it may be advantageous to learn in a low-anxiety situation, but it does challenge the notion of an affective filter.

CONCLUSION

The Krashen theory's popularity may be based on what appears to be its 'intuitive' appeal, a sort of "yes, that's an idea which makes sense.' There is nothing harmful in a series of ideas which seem sensible. But harm can accrue from a series of sensible, though untested, ideas which become a paradigmatic force in any field. Intuition is an ambiguous cognitive style often related to common sense. Common

sense has often been seen in retrospect to have been collective ignorance. This is one of the reasons we respect and adhere to rigorous scientific methods.

Thus we should become concerned to discover a guiding theory of the day is little more than a "theoretical' nostrum contrived to market pedagogical ideas. Progress and excellence are at risk should belief in spurious science contaminate a field and inhibit the search for alternative paradigms. A whole body of scientific research relevant to teaching English as a second language waits to be tapped. Serious efforts could reap exciting rewards for the field of ESL.

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LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS: IS ENGLISH THE ISSUE?

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Lily Wang-Fillmore, in her research on children's acquisition of English as a second language in American schools, came to what may seem to some people a rather startling conclusion. At the TESOL International Conference in Anaheim, March, 1986, she informed her listeners that limited English proficient (LEP) students do not need English. They need (1) to develop thinking skills and (2) to work together in groups. That is, they need to learn how to use language effectively, whether it be their first language (L1) or their second (L2) (Wong-Fillmore, 1986).

In her concern for students' acquisition of English, Wong-Fillmore had confirmed what many educators of language minority students have strongly believed for some time: LEP students need bilingual education and cooperative learning.

Before discussing the reasons behind our advocacy of bilingual education and cooperative learning, let us put forth some statements that we assume the readers will agree with.

1. An ultimate goal of education in the United States is for students to be able to use English in the highest degree possible: to be able to express themselves eloquently in both written and oral form, at various degrees of formality, and to be able to comprehend written and spoken discourse at academic as well as conversational levels.

2. LEP students, even those who, for whatever sociological, psychological, or economic reasons, reach grade level fairly quickly, and struggle a great deal the first few years of school, unless provided with some special assistance.

We make the above statements so that it is quite clear that we affirm the importance of the English language for ultimate success in the American society; and we acknowledge that many students have been successful in American schools without a great degree of help and certainly without bilingual education. We nevertheless persist in our claim that LEP students, whenever possible, would be best served by being taught bilingually, and, whether bilingually or not, through cooperative learning methods.

In this paper, we will describe bilingual education and show why learning in the first language enhances second language acquisition. We will also describe cooperative learning, demonstrating why it is of such benefit to limited English proficient students academically, linguistically, and socially.

Bilingual Education

Why teach a student in her first language? Isn't that taking away time from her acquisition of English? This question seems to be uppermost in the minds of those who are concerned about the English acquisition of LEP students.

First, let us be clear as to what bilingual education is. Bilingual programs can best be defined in terms of their goals: (1) to ensure that students acquire a high level of English proficiency; (2) to ensure that students acquire literacy skills and knowledge of subject matter in their first language while they are acquiring English; (3) to maintain the

student's self-esteem; and, (4) to maintain and develop the students' first language. As we will show below, the first goal is best attained only if the fourth goal is also met.

A bilingual program, then, involves teaching the child in the first language while allowing her to acquire the second.

Now, let us return to the original question--isn't teaching in L1 taking time away from the child's learning English? The belief that the child should jump right in to learning English at the expense of content (which she could be learning in L1) is based on several assumptions, each of which we will now explore.

The first assumption is that the more time spent in an English-speaking environment, the more quickly a student will learn English. There are several considerations here. As the reader is no doubt painfully aware, the pullout ESL program provides only one or two hours 1 day of the kind of L2 training that students need. The remainder of the school day, the student is in the mainstream classroom. Consider that classroom: It is very unusual to find one in which LEP students are exposed to large quantities of English that they can comprehend or in which they have someone to mediate for them in order to make that language comprehensible. The teacher's language is all to often at a level much too complex for the child to understand. Visual and contextual clues are lacking which would make the language more comprehensible. That is, definitions and instructions are often given indirectly in ways that do not clue in the student to what is actually being said (Wong-Fillmore, 1982). In addition, it is a rare classroom in which children are allowed to talk with their classmates, in order to practice the English they are trying so desperately to learn.

For most LEP students, then, the majority of the day outside of the ESL classroom is wasted--the student is not getting the kind of English input she needs in order to a acquire academic English and she is learning very little, if any, of the content--falling further and further behind each day.

There are indeed occasional programs in which the students are in a self-contained ESL classroom for several months before entering the mainstream. In such classrooms the teacher speaks English at a comprehensible level and provides context through visuals, manipulatives, and experiential learning. In many of these programs, literacy skills, content, and high-level thinking skills are incorporated. Such a program can be effective. However, it still does not compare to the speed of growth that can be accomplished when some of the teaching is done in L1, as we will now discuss.

When a LEP child enters the school system, she is trying to learn not only English, but content as well. However, we need to recognize essentially two kinds of English. The first is the social language of informal interaction among classmates and between students and teacher. Cummins (1980), the foremost researcher on the importance of the first language in the learning process, calls this Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BIOS). Educators have found that for many students, pirticularly the at-risk language minority students, the acquisition of BICS takes up to two years. During this time, the children are acquiring little or no of what Cummins calls Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). They are struggling with the basics of the language itself and are acquiring little content in L2 because of the abstract quality of the concepts being taught and the complexity of the language used to discuss it. Content ESL methodology helps a great deal at this point in the students' school career, by putting the language in a highly context-embedded setting (to use

Cummins' term), but, as a result of the need to simplify, the amount of conceptual material and the amount of language for that concept is extremely limited in comparison with native-speaker potential.

At this point, the high-level language, not only in terms of grammatical and lexical complexity, but also as regards sophistication of function (such as requesting clarification, disagreeing, providing counter-arguments) has not been developed in L2. And if that is the language she is limited to, she is not getting nearly the amount of knowledge nor the cognitive challenge that she could be getting if Ll were being used. Cummins reports that development of CALP in the second language, for those at-risk children who do not have it in Ll, takes several years beyond the two needed for BICS.

The second assumption of those who oppose Li is that learning in the first language takes away from the acquisition of the second. This suggests two different views of what language learning is all about. The anti-L1 view is based on the behaviorist view of language as habit-formation--the more one practices the language, the faster one will learn it. The implication of this view is that the more the child uses the first language, the stronger will be her habits. They will, then, interfere with the learning of the second language (Lindfors, 1980; Skinner, 1957).

The opposing view of second language acquisition, sometimes called the innatist view, is that language learning is not a question of habit formation, but rather a particular capacity of the human brain to process and acquire language. This view claims that upon being exposed to comprehensible language, the brain will discover regularities and enable one ultimately to produce the language without drill or explanation from outside sources (Chomsky

1959, 1965; Dulay and Burt, 1973, 1974; Krashen, 1983; Macnamara, 1973).

One implication of the second view of language learning is that a better "processors would enable one to acquire language faster. What kind of processor would that be? One which was already well-developed--one that, to put it simplistically, already had a lot of practice in learning and using language. In this view of language learning, if the student's first language is well developed, she will acquire her second language faster.

Another assumption of the innatist view of language learning is that the input must be comprehensible (Hatch, 1979; Terrell, 1983). One way to make a language comprehensible is, as we well know, to use the kinds of techniques that ESL teachers use; a lot of visuals, controlled language complexity, repetition of content words. However, another way to ensure comprehensibility is to use the language about a subject matter that the student already knows. (If you were going to study Chinese through content, would you rather be learning about basic geography or about nuclear physics?)

Thus, in the innatist view, if the student's first language is well-developed, not only in BICS, but in CALP, the student should more easily acquire a second language. And, this is precisely the case. Teachers consistently report that children who enter their classes directly from another country with three or four years of education (regardless of socio-economic background) usually only take two years to achieve at grade level. On the other hand, they confirm that children with no schooling struggle a great deal more and take much longer to attain grade level. The at-risk groups may never attain grade level. Research backs up these teachers' claims, as will be shown below.

The third assumption of those who advocate an English-only approach to teaching LEP students is that of a correlation between fluency in English and the ability to learn literacy skills and course content. As the above discussion indicates, the English acquired during the first few years in an English-speaking setting is mainly BICS--social language. The social fluency that the child has developed does not ensure that she can handle the language of content reading and the teachers' lectures. Thus, a child may be quite fluent, in the sense of ease of production of day-to-day talk, with no signs of the grammatical or phonological errors of the early learner, and still not be proficient enough to succeed in school.

With regard to beginning reading, the question of English fluency leads to a dilemma. If we do not opt for teaching the child to read in Ll, either we must wait until the child has developed fluency in English before teaching her to read, thus retarding her academic progress, or we begin teaching the child to read in English immediately. Since the child cannot be asked to read language which she does not understand, the best approach is the language experience approach, in which the child is taught to read the English which she herself has produced. When the first-language option is not available, this is certainly, we believe, the best choice, but it still means that we are holding the child back from the most sophisticated use of literacy skills--reading of truly rich, high-level language, such as can be found in first language literature for youngsters. If we opt for Ll as the child's first reading experience, on the other hand, we find that reading skills transfer easily. As many educators have said--you only learn to read once.

The final assumption underlying the emphasis on learning in a totally L2 environment for LEP students is that there is no connection between what a child

knows in Ll and how quickly she will acquire English. By now, it should be clear that quite the opposite is true. Children who are well-educated in Ll acquire English faster than those who are not. To review the reasons, as alluded to above:

1. If the student already knows content, she is merely applying new names to old concepts--clearly an easier task than learning new concepts and new language at the same time.

2. If her first language has been developed to the point where she functions well in an Ll academic setting, her language learning mechanism is well-developed--she is better-equipped to process new language (Cummins, 1980, 1982; Shuy, 1977).

3. If she already knows how to read, she merely transfers reading skills to a new language--thus allowing her to gain input from the written word in addition to the spoken word from a very early point in her schooling.

To summarize, then, the following are true regarding the schooling of LEP students. (1) More time spent in an English-language environment does not necessarily correlate with quicker and better acquisition of English, particularly the academic aspects of the language. (2) Acquiring English does not simply mean acquiring the basic grammar and pronunciation of the language, but rather the vocabulary, functions, and complex sentence structure of many school domains. (3) Studying academic content in the first language does not detract from the acquisition of the second language; rather, it allows the child to stay at the level of her peers academically, while she is acquiring basic communicative ability in English. (4) In addition, learning academic content in Ll

assures a faster transition to English, because the student is not burdened with trying to acquire English, new content, and literacy skills at the same time. (5) The more highly developed academically and linguistically a child is in her first language, the faster and easier her transition is into mainstream English language schooling, because linguistic, literacy, and cognitive abilities transfer across languages.

Research on Bilingual Education

There has not been an abundance of research on bilingual education, and only in the last few years has there been much which could be considered valid. Most research quoted by opponents of bilingual education has been found to be faulty--based on grossly unequal comparison groups, inadequate sample size, significant differences in teacher qualifications, and inconsistency of evaluative criteria (Troike, 1978; Hernandez-Chavez, 1980).

Furthermore, research based on transition programs (two-year bilingual programs, used as a crutch until the students become 'proficient" in English), cannot be considered a fair test of bilingual education. As we have said, the English that is acquired in two years is only BICS, not CALP. Hernandez-Chavez stated in a response to the Dekanter/Baker Review of bilingual education:

> In general, THE [transitional bilingual education] is neither hide nor hair--ineffective as an English instructional program and incomplete as an academic program. Its faults are that, in its precipitous rush to 'mainstream' pupils, it does not lay a sound enough foundation in English skills before students are transferred and, at the same time, it fails to develop the child's

> Ll and his cognitive abilities through Ll to the full capabilities of that language (Hernandez-Chavex et al, 1980).

Valid research done on true maintenance programs, in which both English and the first language are taught and enhanced, has shown remarkable results. The students consistently score higher in oral English and English reading than LEP children being taught in English only (Cummins, 1981; Hernandez-Chavez et al, 1980; Troike, 1978).

What About Immersion?

Many educators ask about immersion programs (sometimes referred to as sheltered English). These are programs in which teachers are well-trained in the use of ESL methodology for teaching subject matter in a way which makes it comprehensible. This is the approach recently advocated by the U.S. Department of Education, which commissioned a study in 1984 comparing bilingual education to immersion. S.R.A. Technologies found the following after one year of the study: "Limited-English-proficient students in bilingual programs consistently outperformed 'immersion strategy' students in reading, language-arts, and mathematics tests conducted in both English and Spanish" (Crawford, 1986).

Why does a bilingual approach succeed better than an immersion approach? As we discussed above, English-only is holding the child back. No matter how good the ESL program is, we are ignoring the fact that the child has a perfectly good first langlage with which she can learn to her maximum potential.

Immersion has been shown to work in Canada, where students from the dominant Anglophone culture are taught in a second language, French, during the first two years, after which English is introduced.

This, however, cannot be compared to the situation in this country. The Canadian students are continually developing their English--they hear it and see it all around them in their daily lives--in the newspapers, on radio and TV, in the shops as well as in their homes. In addition, the Canadian immersion program is essentially a bilingual program--in which the goal is acquisition and development of a second language and maintenance and development of the first. U.S. immersion programs are detractive--from the beginning, the intention is to do away with the first language as soon as possible.

To summarize, let us turn to a quote by Wong-Fillmore.

> I came to realize that what these LEP children generally get in school does not add up to a real education at all. Much of what they are being taught can be described as 'basic skills' rather than 'content.' Instruction in reading, for example, is mostly focused on developing accuracy in reading rather than on understanding or appreciating textual materials ... It could be argued, I suppose, that language minority students must learn some of these basic skills before they can be taught other things in school ... This view does not recognize some important facts about second language learning. The first is that children have a fundamental need to learn language in the context of meaningful communication ... Some children have a greater need than others for meaningful content and activities, and even then, some children, by virtue of their personalities, social and learning styles, and prior experience, need more time than others to hear and use a new language in order to learn it ... This, then, is the dilemma for the learner

> and the school. Should instruction in content be delayed until children acquire the English language skills to handle it? Or, should children be given content, and then taught the skills that are needed to deal with this content? And this is the rationale for bilingual education. It could make curricular content available to LEP students even while they are acquiring basic English language skills (Wong-Fillmore, 1986).

Cooperative Learning

Edward De Avila and Shawn Duncan, with Cecilia Navarrete, have developed a set of materials for teaching science and math to elementary students in cooperative learning groups. The program was designed to be bilingual--all written work describing the results of the experiments and activities is to be done in English and Spanish (regardless of whether the children start out as monolingual in one or the other language). (The materials can, by the way, be used solely in English.) Interestingly, at the conclusion of the initial research on this project, the children who had been taught through Finding out/ Descubrimiento, as the program is called, had achieved higher, not only in math skills, but also in language arts skills than the control group--a bilingual program which was not using cooperative learning (De Avila et al, 1986).

Cooperative learning is a very important approach for the teaching of LEP students. This is true in the mainstream classroom, in the ESL classroom, and in the bilingual classroom as well.

Cooperative learning is not simply putting students together in groups to accomplish their regular class work. It involves highly structured activities

in which students must, by the way the activity is organized, interact with one another in order to accomplish a task. There are many types of cooperative learning activities. They have the following characteristics in common:

1. Each student has an individual responsibility.

2. The group has a joint task.

3. The final product can only be accomplished if there is positive interaction among the participants.

Activities can run from quite simple to very complex. A simple activity might look like this: Everyone in the group is to read a story; if some children are behind in literacy skills, the others read the story out loud while they follow along, each child is then to write three words that he thinks tell something important about the story; students are to share their words with each other and, as a group, agree upon three words.

Another simple activity involves phonics awareness. Each group is provided with a set of magazines. Each child is to find pictures of words that being with a letter--M, for example. The child must check with all others in the group about each picture: I think this picture starts with M--do you agree? (This is taken from Clark and Condit in Johnson and Johnson, 1984.) The student must get the agreement of everyone in the group before ctiting out the picture and adding it to a group collage.

Much more sophisticated activities can be of a jigsaw type. Each student is furnished with a different piece of information, through his own research, for example, or directly from the teacher in the form of a reading assignment. Students must

share the information in some way in order to accomplish a joint task, such as filling out a grid, preparing a group report, preparing for a test, or drawing a mural.

We can look at the benefits of cooperative learning for the LEP student from a number of perspectives. We will consider, here, the questions of language acquisition, social development, and cognitive/academic growth.

Language Acquisition

Krashen and Terrell (1983) discuss five concepts related to successful second language acquisition.

(1) The affective filter. Students need a low affective filter--such that they feel comfortable and unthreatened.

(2) The monitor. Language acquirers need a balanced monitor--that is, a production-monitoring ability which does not interefer with natural speech production but can be brought into play when necessary, such as for writing.

(3) Input. Students need to hear/read the new language in the form of comprehensible input--at a level slightly more complex than what they can produce in a context which makes it understandable.

(4) Natural order. Students acquire the structure of a language in a somewhat predictable order regardless of how they are "taught..

(5) Acquisition versus learning. Talking about the language produces "learning' (knowing about the language), while providing comprehensible input allows for unconscious acquisition--the ability to use the language.

As many ESL/EFL instructors have learned, allowing students to work together in groups (assuming that they are structured such that everyone must participate in some way) creates an environment which provides for the above language learning requirements. Without the teacher--the authority--attending to each utterance, students are free to use the language to communicate and take risks in a nonthreatening atmosphere. Because they are focusing on the activity, rather than on language, the monitor is not likely to come into play. Students are assured comprehensible input, as their companions will be intent on making themselves understood in order to accomplish the task. Since the activities are structured to ensure real communicative language, students are free to produce at the level for which they are naturally ready rather than forcing structures they are not yet ready to acquire. In short, students are being provided with the best environment possible within a classroom setting which allows for acquisition rather than conscious learning.

ESL/EFL teachers often ask two questions with regard to cooperative learning. The first is, won't the students acquire bad habits from hearing incorrect English from their peers? The question of the influence on learners of LEP peer language has been dealt with elsewhere. The conclusion by researchers, as well as countless teachers who have used groupwork, is that students do not produce a lower quality of English as a result of group work. On the contrary, research done on adults found that not only do students produce no more errors when working with other learners than when with native speakers, but also they produce more complex gentences in such situations (Long and Porter, 1985).

The second question raised by ESL/EFL teachers regards the use of the first language in groups where the students have that language in common. Should the first language be allowed? Here, it is important

for teachers to be very clear on their goals. If the main purpose of an activity is to teach a specific concept (for example, how to work a math problem or the sequence of events in a history lesson) , then it does not matter which language the information is first learned in (for all the reasons discussed under bilingual education).

If, on the other hand, the goal is the language--to be able to explain the steps of a math problem using appropriate English math terms, for example, or to know the terminology and names involved in the sequence of events in that history lesson--then one must structure the activity to ensure that the goal will be met. Let us take the math problem. A teacher might say: You have fifteen minutes to practice telling each other how to work the math problem. At the end of that time, I will call on one student from each group to recite. If the student answers correctly, the entire group gets credit. The students in the group are thus motivated to drill each other in the language as well as the computation steps.

Social Development

As every ESL/EFL teacher knows, one of the most important aspects of a second language is the social function--how to use language appropriately and politely within the norms of the new culture. Cooperative learning is an excellent vehicle for ensuring that students will acquire the behavior which enhances communication in English. In the Johnson and Johnson (1984) model of cooperative learning, as much emphasis is put on the social side of the activity as on the academic side. In addition to a cognitive or skill-oriented goal, each lesson includes a social goal. At the earlier stages, students might simply be asked to practice politely helping each other to stay on task. There might be a discussion before the

activity of the proper language to use. At more sophisticated stages, students might focus on proper language for expressing disagreement or how to paraphrase what another has said. Structuring Cooperative Learning: Lesson Plans for Teachers (Johnson and Johnson, 1984) contains lesson plans from kindergarten through high school which include sample checklists on the interaction skills which are appropriate to different ages. These social goals are necessary as much in the mainstream classroom as in the ESL classroom.

In the mainstream classroom, there is an additional benefit to cooperative learning--social acceptance. Any of us who has taught LEP children in the public schools knows how isolated children can feel. Not only are they unfamiliar with the school situation, and unable to chat naturally with their classmates, but they are unable to perform successfully in the academic area. Cooperative learning counteracts the feelings of alienation that can result. In fact, it *was* this aspect of cooperative learning that was the prime motivator for Johnson and Johnson's advocacy of cooperative learning (Johnson, David et al, 1984). Bussed minority students, they found, were now in classrooms where they were continually being compared to middle-class students who were more successful. Feelings of isolation were intensified. In cooperative learning, each student's input was honored, and because the setting allowed students to discover one another's strengths, respect developed for each student and self-esteem was assured.

Cognitive/Academic Growth

Finally, let us look at the academic advantages of cooperative learning. There has been extensive research on this approach. In all cases, students have performed the same or better than in individual or

competitive (bell-curve) learning situations (Kagan, 1986).

In general, the more the activity involves high level cognitive thinking, the more the students improve. This simply fits what educators are saying: students do not need to be drilled and practiced on the basics--they need to be engaged in the thinking process--the underpinning of all language and communication (Nummela et al, 1986; Paul, 1984).

Why does cooperative learning create the right atmosphere for high level thinking? How is it that cooperative learning is so effective in helping students achieve CALF? Why do all students, from the so-called talented and gifted to the at-risk, to mentally and physically handicapped benefit academically from cooperative learning? First, by having to interact with others, defend their views, repeat information, teach others, they are manipulating the material in new ways. To get their point across, they may have to reword their explanations, draw pictures, demonstrate step-by-step, verbalize ideas they normally would just perform (such as working a math problem). They are integrating the concepts at a deeper level than one does when working in isolation.

Second, if a student does not understand something, it is the responsibility of the rest of the group to help her understand. This is assured by the grading process (in mainstream classrooms) and also by the sheer satisfaction that students eventually discover from helping one another. Thus a student who normally would have to wait for help from the teacher (help which may or may not come-given demands on teachers' time) receives immediate assistance and feedback.

Finally, the students are being challenged in ways that other classroom settings never allow. We have found that in many mainstream classrooms,

students are bored and/or frustrated. Either the tasks they are asked to perform are repetitive and too simple, or they are too difficult. The interaction that is involved in properly constructed cooperative learning activities ensures that even a fairly unimaginitive assignment becomes interesting. A spelling test, for example, can be assigned to a group. Students are responsible for helping each other prepare for a spelling/vocabulary test. In order for everyone to get an A, they must all get, let us say, 90% correct. (Where there are great discrepancies in ability level, varying percentages can be assigned.) It is delightful to watch how creative students can be in finding ways to help each other remember spellings and meanings. After the test, the teacher leads a discussion about the memorizing techniques. The result is far richer than the acquisition of a few new words. The students have (a) expanded their memorizing skills; (b) used language to talk about language; and, (c) expanded their cognitive awareness. That is, they have learned that there are different ways to learn and these ways have names and can be talked about.

Conclusion

In advocating bilingual education and cooperative learning for the education of our limited English proficient students, we submit that from the beginning our goal for them, as our goal for our native English-speaking student, is not that they simply speak and understand English, but that they also be allowed to acquire the highest level of knowledge and thinking skills possible, and that they be able to use language in its widest and most sophisticated applications. We feel that this goal is best achieved by making optimal use of their natural learning tools--their first language and their ability and desire to communicate with others.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Bilingual programs always involve both English and the student's first language. There are no programs that we know of, either through first-hand experience or through literature on the subject, which involve only the first language (Cardenas, 1986; Halcon, 1983).

[2] This assumes that the ESL class involves the full range of language and skills-development activities which we will be alluding to throughout the text.

[3] For an excellent treatment of the reasons for poor achievement rates among certain ethnic minority groups, see Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) and Heath (1986).

[4] Obviously, immersion is quite the appropriate approach for the English component of a bilingual program. This is where the ESL specialist makes the unique contribution to the second language growth of the LEP student.

[5] This activity is similar to those found in the early grades activities in a splendid language arts series called Success in Reading and Writing (Adams et al, 1982). This series, which involves only a teacher's manual at each grade level, has been highly effective for use with LEP students.

[6] Obviously, in an ESL classroom, as opposed to a mainstream classroom where acquirers of English interact with native speakers, it is the teacher who must provide all of the native speaker input. The ESL teacher must be sure to precede any small-group activity with enough new language to ensure that the vocabulary and structures needed for the activity have been made available to the students.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

WHAT IS A VOCABULARY ITEM?

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James R. Nattinger in his recent article, LEXICAL PHRASES, FUNCTIONS AND VOCABULARY ACQUISITION refers rather vaguely to 'most linguistic theory,' and explains further.

> Linguistic theory accounts for structure in minimal and non-redundant terms, thus making the most efficient (and desirable) description of language ... Descriptions of linguistic performance, however, seem to require different measures of economy ... Many theories of language performance thus suggest that vocabulary is stored redundantly, not only in individual morphemes, but also as parts of phrases, or even in longer memorized chunks of speech, and that it is oftentimes retrieved from memory as these preassembled chunks (THE ORTESOL JOURNAL, Volume 7, 1986, p. 2).

This is certainly an accurate representation of much in linguistic theory, and illustrates a valid weakness not only in the description of English but in linguistic theory generally. The ESL teacher must deal with many sequences of morphemes which form phrases, especially in English, as if they were words.

If we look back at linguistic research from the time of Aristotle up to the present, we find that well over 90% of all linguistic studies have been made on highly inflective languages, that is, languages in which the vast majority of the grammar is carried by affixes--languages such as Latin, Russian, Greek, etc. Thus the theoretical approach of all

linguistic science is totally dominated by the nature of highly inflective languages. The problem is that English has virtually no inflection in it at all. Even such unquestionable grammatical features as the 'past tense' turn out, on careful study, not to follow any of the usual definitions of inflection at all. The past tense marker in English is not only not an inflection, it is a past tense only when the verb is the 'predicate word' in a clause. Several samples of published English literature, each consisting of several thousand words, written by authors such as Pearl S. Buck, demonstrated conclusively that the so-called past tense inflection symbolized past time less than 50% of the time.

What, then, is the -ed suffix on regular verbs, and its equivalent forms in irregular verbs, in English, if it is not a past tense inflection? It is a participial derivative. It is absolutely not an inflection because, by definition, inflections do not change the syntactic capabilities of a morpheme to which they are attached. They merely add an element of meaning, such as, plurality. However, once the -ed is suffixed to a word it can no longer perform nominal functions, e.g., I can take a walk and I walk home, wherein walk performs a nominal function in the first sentence and a verbal function in the second. Once the -ed is affixed, we have walked, which can now perform adjectival functions (which walk cannot) and verbal functions, but it cannot perform nominal functions, (which walk can). We see, then, that once the -ed is suffixed, we have a 'different part of speech" if you will, and this is, by any traditional definition of the terms, derivation, not inflection.

What is the purpose of the paragraph above? It is an attempt to show that English has in its structure virtually no inflection. It is an isolating language. This is, of course, nothing new. All linguists agree with this statement, but what I have

suggested, in several publications over the past thirty years, is that one cannot utilize either traditional grammar or traditional linguistic theory to explain and describe English as a functioning system, because traditional grammar is based on the structure of Latin and Greek and traditional linguistic theory is based on a study of inflective, not isolating, languages. There has been no real attempt among linguists to develop a theory for handling isolating languages. For a much fuller explanation of this problem, cf. Joe E. Pierce, A REVOLUTION IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR published by Norwood Editions (1985).

Isolating languages are, by their very nature, totally different from inflective languages, and this must be reflected in both the preparation of teaching materials and the teaching of such languages. A pure isolating language would be one in which each "word' consisted of 'one morpheme.' The languages which are nearest to pure isolating are the Sino-Tibetian languages, but English is well over 80% isolating. This means that about 80% of the grammar is carried through phrasal structures, which function as syntactic units and must be taught as if they were 'words". It seems that all of the recent linguistic studies, those cited by Dr. Nattinger and several others, reflect a grudging realization that at least some phrasal structures must be treated as if they were words. However, there does not appear to be an understanding of the broader theoretical implications of such a fact.

To illustrate the difference between a highly inflective language and one that is isolating, consider the following examples from Turkish. Turkish is listed as an agglutinative language, which it is, but all agglutinative languages are also highly inflective, so that traditional linguistic theory works quite well for agglutinative languages, but it does not work at all for isolating languages.

English	Turkish
In the house.	Evinde.
My school.	Okulum.
He is running.	Kosiyor.
At the corner.	Kosedeki.
I would have him close it.	Kopartecektim.

Note simply that each Turkish word has an equivalent in English which is a sequence of from one to seven words.

Presumably, inside the Turkish brain the base forms, such as, ev meaning house, okul meaning school, etc., are stored in one compartment and the affixes in another. Along with the affixes are stored a set of rules for generating meaningful words in the language by sequencing base forms and their suffixes. In English, the so-called "lexical" forms are probably stored in the same *way* as the Turkish bases, but since there are very, very few affixes in the language, if we were limited to symbolizing concepts with these, it would be almost impossible to say very much. Therefore inside the brain of an English speaker the grammatical forms, such as, in, at, from, is, be, do, am, along, etc., which are functionally equivalent with the Turkish affixes, are stored, just as the suffixes are in Turkish, along with rules for generating a number of phrase types, and the phrases in English function much the same as words do in Turkish.

Few people who deal with English appear to have even the foggiest understanding of the difference between inflection and derivation. Yet this is critical to an understanding of how to teach any given language. This is important because in English much of what is treated, even by linguists, as syntax is actually derivation, and each derived form has a unique meaning and must be taught separately as if it were a vocabulary item. In many classrooms the teachers assume that the student can learn the words, learn the

rules, and then he can figure out what the sequences mean, and he cannot unless the sequencing is equivalent with inflection. For example, in the house is exactly equivalent with the Turkish inflected form Evinde. The student can understand this without being taught the phrase as a separate entity. However, he cannot understand to wake ue in the same manner, because this represents a derived verb-noun in English.

A sequence of a stem and any number of inflective endings has the meaning of all of the morphemes added together. From the examples above in Turkish, the sequence Evinde consists of three morphemes, the stem meaning house or structure, the second meaning "a specific ," (the blank can be filled with whatever specific noun you are talking about), and the final suffix, meaning 'in the vicinity of.' The two suffixes can be affixed to any noun in the language and when they are, they will always mean in, at or on (in the vicinity of) a specific one of those nouns, i.e., a specific house, dog, horse, or whatever.

A sequence of a stem and a derivative affix has a meaning which is often totally unrelated to any meaning inherent in either morpheme. Consider the following English-Turkish pairs.

English	Turkish
Eye.	Goz.
Glasses.	Gozluk.
Front.	On.
Apron.	Onluk.

The suffix '-luk" in Turkish means only 'noun formative,' because when it is suffixed to a noun, it creates a new noun. Note the English equivalences. The point here is that through no type of logic can one derive the meaning of the derived forms from the sequence of stem plus affix. This is typical of

derived forms. Sometimes there is some connection, but for the most part any student of a language must learn derived forms as separate and distinct vocabulary items whether they be phrases or words. There is no trouble with this in Turkish, because each form is a word, but when people study English, the teachers often assume that the student can figure out the meaning of a phrase, because he knows the words in the sequences--and he cannot.

Why can't he?

Because in isolating languages derivation is a sequence of 'words' which form particular kinds of phrases, and not sequences of morphemes which form words.

To take two examples from Dr. Nattinger's paper, i.e., to Elm, and to t le with, we find that the sequence 221 ta is related with in exactly the same way as the word for eye, i.e., goz, is related to the word for glasses, i.e., gozluk, in Turkish, or perhaps even less so. The sequence put up can only be treated as a vocabulary unit in English and taught independently of both to aat and to LIE with.

Derivation is a process extant in all languages. In all languages the derivative affixes have meanings such as, 'noun formative', "verb formative', 'adverb formative', etc. All of the two and three part verbs in English are a part of an extremely elaborate system of derivation in this language. Hence they must never be treated in a classroom as if the student could logically draw out the meaning. He must be taught each of these separately as a vocabulary item. This is true because if you look at other languages you will find that the equivalent for each two or three part verb is virtually always a single word.

The system referred to above is quite different from sequences such as kick the bucket, which is a

true idiom, that is, a sequence of words with a meaning all its own. The system of derivation mentioned in the paragraph above is a part of an elaborate and complex system of derivation which can be utilized at any time by speakers of the language to create new words. The student of English needs to learn the system, because it is important that he be able to recognize when a sequence is a derived form and when it is not, because in many sentences one can only segment the phrases properly if he understands the system, e.g., he came to. and he came to eat, especially when these are embedded in longer sentences. The form cited in this paragraph, kick the bucket, is unique and is not a part of English structure at all. However, so far as teaching is concerned, it too must be taught as a vocabulary item, because the meaning of the whole is not derivable from the sum of its parts, but there is no system involved that must be taught.

The purpose of this brief article was to show not only that prepackaging is much more widespread than many scholars and teachers realize, but to give at least some understanding of the nature of part of the process of prepackaging and why it exists. There are at least two different types of prepackaging. One type results from the systematic storing of functional units, such as, two and three part verbs. The other consists of idioms which have no structure but which are simply individual utterances which have gained temporary and perhaps widespread popularity. Since this is a very short article, it is only possible to whet your interest in a more and better theory than either that proposed by traditional grammarians or the general traditional linguist, either structural or transformational, for the description of English, because before we know what to teach, and call English, we need to know how the system works.

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DOWN WITH COMPETENCE, BY AND LARGE:
Reply to Pierce

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Professor Pierce seems to disagree with some aspects of my article, but after reading his comments for the third time, I am not certain as to exactly which. I an certain that he misunderstands me, however. Pierce argues for a linguistic theory whose primary purpose is to describe the °extremely elaborate system of derivation* in English, because, among other things, "before we know what to teach, and call English, we need to know how the system works." In arguing this way, Pierce does just what I suggested not doing: he confuses theories of language competence with theories of language performance, and assumes that the best theoretical description of competence will necessarily be the best description for teaching. Certainly descriptions of competence exert a powerful influence on teaching methods and continue to shape classroom activity, for many teachers feel that the subject of language teaching is indeed this abstract language 'competence', and they look to theoretical descriptions of it for ideas about what to teach. But as I tried to show, the goal of language teaching is really not to teach abstract rules of competence, but to get students to use language, to get them to comprehend and produce language successfully; and just teaching the underlying system of a language is no guarantee that students will learn to use that langauge. The precise relationship between the theoretical competence of an idealized speaker-hearer and the actual language performance of a specific human being is a highly tenuous matter, as most linguists will admit. For these reasons, it would be better for teachers to look toward theories of language use, at descriptions of language performance rather than those of language

competence, for more immediately relevant ideas about how best to present language in a classroom. It is more advantageous that we understand how language is actually put to use than how its underlying structure can be most efficiently described.

The performance grammar I suggested was one based on research which looks at the role of 'prefabricated' language in language acquisition. This research shows that many learners pass through a stage in which they use a large number of unanalyzed chunks of language in certain predictable social contexts. Learners use these prefabricated chunks not only as memorized formulae but also as raw material for later segmentation and analysis as they develop regular rules of syntax. Pierce claims that there are 'at least two different types of prepackaging"--"functional units, such as two and three part verbs,• and "idioms which have no structure"--thus implying that all prefabricated language consists of strings of words that are cemented together and never vary. He then opposes these unvarying units to the language 'system' which, he *says,* consists of the regular, generative rules of syntax. In other words, Pierce insists on maintaining the traditional distinction between morphology and syntax. When we look at language performance, however, we cannot find such an easy and obvious distinction between morphology and syntax. We instead find language operating on a principle of gradience, with completely frozen forms at one end of a continuum and freely combined forms at the other, with forms of varying degrees of compositionality in between. As Bolinger has said, "idioms, tightly bound phrases, shade away gradually into free forms through Firthian collocations, cliches, and illocutionary formulae (Bolinger 1976:11)." For example, 'by and large' is a completely frozen form which permits no variation; 'down with the king', 'a year ago', and 'the more, the better' are phrases which permit a little internal variation; and phrases like 'if I X, then I Y'--those I

call 'Sentence Builders', 'Situational Utterances', and 'Deictic Locutions'--can vary enormously in specific lexicon. If language is looked at this way, I claimed that "any sharp distinction between vocabulary and syntax collapses into a dynamic and fluid continuum, varying from the completely fixed to the completely original, and then suggested how such a view might guide teaching methods. I see no reason for changing my mind.

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A MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH TO A THEMATICALLY-BASED CURRICULUM

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What is a Thematically-Based Curriculum?

A thematically-based curriculum follows a specific theme over a period of time. It consists of series of lessons which uses a variety of media leading to the development of a body of knowledge.

Why Use a Thematic Approach?

A thematic approach develops basic vocabulary and concepts. It can be a vehicle for exploring American culture as well as others. As it draws from students' experiences, it generates idea-sharing and discussion. Students learn language within a comprehensible context and therefore, they are more likely to use the language in appropriate settings.

How Can You Use a Thematic Approach?

First, assess which materials are readily available and then select a theme. Develop your information base with a variety of reading, listening, discussion, and viewing materials. The following outline describes the suggested content in creating thematically-based curriculum on working. Other possible themes are marriage and family, aging, social problems, education, crime and punishment, politics, etc.

TIME - THE WORLD OF WORK

I. Developing an Information Base

A. Reading

1. Parade Magazine, "What People Earn'
2. Contact USA, 'Taxes, Taxes, Taxes*
3. Reading Help Wanted Ads
4. A General Work Vocabulary, A Conversation Book II, "Employment"
5. Idioms, ,Take it Easy, "work"
6. Practical English Book II, pp. 163-165.

B. Listening

1. Listening In and Speaking Out, 'Working"
2. Pinch and Ouch, 'Interview'
3. Song: Nine to Five

C. Viewing

1. Film Viewing of "Nine to Five"
   a. Vocabulary Preview
   b. Film Viewing
   c. Post-Viewing Follow-up

      1. Sequencing Events
      2. Comprehension Questions
      3. Discussion Questions
         a. Feelings and Reactions
         b. Personal Experiences
      4. Explaining Different Sides of the Issue

D. Second Viewing

1. Vocabulary Review in Context
2. Cloze Test of Particular Segment
3. Problem-Solving

E. Grammar

1. Conditionals
   a. What would you do if you were Violet?
   b. What would you have done if you had been Mr. Hart?

2. Modals
   a. should have
      I think Mr. Hart should have ...
   b. could have
   c. would have
   d. must have

F. Role-Playing

1. Reenactment of Specific Movie Scenes

II. Applying Concepts

A. Writing
   1. The Writing Process, 'The Best Candidate for the Job"
   2. Resume Writing
   3. Writing Letters of Reference
   4. Filling out Applications

B. Listening
   1. Vocational Videotapes

C. Discussing
   1. It's Time to Talk, 'I'd like to be a

   2. It's Time to Talk, "Liberated Women'
   3. It's Time to Talk, •Earning Money"
   4. Personal Career Choices
   5. Comparing Career Opportunities Between Men and Women
   6. Job Interviews

D. Problem-Solving
   1. React-Interact, 'A Once-In-A-Lifetime-Opportunity'
   2. React-Interact, "The Ideal Secretary'
   3. React-Interact, 'Business Among Friends'
   4. React-Interact, 'Careers'

E. Using Outside Resources
   1. Visiting Unemployment Office
   2. Visiting Employment Agencies
   3. Interacting With Outsiders
      a. Interviewing Native Speakers Related to their Career Choices
      b. Creating/Taking a Survey
      c. Interviewing an Employer

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