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Fluency and Accuracy
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Fluency and Accuracy

Toward Balance in Language Teaching and Learning

Hector Hammerly

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To the memory of
Tai Whan Kim
(19331990)
friend, colleague, scholar

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Preface

The worthy aim of getting language students to communicate (rather than, for example, just develop knowledge *about* the language) has unfortunately often been carried to the extreme of promoting communication at the expense of language structure. One result is that most students emerge from lengthy language programs with deeply ingrained and very faulty interlanguages.

This need not be so. Neither accuracy nor fluency has to be sacrificed for the sake of the other.

My own experience as a classroom language learner has convinced me that many methods are ineffective; others in the field of language teaching seem to have reached the same conclusion. Yet it's not widely known that certain language programs *have* been very successful in producing communicatively competent graduates without neglecting linguistic accuracy.

The purpose of this book is to outline how students can be helped to attain reasonable fluency *and* a high level of accuracy within second language programs. I am sure this is the goal of most language teachers and students. Students want to learn the language *well*, not just learn to 'survive' in it.

In education, we want to empower our students by giving them a solid foundation that enables them to carry on as lifelong learners without burdening them with mislearned things to be unlearned. In language teaching specifically, empowerment means imparting basic mastery of the language so that program graduates can learn further on their own without being handicapped by faulty linguistic habits. Encouraging students to use the language to communicate without regard to its structure is not empowering them it is disabling them, and likely permanently so.

How we should teach any subject in the curriculum depends largely on the nature of the subject *what* we teach plus our goals about it. What language teachers need to teach is a *language* hard as some find to accept this. And, of course, out goal is imparting *second language competence*: the ability to use a second language accurately to communicate reasonably fluently in culturally appropriate ways. Rapid 'tourist' English, French, or Japanese are not, strictly

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speaking, languages but pidgins, so they are not defensible goals for, or outcomes of, language programs.

Native-like use of a second language (our concept of 'perfection') is often unattainable, but excellence isn't. When excellence is the standard, it can be attained by some, and sometimes even by many. Low expectations and no standards, on the other hand, make excellent results either rare or impossible.

Perfection is useful as an *ideal*, as long as teachers and students keep in mind that that's what it is an ideal that offers a sense of direction and a source of motivation. As idealistic as aiming for Alpha Centauri (the nearest star) may seem, it might possibly get us there, or to Mars it has already gotten us to the moon. Students can't attain excellence if we don't even give them a chance to attempt it and this, sad to say, is too common in language programs.

When excellence is not stressed in the field of languages, when students are simply encouraged to communicate freely without regard to language structure, they may enjoy the immediate gratification and may even feel exhilarated about it. But when graduates of such programs realize that their output is quite ungrammatical (and impervious to so-called 'finishing touches'), what they feel is not self-esteem, positive attitudes, and motivation but terminal discouragement that leads them to avoid using the language. To prevent this, and to outline a 'better way', is the primary aim of this book.

Though wide in scope, a book this size cannot cover more than a few topics in detail. I hope, however, that it says enough about enough to generate thoughtful action.

Acknowledgments

1
Second Language Acquisition Through Classroom Communication/Interaction (SLACC/I) and Linguistic Accuracy 1

Katie is eighteen years old. She has been in a French immersion program for thirteen years. She can fluently put most of her ideas across, in simple sentences, using mostly French words. So can her classmates. But they say such things as *Nous était fatigué*, *Paul a tombé de son bicyclette*, *J'ai un classe maint'nant* and *Je aller dans le ville demain*. This may look and sound like French, but one can see that something is wrong here each of these sentences contains one or more basic grammatical errors.

Of all the approaches to language teaching used to date, the communicative approach has clearly stimulated student fluency best.2 Students learn primarily what is stressed. Therefore when communication is emphasized throughout a language program, it is not surprizing that students learn to convey most of their feelings and ideas. This stress on communication is commendable, because it brought a missing element into many language classes.

Students taught by the grammar-translation method a tradition that is still alive today, in many places developed an intellectual understanding of language structure and maybe the ability to read, but instead of gaining oral fluency they suffered from what could be described as second language mutism. On the other hand, the structural approach, *when* combined with graded communicative activities, produced good results. But in most schools it soon degenerated into a mechanical routine that turned out linguistic parrots unable to transfer their knowledge to real communicative situations.

Second language acquisition (SLA) specialists state that students in communicative classrooms can learn the language quite well, not just acquire the

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ability to somehow put their ideas across. Proponents of the communicative acquisitionist naturalistic (CAN) 'megatheory' of language instruction a group of mutually supportive theories hold that, through classroom interaction, second (or foreign) 3 language learners develop better and better control of the structure of the language, the way young children do with their mother tongue. They predict that the communicative approach should produce students who are not only fluent but also, in the long run, linguistically competent and accurate, for errors are supposed to disappear gradually through the 'negotiation of meaning' that takes place when the language is used.4

To validate theories, we test whether or not what they predict happens. For theories, facts are the litmus test. It is crucial, therefore, to determine whether the CAN megatheory produces the outcome it predicts. If the second-language-acquisition-through-classroom-communication/interaction (SLACC/I) approach does indeed yield linguistic competence and accuracy (or a solid foundation for their further development) at the end of language programs, we must conclude that the CAN megatheory is correct and that SLA theory can be applied, without major modifications, to language classrooms. But if we determine that SLACC/I does not result in accurate linguistic performance, that it yields deeply embedded faulty linguistic habits instead, this should have important practical consequences for language teaching.

While many studies have been conducted on the communicative and psychological aspects of the SLACC/I approach, there have been apparently very few studies that carefully analyze the *linguistic* output of students in communicative/interactive programs or that describe in detail the types and frequency of errors such students make. This scarcity of evidence seems hard to explain. After all, one would think that mastery of the language would be the primary objective of any serious *language* program. One is also entitled to expect that the ability to survive in an error-laden interlanguage should not be considered a valid terminal goal for second language programs. I am not aware, however, of a single study reporting excellent fluent *and* accurate speaking (or writing) skills as a result of any SLACC/I program. But we can determine the linguistic effectiveness of SLACC/I and the validity of the CAN megatheory by considering the linguistic results of 'immersion' programs.5

Immersion programs are, in fact, the ideal testing ground for, and the litmus test of, CAN/SLACC/I, as noted in a recent article (Hammerly, 1987a). Where else could SLACC/I teachers expose learners to 13 years of 'comprehensible input'? This is the best chance a communicative/interactive method will ever have to prove its effectiveness. If students do not develop linguistic accuracy through such long-term communicative/interactive

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classroom exposure to a second language, how could they do so in other, far more limited language programs?

Leaders of the SLA movement have said that the immersion approach is in harmony with their theories. They have cited the 'great success' of immersion as evidence of the validity of those theories. Advocates of the immersion approach, in turn, have propped their views with those of leading SLA theorists. This mutual support relationship has existed for years and has been seen often in publications, presentations at conferences, and elsewhere.

Immersion has been practiced for two decades in Canada with French, and more recently in the United States, particularly with Spanish. The immersion literature is full of references to the success of this approach; comments about any linguistic problems characterize them as minor and easily remedied. Yet it isn't easy to determine from the professional literature just how linguistically successful the immersion approach is, even though for years immersion advocates have had access to interview data, etc. and plentiful opportunity to publish such evidence. I have looked in vain for articles by pro-immersion scholars in which *all* the facts, uncolored and unvarnished, are presented.

No less an SLA figure than Stephen Krashen has written that the immersion approach 'may be the most successful programme ever recorded in the professional language-teaching literature' (Krashen, 1984: 61). He also said that 'no programme, to my knowledge, has done as well' (*ibid.*).

To try to settle the question of the validity of SLACC/I, let us consider very briefly six studies that analyze the errors of Canadian French immersion students.

(1) In 1976 Irène Spilka published an analysis of the retelling of stories in French by children in Grades 5 and 6 from the original and much praised St. Lambert, Montreal early immersion classes. She compared their speech with the linguistic performance of the same classes in Grades 1 to 4 and with that of francophone children the same age. Spilka found that 52.2% of the sentences produced by Grade 6 immersion students were incorrect, with one or more grammatical or vocabulary errors each. In contrast, francophone children at the same grade level produced less than 7% incorrect sentences. Spilka concluded that there was no apparent progress in the grammaticality of the speech of immersion pupils from Grade 1 through Grade 6.

(2) In 1980 Ellen Adiv reported on 114 interviews with children in the first three grades of two immersion programs, one French and the other French and Hebrew. She found that in both programs 'there was little progress

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towards mastery of the grammatical features, other than the unmarked ones' (Adiv, 1980: 150). Adiv concluded that the children engaged in grammatical simplification because they felt pressured to communicate freely.

(3) In 1983 Rosanna Gustafson completed a research project in which she interviewed above-average, average, and below-average early French immersion students in Grades 2, 4, and 6. She found no evidence of linguistic progress; on the contrary, there even seemed to be some grammatical deterioration in their speech.

(4) Also in 1983, Mabel Tatto studied Grade 11 students who had spent 5,300 hours in an early French immersion program. She found that their written French grammar was not significantly better than that of students with less than 500 hours in regular French classes.

(5) In 1985 Catherine Pawley published an article that included the results of Foreign Service Institute-type interviews given to 41 'primary-entry' French immersion and 56 'late-entry' French immersion students in Grade 11. She found the level of proficiency of the majority of these students to be between 2 and 2+ (out of 5), or lower. This is quite a low rating, considering the great amount of exposure to French involved. At the Foreign Service Institute, in the early 1960s, many well motivated young adults reached the higher 2+/3 level of proficiency in French after four to six *months* of instruction.

(6) In 1986 Micheline Pellerin and I published the results of interviews with six Grade 12 volunteers from two highly respected immersion programs (Pellerin and Hammerly, 1986). 6 These students had had about 7,000 hours of instruction in French beginning in Kindergarten or Grade 1. Had their errors disappeared, as predicted by CAN/SLACC/I/'Immersion' advocates? We found that nearly 54% of the simple sentences they produced contained one or more grammatical or vocabulary errors (we counted as errors only what no French speaker would say, discounting colloquialisms, false starts, self-corrected errors, and so forth). Many of the errors these young people made were of the most basic kind: verbs with wrong endings and tenses, missing or incorrect auxiliaries, and even infinitives instead of conjugated forms; wrong or omitted prepositions; frequent errors in gender, even with very common nouns; and so on. Many of the errors showed the influence of English, the native language of the learners. These young people spoke very confidently and rapidly, but it wasn't French they were speaking; it was what I have called 'Frenglish' a new structural mixture of French and English.

The above six studies, though largely ignored by advocates of immersion in Canada and the United States and by CAN/SLACC/I leaders in both countries, clearly show that the immersion approach does not result in basic linguistic

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accuracy, even after many years. These studies indicate that an error-laden classroom pidgin becomes established as early as Grade 2 or 3 because students are under pressure to communicate and are encouraged to do so regardless of grammar. The next nine or ten years serve primarily to expand vocabulary and increase fluency, thus consolidating Frenglish. Except for minor improvements in some areas, linguistic errors do not disappear and there may even be some linguistic deterioration. This classroom pidgin seems to stay essentially the same through the years. Further, it exhibits all the characteristics of a *terminal* faulty (2/2+) interlanguage, in the sense so well described by Higgs and Clifford (1982). This means that after many years using Frenglish, it would be extremely difficult for immersion graduates to upgrade it to correct French; even prolonged residence in Quebec or France might not help. The same is true of the 'Spanglish' Spanish immersion pupils learn or of any other such classroom linguistic hybrid.

Should you think I am overstating the case, please consider the following examples of errors made by French immersion students after nearly 13 years of SLACC/I (from Pellerin and Hammerly, 1986):

Verbs: **nous était* (like saying, in English, 'we was'), **nous écrivons* for *nous écrivions* (wrong tense), and **je aller* (either infinitive for conjugated verb, like saying *'I to go', or missing auxiliary, like saying *'I gone').

Prepositions: **née dans New Westminster* (as incorrect as saying *'born at New Westminster' in everyday English), **Il écoute la radio pour quinze minutes* (like saying *'He listens to the radio during fifteen minutes'), and many omissions.

Gender: **un classe*, **la mot*, **la examen*, **le communication*, **le grammaire*, **la gouvernement*, etc.

Spanish 'immersion' produces similar results. Consider, for example, that after *four years* of Spanish immersion, pupils say such things as **(yo) puedes* for 'puedo', **la pollo*, **el comida*, and so on. This is not Spanish, as anyone with even minimal knowledge of the language knows. Students in systematic Spanish programs would learn to apply these basic noun gender and present indicative verb ending rules correctly in a matter of a few *hours*. The above examples were taken from Cohen (1976). As far as I can tell, no major US journal in this field has published linguistic results of Spanish immersion programs in 13 years [!]. It seems that in the United States, too, the politics of 'bilingualism' is more important than the actual results of language learning programs.

'Immersion' is politically very successful in Canada. Most Canadian parents are 'sold' on it, as they think it turns their children into bilinguals with better job opportunities, and so on. The number of Canadian children in French immersion programs keeps on growing, having reached 250,000 in the 198990

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school year. In the United States, immersion is being heavily promoted and, again, less-than-fully-informed parents are at the vanguard of the movement. But linguistically the immersion approach is a failure. While I have no comparable extensive data from Spanish immersion programs in the United States, I have been in personal communication with several teachers in such programs. They have referred to such 'Spanglish' monstrosities as *la perro and *él comes after years of immersion and have expressed concern at seeing their students 'make in Grade 8 the same errors they made in Grade 3'. These teachers wish they could do something, but they feel their hands are tied.

There is no reason to believe that the immersion approach could work well with any language, and even less reason to think that other, less intensive programs based on the same philosophy would yield better results. And in Canada, the hoped-for job opportunities have not materialized: most French immersion graduates speak and write so poorly that they cannot handle the telephone or correspondence well, so bilingual positions requiring knowledge of French are being filled with French Canadians. (For a detailed discussion of the immersion approach, see the recent book *French Immersion: Myths and Reality* [Hammerly, 1989]).

The linguistic failure of the immersion approach, a variety of the SLACC/I approach fully in harmony with the CAN megatheory of classroom language learning indeed, its flagship forces us to bring into question the validity of CAN/SLACC/I. As well, we must doubt the validity and relevance of second language acquisition theory and practice as far as classroom language learning is concerned. While SLA theory, as developed by Krashen and many others, might be the best explanation of what happens in natural (i.e. untutored) language acquisition settings, extending it to the very different environment of the language classroom is an unjustified extrapolation. When surrounded by native speakers of a language in a natural setting, young children evidently can 'acquire' ('pick up') the language well; but it seems they, or older children, or adults cannot do so in the sociolinguistically artificial situation offered within four classroom walls.

It behooves us, then, to consider *why* immersion/SLACC/I does not result in second language competence. 7 We must determine what, if any, are the shortcomings of the CAN megatheory of language learning. We should also ask ourselves whether the communicative/interactive approach can be improved and how so that it will result in linguistically competent graduates rather than speakers of an ingrained classroom pidgin.

A newcomer to the field of SLA would be struck by the pervasiveness in SLA theory of the largely implicit assumption that virtually equates (a) the process of learning a language in the classroom with (b) that of natural (untutored)

SLA in the field, and this, in turn, with (c) the process of native language acquisition. However, these three learning situations differ markedly. In native language acquisition the learner (1) does not already know a language and (2) is surrounded by native speakers of the language being acquired. Only condition (2) may exist in natural SLA. Neither condition exists in classroom language learning. These are both very important factors. The absence of condition (2), in particular, turns the language classroom into an unavoidably artificial sociolinguistic environment. (Of course, even in the second language classroom some procedures and learning strategies are more natural that is, called for by the situation than others.)

The sociolinguistic poverty of the classroom situation is of great consequence. In the communicative/interactive language classroom, the student can normally interact with only one fluent second language speaker, the teacher, who often isn't a native speaker of the language being learned. At the same time, the student interacts frequently with 25 or 30 classroom peers who misuse the language just as badly as he or she does. Such loosely directed and largely unsupervized peer interaction can hardly be linguistically enhancing; while it encourages fluency, it indirectly lowers accuracy. Peer pressure tends to enforce a standard of mediocrity, not a standard of excellence.

Moreover, communicative/interactive approach teachers are usually unwilling to point out and correct linguistic errors and tend to praise any act of communication regardless of grammaticality. Thus the use of 'ingredients' inappropriate to successful language learning and the lack of those essential to it result in a nutritionally deficient 'stew' which, if fed daily to students over two or three years, will inevitably cause 'permanent linguistic rickets'.

Since CAN/SLACC/I is based on SLA theory and this, in turn, is ultimately based on a theoretical model of native language acquisition, it naturally stresses the characteristics typical of mother tongue acquisition and minimizes those that play a minor role or no role in it. For example, SLA proponents consider the native language of the second language learner unimportant. Yet many of the errors of French immersion graduates, whose programs are conducted strictly in the second language, are clearly due to native language influence. Indeed, psychological research provides abundant evidence, and common sense dictates, that a person's prior knowledge affects later related learning of a language or anything else, in specific ways that help or hinder that learning.

Another native language-based premise of the CAN megatheory is that unconscious acquisition is better than, and preferable to, conscious learning. Native language acquisition is largely unconscious, but this is because young children cannot learn any other way, not because unconscious learning is inherently superior. Native language acquisition is almost always successful, but this

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doesn't mean that its success is due to its unconscious nature. There is no proof that unconscious acquisition is superior to conscious learning in a classroom situation. On the contrary, when applied to older learners, an unconscious learning process clearly neglects to take advantage of their superior cognitive development the minds they have should be used to facilitate learning.

Also claimed, on the basis of rather one-sided studies of language acquisition, is that language users monitor their output only under certain restricted circumstances, that is, when they can produce it very slowly (as on a written grammar test) with conscious attention to rules. There is not much basis for this claim. Instead it seems that one way or another we monitor our output including our oral output most if not all of the time, before, while, and after we produce it. That monitoring is a frequent SL student strategy across all language skills was shown in a recently completed three-year project (Chamot and Kupper, 1989).

And claims that only what has been acquired unconsciously is available for output clearly aren't true. Many language teachers myself included have repeatedly led students through a series of steps from the conscious control of a structure to its unconscious use. 8 The important factor is whether the rule is practiced, used meaningfully, and integrated with what the student has already learned, not whether it enters the learner's mind consciously or unconsciously. (As we shall see, though, the learning of certain rules benefits from an initially conscious treatment.)

Because of its reliance on native language acquisition theory, the CAN megatheory assumes that preschool children, or children in general, are better language learners than, say, young adults. This belief agrees with the popular misconception of 'the younger the better', a misconception that results from faulty observations and is supported by the fact that young children *are* better in one area the untutored acquisition of native-like pronunciation and intonation from native speakers in the environment. CAN proponents seem to have arrived at the incorrect conclusion of general childhood superiority by observing different degrees of natural SLA without recording the amount of exposure and interaction involved. I know of no study comparing the degree of SLA of adults and children exposed to even a *similar* amount of linguistic interaction. Indeed, several studies have shown that, in immersion/SLACC/I programs, children starting at a later age do better (e.g. Genesee, 1982: 33). Furthermore, with proper instruction young adults can become very competent in a second language.

In many respects, adults are superior to children as learners. They have greater cognitive maturity, better learning strategies and study habits, better focused task and goal orientation, a longer attention span, the ability to make a greater variety of associations, and better short-term memory. It has even been

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shown experimentally that the older the students at least through secondary school the better they can imitate SL words and phrases (Politzer and Weiss, 1969), so the young child is not even a better mimic, as popularly assumed.

CAN/SLACC/I also favors 'learning language by using it' rather than 'using language *as* it is learned'. The former process again largely corresponds to what happens in native language acquisition. But since the language classroom lacks the rich linguistic environment and constant communicative/interactive feedback of the early childhood home, this global, nongraded approach just doesn't suit classroom learning. Some acquisitionists have extended the native language-classroom language learning extrapolation so far that a research issue has been made of whether classroom SL instruction makes any difference!

Krashen, the leading SLA theorist, has repeatedly stated that the only important requirement for satisfactory SL development is to provide learners with 'comprehensible input'. This, again, may be true of natural language acquisition, but it does not apply to the second language classroom. If 'comprehensible input' alone were adequate in the classroom, immersion graduates, after over 7,000 hours of such input, would be very competent speakers of the second language but they are not. They are very inaccurate. For good results in the classroom we must help students communicate within the limits of *manageable output*. And to be manageable, output has to be *managed*, that is, we must provide students with systematic, step-by-step instruction. 9

The CAN/SLACC/I attitude toward errors and their correction follows the same natural acquisitionist model. In native language acquisition, children's errors10 gradually disappear. Correction of young children's errors has been shown to be mostly ineffective. This situation has been mistakenly extended to the very different language classroom environment. Thus, CAN advocates like Savignon (1983: 22324) and Krashen and Terrell (1983: 17778) tell us that it isn't necessary to correct errors directly in the classroom that it is counterproductive, as it discourages communication. But in the SLACC/I/immersion approach, in which most errors cannot be corrected effectively, the outcome is a classroom pidgin.11

With its emphasis on communication, CAN/SLACC/I stresses early vocabulary development while largely ignoring language structure, whether it be phonological, morphological, or syntactic. Most SLACC/I advocates do not seem to care that students mispronounce sounds, use wrong stems or endings, or construct sentences following faulty rules all of these problems are supposed to disappear, eventually, through communicative classroom interaction. Well, there is no reason why they should, and it is clear that most don't. The SLACC/I classroom provides too few 'teachable', linguistically memorable moments of communicative 'negotiation' for the student to internalize the correct rules of the

language through such occasions. This is especially the case with 'redundant' linguistic rules that don't contribute much to communication but are an essential part of what makes a language what it is. To the extent that any point of structure is communicatively redundant it will rarely even be the object of attention during conversation.

The few SLACC/I advocates there are, fortunately, some who show concern about the linguistic errors of communicative/interactive approach students don't seem to know how to prevent the occurrence of frequent errors or what to do when errors occur. (Unfortunately some SLACC/I/immersion advocates, as they have come to realize that the output of graduates from the programs they have promoted is very deficient, have adopted an attitude of so-be-it-this-is-just-a-new-dialect-of-French/Spanish. As we shall see in Chapter 16, such an attitude is just an updated version of 'anglophonic linguistic imperialism'.)

When communication is emphasized early in a language program, linguistic accuracy suffers and linguistic competence doesn't develop much beyond the point needed for the bare transmission of messages. But what else could we expect from programs in which teachers are so interested in communication they congratulate the students even when they say something completely ungrammatical. 12 The students soon realize that communicating is all that matters, and they lose their initial motivation (present in older children and adults) to express themselves accurately. An early emphasis on free communication, then, seems to *guarantee* linguistic incompetence at the end of the program, just as surely as an exclusive emphasis on linguistic structure guarantees communicative incompetence.

In summary, the SLACC/I approach is based on a theory of classroom language instruction (the CAN megatheory) that is in turn based on a theory of natural SLA which largely follows a model of native language acquisition. It is thus an unjustified double extrapolation. It is not surprising, therefore, that SLACC/I does not work and, further, *cannot* work well in the SL classroom. The theoretical foundation needs to be changed. In the classroom, *fluency does not lead to accuracy*, and most errors do not disappear through communicative interaction. In the classroom a language cannot be acquired unconsciously with good results. But through largely conscious procedures a language can be successfully learned in the classroom. This can be done quite well through systematic instruction, which should precede and build up to part of the curriculum being taught in the SL.

SLACC/I/immersion leaders state that their goal is to produce not native speakers of the SL but 'functional bilinguals'. The criterion for the latter is communicative competence. Accuracy is a less-important byproduct. Leaving aside

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the need to define bilinguals quantitatively and qualitatively if the definition is to have any rigor, it is clear that SLA theorists and CAN/SLACC/I advocate use the word 'bilingual' in an extremely loose way. How defensible is it educationally, sociopsychologically, and in terms of the requirements of business, government and society in general for SL programs to produce linguistically incompetent 'functional bilinguals'? 13 It is as unacceptable as the goal of producing native speakers is unrealistic. Lowering aims to the production of 'functional bilinguals' is taking the easy way out. It is cheating many of our students of even the possibility of learning a second language well. Most older children and adults start the study of a second language with determination to *succeed* in learning it well rather than the self-defeating desire to *survive*, to get by as linguistically incompetent functional bilinguals. (And I estimate that if all we wanted were just functional bilingualism, this could be attained in the equivalent of *one* school year of intensive instruction with young adults.)

But we must not settle for functional bilingualism, for language program graduates who speak and write in Frenglish, Spanglish or Germglish. While a six-year-old child may sound 'cute' speaking a second language very ungrammatically, the same cannot be said of a university graduate or of a 40-year-old businessman, diplomat, or scientist. Functional bilinguals have such poor structural control of the SL that they cannot be hired by any employer who expects to be well represented linguistically.

Functional bilingualism is the lowest possible denominator and quite inadequate as a goal. In SL learning, as in all other aspects of the curriculum, the goal should be excellence. Students should be encouraged to the highest attainments possible to each, not to be satisfied with just being functional. (Functionalism in education is further discussed in Chapter 16.)

Of course, all SL program graduates make linguistic errors. Only a purist would object to occasional, nonhabitual errors; they are perfectly normal and understandable. But CAN/SLACC/I assumptions and teaching procedures cause very frequent errors of the most basic kind to become established in students' speech. As SL professionals we must be concerned at the thought of hundreds of thousands of children and adults being permanently impaired, linguistically, through their exposure to a second language program based on a faulty theory. Some members of our profession also feel more than a little frustrated because they know that excellent results in classroom language teaching *can* be obtained, if only we introduce balance in language teaching and stop following the pied piper of second language acquisition through classroom communication/interaction/immersion.

The proponents of SLA in the classroom have extrapolated what they discovered about natural, unconscious language acquisition to a very different

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situation in which such knowledge does not apply. They dismiss other theories. They also dismiss the observations of practitioners whose daily classroom experience shows them that the CAN megatheory and the SLACC/I approach don't yield good results. With a few laudable exceptions, our profession is silently watching the parade go by, for only a few are in a position to be able to say, with frankness and courage, that 'the emperor has no clothes'. 14

Notes to Chapter 1

1 Adapted from a speech given at the Annual Conference of the California Foreign Language Teachers Association in Los Angeles on April 26, 1987.

2 Although the word 'fluency' has long been used in everyday speech to mean speaking rapidly *and well*, in our field it has largely come to mean speaking rapidly and smoothly, not necessarily grammatically. This is the way the word will be used in this book, in contrast to 'accuracy' (control of the code).

3 'Second' is used throughout this book for any language other than a learner's native language(s). When further specification is required, a distinction will be made between second languages that are 'local' (dominant in the community) and 'remote' (not widely spoken locally). The 'remote'/'local' distinction is far more important for SL teaching and learning than whatever political status ('foreign', official, etc.) the language may or may not enjoy.

4 'Linguistic competence' is knowledge *about* the language, whether conscious or unconscious; 'accuracy' is performative knowledge *of* the language or linguistic 'know-how', i.e. the ability to use the language according to its systematic characteristics.

5 Simplifying the matter somewhat, in 'immersion' programs there is usually total exposure to the SL (the entire school day) for two or three years, followed by a decreasing degree of exposure for many years. Early immersion programs begin in Kindergarten or Grade 1 (for an overall total of about 7,000 hours of SLACC/I), late immersion programs begin in Grade 6 or 7.

   I have used quotation marks with the word 'immersion' advisedly. Pupils in immersion programs are *not* immersed in surrounded by French, Spanish, etc. Instead, both the teacher and the pupils are immersed in a very faulty interlanguage.

6 For a summary of this study in English, see Hammerly (1987a). For a partially edited transcript of these interviews, see Hammerly (1989).

7 SL competence has three components linguistic, communicative, and cultural. It is the linguistic component that fails to develop well under communicative approaches. Second language competence will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 3.

8 How this can be done is discussed in Chapter 12.

9 Certain advocates of acquiring a second language naturally through communication (what I have called the CAN megatheory) acknowledge that 'comprehensible input' is not enough. For instance, Swain (1985) proposes 'comprehensible output' that appends the idea of accuracy. But the meaning of the word 'comprehensible' does *not* include the concept 'accurate'. It is precisely

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comprehensible (but very inaccurate) output that immersion and other SLACC/I students have long been producing and internalizing.

10 That is, as seen from the adult speaker's point of view; acquisitionists think of errors as evidence of learning rather than as something undesirable.

11 For an instructionally oriented discussion of language classroom errors, see Chapter 8 in this book. For ideas on error correction, see Chapter 9.

12 This theory-based practice has been readily observable. See, for example Calvé (1986).

13 Again, I must use quotation marks; this is because most graduates of SLACC/I programs neither can function well in Spanish, French, etc. nor are bilinguals in any carefully defined sense of the term.

14 Theoretical aspects of how to get language students to communicate fluently *and* accurately are part of the discussion in Chapter 3 of this book. Methodological and procedural aspects are summarized in Chapters 11 and 12.

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2

'New' and 'Old' in Language Teaching

We are constantly exposed to new ideas, technologies and gadgets. This ongoing renewal is a sign of the vitality of free societies.

In technological fields 'new' usually means 'better'. In the field of sound reproduction, for example, the audio cassette was an improvement on the long-play record; not long after the audio cassette had come into general use there came the prerecorded compact disc, with far better sound; and the latter had barely begun to be widely used when DAT (digital audio tape), with even higher fidelity, entered many markets. In just a few years, the speed and memory capacity of personal computers have increased dramatically, making three- or four-year old models obsolescent. A large American telephone company rewired its entire system with fiber optics in 1987 after having installed a new system in 1983.

An attitude I call 'neophilia' (strong attraction to the new) is characteristic of modern life. Having its likely origin in the fact that new devices tend to be better than earlier ones, and fueled by the advertizing industry, neophilia has resulted in continual consumption, at least for those who can afford it: Who wants to have just an old record player if one can get into CD or DAT? Who is satisfied with a three-year-old car if one can buy the latest model with all the gadgets?

Neophilia is perfectly understandable in regard to technologies. Many people, however, have the same attitude toward most aspects of human behavior, as shown by their desire to do whatever is now 'in' and abandon what is now 'out', even though the latter was 'in' just a few weeks or months earlier. Americans were told on a recent New Year's Eve, for example, that . . .

. . . bright colors are out and pastels are in;

. . . suspenders are out and skin belts are in;

. . . acid-washed jeans are out and basic jeans are in;

. . . credits cards are out and cash is in;

. . . sensitive men are out and strong men are in;

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. . . muffins are out and waffles are in;

. . . and so on and on. 1

In all such trends there is neither rhyme nor reason, but mostly change for its own sake. As the author of the list concluded:

> To those called *out*, we send our sorrow.
> All those called *in* you're out tomorrow!

Neophilia leads to faddism, and if faddism is a little ridiculous when applied to human behavior, it is quite inappropriate when extended to the search for truth in the world of ideas. An idea is not necessarily better because it is 'new'; indeed, most 'new' ideas are little more than old ideas recycled. An idea is better only if it brings us closer to the truth by explaining something better, predicting events more accurately, or guiding behavior toward more successful results. Conversely, an 'old' idea should be modified or discarded only if it inadequately explains known facts. Some 'old' ideas are of proven, permanent value. While the 'neophobia' (dislike for, or fear of, the new) some people show is regrettable, the centuries-old attitude that the latest must be the best is, though more subtly, equally 'old hat'.

Faddism and trendism, and the 'bandwagonism' (pressure on people to get on the popular or winning side) they engender, are especially damaging to academically immature fields like SL teaching, learning, and use which I prefer to call by a more convenient one-word name, 'languistics'.2 So let us consider briefly the effect of neophilia on languistics and how languistics could shake trendy influences from related disciplines and become a discipline of its own, maybe even a science.

Languistics has been swayed by major 'new' trends every fifteen to twenty years and less influential fads every three years or so. The major trends have not built on previous knowledge. On the contrary, the leaders of each new trend have rejected what preceded it, declaring previous ideas to be 'traditional' and 'out' and their own ideas to be 'new' and 'in'. Such trends tend to be merely long-lasting fads rather than instances of constructive theory development. The best from the past has not been systematically incorporated into a body of established knowledge.

In languistics the trend setters have included the grammar-translation method, the direct method, the structural approach (and the several 'audiolingual' methods partly derived from it), and communicative approaches (what was identified in Chapter 1 as CAN/SLACC/I). Now that mounting evidence is confirming that natural SL acquisition does not and, in my view, *cannot* work well in the artificial environment of the classroom, the tide is slowly beginning to move out from the shore of communicationism.

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The danger we face now is that an extreme trend will again be replaced by another, equally extreme reaction. The challenge is to establish principled balance in language teaching.

Extremes require correction. When the direct method, the structural approach, and the communicative/interactive approach came along, each was a corrective for what had preceded it. Unfortunately, correctives in languistics have consistently gone to the other end of the spectrum. The pendulum has swung wildly. There have been only brief, transitional periods in the last 100 years when emphasis has been on *both* structure and communication, *both* fluency and accuracy.

Extremist trends and fads have so far made it impossible for languistics to become the distinct discipline, much less the science, it should be. For a field of scholarly and practical activity to become a discipline, it must be *autonomous*, not part of other disciplines. Furthermore, as Charles Fries noted (1963: 37), for a discipline to become a science it must be *cumulative*, that is, take into account all previous contributions as it builds a body of knowledge; and it must be *impersonal*, with results open to verification by objective observers, not simply perpetuated by authority. But the trendism and faddism that have plagued languistics violate all of these conditions. As long as all 'old' knowledge is 'out' and all 'new' knowledge is 'in' every fifteen or twenty years, language teaching will remain a featherless young academic bird, unable to fly.

The idea that language teaching should be an autonomous discipline has been proposed by various leaders for nearly a century. However, language teaching has not yet succeeded in becoming autonomous, having been, instead, a stepchild, in turn, of many other disciplines: classical languages, logic, literature, structural linguistics, education, transformational-generative linguistics, psychology, and the latest, natural (untutored) language acquisition. It has had to accept, virtually wholesale, the premises and limitations of each parent discipline or field. Languistics will emerge as a separate discipline that resists extraneous trends only when languists strongly believe all other relevant disciplines to be not parent but *feeder* disciplines from which languists choose what they find useful and reject what is irrelevant or counterproductive.

For knowledge to accumulate so that languistics can become a science it is necessary first to establish a set of sound principles of classroom SL teaching, testing those that need to be tested. (Such a solid foundation to further development is a *sine qua non* for any science.) With such a foundation, the burden of proof falls where it belongs on those who propose ideas that defy logical or empirical evidence and common sense, ideas that deviate significantly from successful language teaching/learning practices.

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While during the last fifteen to twenty years the results of much research have been made public, there have been at least three problems in this area. First, the unsubstantiated premises behind many claims have not been explicitly stated (e.g. the false assumption that classroom remote-SL 3 learning can be essentially the same as natural native or local-SL acquisition). Second, some reporting has been misleadingly incomplete; for example, lists of 'common' or 'typical' ESL errors have been frequently cited (e.g. Richards, 1985: 5561) as evidence that NL interference is only one not the most important factor in ESL, but as far as I know, the percentage of native speakers of each language that made each of the errors has not been revealed. Third, in some cases poor results have been withheld from the public for many years or even stated positively (e.g. the insistence of the Establishment that graduates of Canadian French immersion programs 'speak French well', when they really speak fluent Frenglish).

Like other unstable disciplines, our field has suffered from a lack of openness. Once certain ideas become dominant, it has become very hard for anyone to make the counterevidence public. This is, of course, a situation not unique to the present SLACC/I trend dissenters have found it just as difficult to communicate their ideas to the profession under previous trends. It is in fact a natural characteristic of people even of many scholars to become entrenched in their positions, to only want to read or listen to what is supportive of such positions, and to prefer to dismiss whatever does not provide such support. But our field will mature into a discipline only when we are open to all points of view that can be substantiated logically or empirically or, best of all, both.

Coming back to the concept of 'new' and 'old', what is 'in' and what is 'out' in languistics should be based on the soundness of the idea rather than its newness or source. Some ideas deserve to be permanently in, others permanently out. Some 'old' ideas are of lasting value and should always be taken into account, regardless of the winds of opinion. The fact that an idea appears or, more likely, *re*appears as part of an attractive, sophisticated new 'package' of theory and practice doesn't necessarily mean it's sound, practical or effective. 'New' ideas should be tested by objective, neutral parties *before* they are widely implemented, and those that do not work as claimed by their proponents should be discarded. (Even as huge and powerful an organization as the US Department of Defense has finally concluded that prototypes must be built and tested before proceeding to mass production.)

To be able to sort out which 'old' and which 'new' ideas are either valid or to be discarded we need evidence. In languistics, this means primarily learner output data at the end of SL programs, experimental treatments, and so on. Some things are so obvious that we don't need to spend resources investigating them.

Examples of these are the ideas that the teacher and the quality of teaching make a difference, that student motivation is important, and that better results are obtained when the aim is excellence rather than just 'functional' survival.

Well-reasoned logical argument especially if supported by objective data is valid evidence too. To reject it because it is 'not empirical' is, I think, a serious mistake. It is true that one can reason his way into major fallacies and then go out to collect data selectively to prove one's point. But experimental evidence is no less subject to distortion: if empirical research is based on false assumptions, this will affect the choice of research question, what data is sought, how it is gathered and recorded, and how it is analyzed and interpreted. I have read my share of reports on experiments that were impeccable as to design, statistical analysis, etc. and yet reached obviously incorrect conclusions because of false premises.

Evidence is strengthened when it all 'falls into place' from separate sources. For instance, the conclusion that the immersion approach produces fluent but very inaccurate SL speakers comes from the integration of separate findings by a number of widely dispersed researchers who used a variety of methods and in certain cases didn't even know of each other's existence.

Languistics will begin to mature when we deal with the 'new' and the 'old' in terms of *principled eclecticism*. This may seem an oxymoron; but the word 'eclectic' has two meanings, a (popular) negative one and its original, neutral or positive one. Haphazard eclecticism, where new and old ideas from all sources are jumbled together without regard to theory, internal consistency or purpose and results is, of course, 'intellectually obscene' (to use a phrase Krashen applied to eclecticism a few years ago). But the careful, principled combination of sound ideas from sound sources into a harmonious whole that yields the best results is a possible, valid, even essential process of integration thus the phrase, 'principled eclecticism'. It is in the light of such an integration that we should consider the validity of 'new' and 'old' ideas in languistics.

Some examples of 'old' ideas that deserve to be building blocks in the linguistic foundation are the following:

Language students learn to do primarily what is emphasized in their programs. Grammar-translation students learn to recite rules, to read (a little) and to 'translate' (not well). Audiolingual method students whose programs do not provide communicative activities mostly learn to do drills and rattle off dialogues. Communicative/interactive approach students learn to put across their ideas fluently. 'Comprehensible input' results not surprizingly in good *comprehension*. This is not to say that learning corresponds exactly to what is taught or that there is no incidental learning.

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A corollary of the above principle is that *students tend not to learn well what is not emphasized in their programs*. Students taught via grammar-translation or a mechanical audiolingual method do not learn to communicate orally, nor do they develop a high level of listening comprehension unless they have specific practice in that. Students taught via SLACC/I/immersion are not learning to communicate grammatically, for, as noted in Chapter 1, in the classroom grammatical accuracy does not result from comprehension or fluency (nor was there ever a good reason to think it would).

Language is a very complex, structured (or rule-governed) system of primarily oral communication. Internalizing a faulty SL system that allows communication at the expense of grammaticality is even worse than learning to control structures while remaining unable to communicate. In the latter situation, at least it is possible for learners to move on to fluent *and* accurate communication later. The primacy of speech, of which there is much evidence, should have and at times has had major instructional consequences. There are major differences between language as what one reads in books or sees on a computer screen and language as a spoken system; these differences should be clearly reflected in linguistic methods and procedures.

A complex system, once mastered, is used 'top down'; but it is best learned and mastered 'bottom up' cumulatively, one step at a time, with the learner using every aspect of the growing system as it is learned and to the extent that it has been learned. This is a sound idea that has existed for centuries, at least since Comenius. The notion of approaching a complex system holistically and expecting its details to fall into place by themselves is of more recent extraction, and unsound (as major details fail to come under control). The idea that it is best to teach complex systems in a step-by-step, cumulative way does not imply, of course, that young children acquire their native language (NL) that way or that SL teachers can ignore the contextualized use of the language.

Anything linguistic, communicative, or cultural that language students already know (consciously or unconsciously) is relevant to the task of learning a second language. Psychologists have known for a long time that new learning develops in relation to existing knowledge in the learner's mind. Yet in many places language students, unlike students in the other subjects in the curriculum, are taught as if they came into the program with no knowledge of anything at all.

With laudable exceptions, language students tend to follow the law of least effort. Many North American students believe that 'Spanish' for example 'is easy', and thus it has become, in some institutions, a haven for academically unmotivated athletes and those with low grade-point averages. Of

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course, typologically close languages can be mastered faster than distant ones; but to learn any language well, students must be prepared to work hard. There is no reason why language courses shouldn't be as demanding as courses in, say, mathematics or chemistry.

To get excellent results language programs must find ways to increase student motivation and must also be reasonably demanding, stressing excellence, setting before the students attainable short- and long-term goals, and discriminatively rewarding the attainment of those goals. This does not mean that there are no individual differences in the initial goals of the students or in the ways they would prefer to go about attaining them.

The above are some of the 'old' ideas that I think deserve to be basic tenets of languistics. There are many other principles, both 'old' and 'new', that should be part of its foundation. Some of the 'new' ones are:

As much as may be conducive to learning, language programs should be adapted to the individual characteristics and goals of the learners. This refers to individual differences in aptitude (and thus, speed of learning), Teaming styles, and overall goals. In some form or another, good teachers have done this since ancient times, but the idea became prominent in our field through the individualization movement of the early 1970s.

The development of listening comprehension is facilitated by practice in responding physically to instructions. James Asher (1977) proved this in numerous experiments. However, as effective as a particular teaching procedure like the Total Physical Response or any other such procedure may be, I don't think it is wise to base an entire method on it. For accuracy in speech to develop, there must be student output and teacher feedback from the very beginning of the program (subvocal language may be very inaccurate and, moreover, self-reinforcing).

Developing second language competence is a matter of learning (1) to use language structure and vocabulary (2) to communicate (3) in culturally appropriate ways. That is, (1) language structure is at the core of SL competence, (2) communication is the use to which language structure and vocabulary are put, and this is done (3) in a cultural context whether in a local- or a remote-SL classroom (this being necessarily make-believe, culturally) or in the actual environment.

Some 'old' ideas are better left behind, because they can be shown to be unsound. Among them are the following:

The main purpose of learning a second language is to develop one's mental powers. Any mental activity should help develop the mind, and so does SL study, at least verbally (e.g. Cooper, 1987), but taking courses in

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logic, playing chess, or solving verbal or mathematical puzzles might enhance general mental powers better than SL learning. There is increasing agreement that the main purpose of SL study is to learn to communicate accurately, fluently, and appropriately in order to understand and be better understood by speakers of other languages. Success or failure in this endeavor has individual, societal, and international consequences.

Classroom second language learning is, or can be, similar to (natural) native or second language acquisition. There have always been advocates of this idea. The Natural Method was first proposed in the thirties the *eighteen*-thirties! The CAN theory and SLACC/I approach are the latest manifestation of this idea, now expressed in very sophisticated psycholinguistic terms and propped by complex statistical analyses of much data (most of it instructionally irrelevant).

This *still* is an unsound idea that ignores several truisms. Unlike NL learners, classroom SL learners know another language already. Unlike very young children, by the time classroom learners are ten years old or so they are cognitively mature learners who can learn better consciously and systematically (in the early grades, children *mis*acquire a remote SL unconsciously). Unlike NL acquirers, classroom SL learners are in an artificial socio- and psycholinguistic environment, with direct access to only one speaker of the language and surrounded by many peers who misuse it. As much as some may wish them to, these three major differences cannot be changed.

The assumption behind CAN/SLACC/I that much similarity exists, or is even possible, between classroom SL teaming and natural NL or SL acquisition is therefore untenable. It is, in fact, a faulty (double) extrapolation. The procedures derived from such an assumption focusing on communication rather than structure, refraining from correction, and so forth are equally unsound and produce poor results, even in the very long run, as shown in Chapter 1. (Certain CAN/SLACC/I advocates have realized this and are trying to change, instead, the public and professional perceptions of what it means to know a second language.)

'Practice makes perfect', so all you need to learn a SL well is to practice it. A better motto would be 'Practice makes permanent'. Practice of the wrong kind or at the wrong time, and practice without effective feedback makes imperfection permanent. Communicating in a second language with many errors makes the faulty rules underlying the errors permanent.

'Learn by using'. This is a parallel motto to 'Practice makes perfect' and incorrect for the same reason. If learners are guided on how to use something and then receive discriminative feedback on whether they used

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it correctly or not, they will learn from the experience. Otherwise all that they may learn is how to misuse it. A better countermotto is, 'Use as you learn'.

The best place to study and learn an SL is in the country (province, etc) where it is spoken. This is a sort of 'geographical learning by doing'. It also makes several questionable assumptions, namely that (1) people in that country know very well how to teach their language to speakers of other languages (seldom the case); that (2) teachers who are likely not to know the NL of the students can help them better than teachers who know the students' NL and understand their particular linguistic, communicative, and cultural problems; and that (3) it is a good idea to use an SL to communicate freely before one has any knowledge of it.

When so stated, it is evident that these assumptions are largely false. I think far better long-term results are attained by SL learners who first develop a solid foundation in a good program at home and then go to a place where the language is spoken to rapidly expand their active vocabulary and become fully fluent.

To become bilingual, one should behave as a bilingual. This has tong been argued in support of monolingual SL instruction after all, isn't a bilingual capable of functioning monolingually in each of his or her two languages? (In fairly recent terminology, true bilinguals are 'coordinate' rather than 'compound' bilinguals.) There is one basic problem with this: It confuses a final outcome with the way to get there. Not that it is particularly relevant to what we may or may not do in the SL classroom, but it's interesting that true bilinguals don't *develop* monolingually. They may not completely separate the two sound systems until the age of four or the two syntactic systems until they are about ten years old. And the two vocabularies are never completely separated, as shown by the ease with which they can code-switch.

A few examples of 'new' ideas that don't seem particularly helpful are the following:

SLs for Specific Purposes. People who just need to understand and use a second language in a few contexts, who don't mind 'butchering' it and the consequences this may entail, and who accept the idea that they are probably ruining forever their chances of speaking the language well may wish to take a quick course in that language 'for specific purposes'. But using a language is a high-level, holistic activity which one cannot perform well without adequate control of lower-level skills. As the long-term effects of learning a language for specific purposes are likely to be linguistically disastrous (a 'terminal 0+'?), I don't see how the idea can be considered

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defensible. I think *our aim should be more people learning SLs well, not many people learning just enough to butcher them.*

Teaching for proficiency. This is another case, among many, of confusing the program-terminal goal with the way to get there. If SL students accept surviving a series of oral proficiency interviews as a valid, effort-focusing *short*-term goal, the effect of this on their linguistic accuracy will be negative, however much their 'fluency' (rapidity and smoothness of speech) may improve. (This is discussed further in Chapter 4.)

The nonexistence of the 'educated native speaker'. This is one of the 'newest' ideas. It has some validity: no one wants to be or even be called an 'elitist'. Still, we need a standard to which we can refer. Without standards language teaching cannot hope to be a successful endeavor. (Some thoughts on the elusive 'educated native speaker' appear also in Chapter 4.)

We have seen in this chapter that, while in technology 'new' usually means 'better', *in the field of ideas neither newness nor oldness necessarily determines soundness*. The notion that the latest idea must be the best a neophilia that is endemic in places like Washington, D.C., Ottawa, and, reportedly, parts of California is in fact an *old* North American tradition.

In many fields, the tendency is for 'new' knowledge to *replace* 'old' knowledge rather than build on it to the extent this may be possible. The wheel has been re-invented countless times. This may account to a considerable extent for the disorientation in our society and even for its competitive weakness we waste much of our energy going in all directions rather than building up on a series of successively more encompassing syntheses.

When facing complex problems, we are not helped by trendiness. The latest idea, the latest trendy book can be obsolete as soon as the next one comes out. But basic facts about human behavior are unchanging and great truths are rarely new. So to solve complex problems we should make full use of both old and new sources of knowledge.

Teaching and learning a second language involve complex problems and challenges, so they both call for full use of all we know, whatever the source. In languistics, the criterion for evaluating ideas should be whether they contribute to, or detract from, the attainment of excellent results in SL learning, which should always be our aim. This calls for nothing short of both doing the right things and doing them right.

Love for the 'new' is a very old attitude in North America, as old at least as the horse and buggy people back then surely must have extolled the virtues of the latest kind of buggy wheel, door, and seat. Real progress in the realm of

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ideas can only be attained by rising above the clouds of both neophilia and nostalgia into the bright, timeless sunlight.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 Copyright 1987, *USA TODAY*. Adapted with permission.

2 This word was coined by Nelson Brooks in the early 1960s.

3 Some examples may help clarify the 'remote'/'local' distinction. English is a 'local' language in most of North America. We can speak of, e. g. French in English Canada as 'remote', though it certainly isn't 'foreign'. Spanish in some parts of the United States is 'local' rather than 'remote'; this terminology enables us to avoid the sociopolitically touchy issue of its purported 'foreignness'.

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3
Theories, Models and Methods

In discussing theories, models and methods of SL teaching/learning, we must keep in mind that there are many ways in which languages can be acquired or learned. A distinction introduced by Stephen Krashen (1978) is often made between *acquisition* and *learning*. Acquisition is untutored, largely unconscious learning, while learning (in its narrow sense) is a mostly conscious process that results from systematic instruction. I think this distinction is significant but its meaning should be reinterpreted.

Acquisition happens in natural sociolinguistic environments, although a full-fledged SL program would have much acquisition at the advanced levels. As discussed in Chapter 1, acquisition does not work well with basic structures in the classroom. Learning, on the other hand, is the result of teaching, so it usually takes place in the sociolinguistically artificial environment of a classroom. In Krashen's Monitor Model only (unconscious) acquisition can result in sentence generation. But through practice practice that goes from mechanical to meaningful what is learned consciously or largely consciously (with focus on what is being learned) can be used to generate an indefinitely large number of sentences. This practice can turn initially conscious knowledge into unconscious ('internalized' or 'habitual') knowledge, thus making it fully available for sentence generation with focus on messages.

Keeping my interpretation of the distinction between acquisition and learning in mind, let us consider briefly several major types of language learning (here I mean learning in the general sense).

(1) Infants and very young children *acquire* the ability to *understand and speak* their *native language*. We don't even remember details of what happened to us linguistically before the age of three or four, by which time the process has been basically completed.

(I take 'native language' to mean the same as 'mother tongue' or 'L1'. A child may have two or more native languages if, from infancy, he or she interacts in them and grows up to use each of them free from linguistic interference. SL learners may develop 'native-like' free from

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interference control of the SL, or they may be native-like in some aspects but not in others.)

(2) *Native language reading and writing skills* are normally *learned*. Apparently the reason this process takes a fairly long time is that elementary school children are limited in their cognitive development and thus cannot learn consciously in an efficient manner. Of course, what the native-speaking child has to learn in the first few grades is very different from what a child who doesn't know the language needs to learn (Hammerly, 1983).

(3) *Bilingual acquisition* is the acquisition of two or more languages before the age of four or so, either as native languages or before the native language has become so strongly internalized that it interferes with the acquisition of another language.

(4) *Child second language acquisition*, starting at about age 413, involves overcoming interference but often results in native-like control, including untutored native-like pronunciation.

(5) *Adult second language acquisition*, starting at about age 13 and over, is characterized by an accent, and often other forms of interference. (By 'adults' I mean, of course, 'psycholinguistic adults', that is, teenagers and adult men and women.) These learners have deeply embedded NL psycholinguistic habits and need systematic SL instruction resulting in learning; with rare exceptions it is too late for them to overcome NL interference and become native-like in an SL strictly via acquisition.

(6) *Child second language learning* involves systematic instruction starting by the age of 13 at the latest. This is not very effective if it starts before the age of about 10 or 11, for younger children lack the linguistic awareness and cognitive maturity needed to focus on the 'medium' (the language *per se*) as opposed to the 'message' and such a focus, as well as high responsiveness to linguistic correction, are essential. (Of course both medium and message should be attended to from the start.)

(7) *Adult second language learning* results from systematic instruction that starts at about age 13 or later. The disadvantage these learners suffer from in pronunciation and intonation *can* be overcome with appropriate help. I know several adult students who developed an accent-free control of an SL. With sufficient help of the right kind at the right time, many psycholinguistic adults could accomplish this.

Immersion programs do not fit any of these seven situations. Rather, they try to use acquisition for the basic structure of an SL. While in a classroom SL program acquisition is useful, even essential, at the advanced levels, it cannot replace the structurally systematic instruction that is needed at the beginning and intermediate levels. Thus immersion has the disadvantages of acquisition

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(unsystematic exposure to the language, etc) and lacks the advantages of learning (systematic instruction). The same is true of any approach that emphasizes communication over structure in its early stages.

The two competing paradigms in our field are then (1) holistic acquisition and (2) learning that results from systematic, step-by-step instruction. There is no evidence that the first has ever worked in the classroom, and considerable evidence that it doesn't. The second has, at certain times and in certain places, worked very well.

Of course, no SL program can produce, by itself, full (FSI/ILR 5) bilinguals. After a solid foundation has been built, the remote-SL learner would need to spend considerable time in an SL milieu. But a full-fledged SL program can produce *transitional bilinguals*, that is, graduates who communicate in the SL with reasonable fluency and have no faulty linguistic habits. Unlike students who internalize a classroom pidgin, such graduates can go on to become excellent and, in some cases, native-like speakers of the second language.

How we teach depends largely (but not exclusively) on *what* we are trying to teach. In our field, this is the language and how to use it. We SL teachers expected linguists to describe our target languages in a useful way and psychologists to tell us how they can be learned in our classrooms. We have been largely disappointed in our expectations. Few linguists or psychologists are interested in SL teaching which might be a blessing in disguise!

Unlike Chomsky I use the word 'competence' to mean knowledge *both* about and of something, both cognitive and performative whether conscious or unconscious. *Second language competence* means

> being able to use a second language accurately (linguistic competence) to communicate messages fluently and effectively (communicative competence) in ways that are socioculturally appropriate (cultural competence) (Hammerly, in press).

Linguists could be of help by usefully describing the core language component of SL competence.

Sentence derivation trees and transformations on deep structure strings are *not* what I have in mind when I say 'usefully'. To be useful in the classroom, descriptions must be as concrete as possible and must take into account what the students know, even if (or *especially* if) what they know or think they know isn't completely accurate. For example, definitions of word categories on the basis of function, or of function and form, are not enough. Thus, most nouns *are* (as per their traditional definition) 'names of persons,

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places or things', and this generalization about their meaning *is* useful to know provided the existence of exceptions is made very clear.

Just as in the 1940s and 1950s there was a (largely coincidental) alliance between structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology, there has been since the late 1960s an alliance between transformational-generative linguistics and cognitive psychology. Among the results of the current alliance are the preference for unconscious learning, the avoidance of practice, the rejection of feedback/correction, and the idea that the important thing is to be 'creative'. These beliefs are demonstrably incorrect, at least as far as the classroom learning of a complex code is concerned.

Knowledge that is initially conscious can become unconscious (i.e. used automatically when called for) through practice that gradually shifts, for each point to be learned, from focus on structure/form/language (the 'medium') to focus on communication/meaning/language-in-use (the 'message'). I think certain complex SL distinctions do not lend themselves easily to acquisition (by linguistic adults) but can be taught and learned very well in a conscious, deductive manner. Examples are, for English-speaking students, *estar* versus *ser* (two verbs for 'to be') in Spanish and the *imparfait* versus the *passé composé* (two past tenses) in French. Without initial conscious attention to such SL distinctions, students who are exposed to an SL for communicative, natural, unconscious acquisition rarely master them.

The CAN/SLACC/I/'I' establishment holds that the only acceptable kind of practice (if they use the word 'practice' at all) is meaningful, natural use of the language. The problem is that natural, unstructured practice is too haphazard to lead to mastery, either of individual structures or the SL in general. Of course, mindlessly doing the same thing over and over again is not very useful either. To be useful, practice must involve some sort of decision at each point and, as a result of feedback, some sort of cognitive change. (Chapters 11 and 12 deal with practice in greater detail.)

Students need feedback to guide their choice-making at all the points of decision. When results are not acceptable, corrective action is a must. It is the height of unreasonableness to expect students to learn an SL well in the classroom without giving them prompt, language-focused evaluations of their output. (More on this in Chapters 8 and 9.)

As for creativity, it is disastrous to use any tool 'creatively' before one has developed the degree of control required for a particular use of it. The bounds within which one can be creative and still use a tool appropriately can gradually expand. It takes time and careful training to learn to do a complex thing well. Would you entrust your car to an apprentice mechanic and invite

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him to be 'creative' with its transmission? If not, why should beginning SL students be encouraged to be 'creative' far beyond the very limited control they have over the tool of language?

The currently popular view of learning is that learners have to just plunge into the subject, doing poorly at first and gradually learning to do better and better and, eventually, very well. This flies in the face of evidence that remedial learning, which involves unlearning what has been mislearned and then relearning it, is as much as four times more time-consuming than mastering things step by step the first time around. Furthermore, remedial learning is often ineffective and requires very high motivation on the part of the learner. In the case of people who have become used to communicating messages in faulty language, the damage can rarely be undone.

Given the above considerations, let us discuss briefly various theories, models and methods in our field. 1

Second language theorizing and model development have been popular of late, but for a very long time all we had in our field was methods, largely devoid of theory and often opposed to one another. Second language methods remind me of a feature of the North American continent: the continental divide running from North to South and separating the waters that flow East into the Atlantic Ocean from those that flow West into the Pacific Ocean. Except that in languistics there are many methodological continental divides. Some are discussed below.

The Monolingual/Bilingual Divide: Most SL methods are monolingual. Even methods that were originally bilingual (such as the structural linguists' approach at the Foreign Service Institute) were turned into monolingual methods when they were adopted and modified almost beyond recognition by the educational system, as in the so-called 'audiolingual' method*s*.2 The most highly developed bilingual method widely used today seems to be Dodson's (1967/1974), but several other methods make use of the students' NL.

The Graphemic/Oral Divide: Most of today's methods emphasize the spoken language, but many still base oral development on a written foundation. One can of course learn to read fairly well and still be unable to understand or use spoken language; this has been the experience of millions of people exposed for many years to reading-oriented methods.

The Natural Acquisition/Guided Learning Divide: Many 'new' methods are based on natural acquisition. I think best results are obtained when both the learning and the acquisition modes of instruction are used, with acquisition becoming dominant at the *advanced* levels. The best attempt to do this at a university may be Walker's (1989) Intensive Chinese Curriculum (although its learning mode is monolingual).

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The Structural/Communicative Divide: Several popular methods emphasize communication from the start, often at the expense of structure. This divide has often been interpreted as a dichotomy between meaningfully used language and mindless mechanical oral work. But while some repetition and simple manipulation are necessary, most practice that focuses on structure need not be mindless. Attention to structure is essential, or a classroom pidgin will develop; but *from the start, what is learned should be used to produce real messages of gradually widening scope*. So this isn't an either/or situation: the SL program must stress both structure (the medium) and communication (messages using the medium), with different degrees of emphasis at different points.

Holistic, Top-Down 'Gradual Improvement'/Step-By-Step Linear Learning Divide: Methods that leave grammaticality to 'emerge' largely by itself produce, not surprisingly, graduates who speak and write very ungrammatically. While there may be gradual improvement in some areas, many rules and elements are never mastered. At the other extreme, linear bottom-up step-by-step methods that do not involve communication throughout produce, again not surprisingly, graduates who can replicate and manipulate the SL but can't communicate in it. (Examples of such methods would be highly cognitive traditional teaching and very mechanical oral methods.) The answer lies somewhere in the middle. Unlike either holistic or linear approaches, with a *cumulative mastery* approach learning is *interactive* vis-à-vis the top-down/bottom-up divide, for each rule and element is mastered bottom-up but then used top-down to communicate with everything learned up to that point.

Theories normally underlie methods, and models graphically represent theories and methods. But, as already noted, several methods have lacked explicit theories and models, so these can only be suggested *ex post facto*, primarily on the basis of teaching materials and known procedures. Keeping that in mind, the following major theories-models-methods can be distinguished:

The *Logico-Literary Theory* (as I have called it) holds that learning an SL is primarily a matter of understanding, memorizing and applying rules for the main purpose of learning to read, especially literature. Far more translation is used than may be justified. In the related model, called the *Reconstructionist Model*, the learner takes NL sentences and reconstructs them into SL sentences. The method associated with these views is generally known as the *Grammar-Translation Method* and has been in use, with various adaptations, for several centuries. Rarely do students who study an SL with this method attain a high level of SL competence.

The *Naturalistic Theory* (my name for it) assumes that an SL is best learned in the classroom monolingually, the way the NL is acquired in early childhood. The model or hypothesis that goes with this view is Dulay and Burt's

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(1976) *Creative Construction Hypothesis*, wherein the learner 'creates' the SL quite apart from the NL. Methods closely associated with the Naturalistic Theory include the *Natural Method* (1850s), the *Series Method* (Gouin, 1880), and the *Direct Method* (1890s on). Naturalism and the Direct Method strongly affected the *Audiolingual Methods* and found another modern manifestation in the *Audio-Visual Method*. Other methods heavily influenced by this theory are situational methods, the *Immersion Approach*, the *Total Physical Response* (Asher, 1977), the *Comprehension Approach* (Winitz, 1981), the *Natural Approach* (Terrell, 1977; Krashen and Terrell, 1983), and most versions of the *Communicative Approach* (see below). Some languists favor naturalness beyond monolingualism, for example by calling for the use of 'authentic' materials from the first day of class. Others point out that certain learning strategies asking questions, seeking NL equivalents, etc are more natural than others in the SL classroom; but this doesn't turn the SL classroom situation into a natural language acquisition environment.

What I call the *Structural-Behaviorist Theory* can be inferred from the work of applied linguists starting in the early 1940s. It did not have, as far as I can tell, any model associated with it apart from the corresponding linguistic and psychological theories. The first method associated with this theory was the *Army Method* (also known as the '*Mim-Mem*' or *Aural-Oral Method*) of the 1940s. This method was refined and improved over the years, especially at the US Department of State, and came to be known as the *Linguistic* or *Structural Approach*. As I knew it at the Foreign Service Institute in the late 1950s, it was an oral, bilingual method, still too mechanistic but fairly effective, and it did not neglect communication. Only one of the so-called *Audiolingual Methods* supposedly based on the Structural Approach was similar to it, but unfortunately few school teachers had the necessary linguistic or professional qualifications to use it effectively. The well-known result is that in its wider ('Audiolingual') use the Structural Approach became distorted into something monolingual and highly mechanical that did neglect communication. Since many students taught with such a distorted method came out as little more than parrots, a strong reaction naturally followed.

The *Generative-Cognitivist Theory*, as I call it, reflects the corresponding views in the new linguistics and psychology. Perhaps Jakobovits (1970) came closest to explicitly stating this theory. Its methodological manifestation was the *Cognitive Approach* introduced in the 1970s. This method can be called 'logico-communicative': it relied on deduction based on the new linguistic rules, completely rejected mechanical practice, and emphasized linguistic 'creativity' in communication-like exercises. Some strands of this theory and this method can be seen in some of today's methods.

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What I have called the *Sociopsychological Theory* is a common thread going through three methods introduced in the 1960s and 1970s: the *Silent Way* (Gattegno, 1972), *Community Language Learning* (Curran, 1976) and *Suggestopedia* (Lozanov, 1978). What they have in common is an emphasis on the learner's feelings in the social context of the classroom. But they also differ markedly: the first two withhold direct teacher guidance as much as possible, while the third has the teacher very much in charge.

The *Communicative (or Sociolinguistic) Theory* of SL teaching has drawn primarily on the work of discourse-oriented linguists and sociolinguists, especially in Great Britain. Their work has shed much light on the functions of language and the nature of communication acts. This focus led to a new emphasis being given to communication in SL teaching. In many places, communication was not sufficiently stressed and some emphasis on it was overdue. The method associated with this theory is the *Communicative Approach*, which has taken several forms. Unfortunately, many people have adopted the position that an SL method cannot be both structural and communicative. They have tended to believe that communication is all that matters, with very detrimental effects on the linguistic accuracy of students.

The Communicative Approach aims at developing communicative competence, a concept most explicitly defined by Canale and Swain (1980). In this article, the authors relegate linguistic competence (which they call 'grammatical competence') to one of four components of communicative competence, the other three being 'discourse competence', 'sociolinguistic competence', and 'strategic competence'. But discourse is linguistic competence extended beyond single sentences, and sociolinguistic appropriateness lies at the boundary between language and behavioral culture. This leaves only 'strategic competence', which, apart from language, paralanguage 3 and personality variables, amounts to little more than a bag of conversational tricks. These can of course be taught; but this need not be a major endeavor and can be largely incidental to the learning of language and paralanguage.

The present overemphasis on communication has led to a neglect of structure. One can communicate fairly well in an SL with gestures, a phrase book, and a pocket dictionary but is this being 'competent'? The language itself must be at the center of our theory, method and model as a means to communicate in culturally appropriate ways. It is the language itself that is hardest to master, so it requires most of our pedagogical attention.

The *Acquisitionist Theory* (again, as I call it) holds that an SL is best 'acquired' holistically and unconsciously, while conscious attention is on something else, such as the communication of messages or nonlanguage subjects in the curriculum. The model associated with this SLA theory is

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Krashen's (1978) Monitor Model, to which I have already referred. As relevant as this theory and this model might be to untutored SL acquisition in the field, they are largely irrelevant to the very different situation classrooms present.

The Communicative, Acquisitionist and Naturalistic theories have supported each other and joined forces into a 'megatheory', the 'CAN Megatheory'. This megatheory has displaced systematic SL teaching and for years has been the dominant view in publications, at conferences, and even in research organizations. The problem is that SL programs based on this megatheory or on any of its three intermingled theories don't produce good results.

Other models, or at least hypotheses, of SL acquisition/learning or use have been offered. One is the *Interlanguage Hypothesis* (Selinker, 1972; Selinker *et al.* 1975); as we shall see in Chapter 7, the SL program should aim at *preventing* the establishment of an interlanguage. Another one is the *Pidginization Hypothesis* (Schumann, 1976); but pidginization is neither a desirable nor an inevitable phase of SL learning in the classroom. Thirdly, there is the *Acculturation Model* (Schumann, 1978); but while in the field acculturation and SL competence normally go hand in hand, one can develop transitional biligualism in the classroom without acculturation, and acculturation in the local environment without a high level of bilingualism.

There is a strong tendency to take theories and models that may be relevant to language acquisition outside the classroom and extrapolate them to the SL classroom. Inevitably, methods based on extraneous theories and models do not work well in the SL classroom.

Most methods have one or more procedures or emphases that are successful in certain areas of SL learning. The problem is that many methodologists extend such procedures or emphases beyond their applicability, building an entire method around them. A balanced method will use good ideas from many sources, not one or two ideas for everything.

There have been many failed attempts at producing transitional bilinguals in the classroom. Instead, we have produced mostly *sesquilinguals* (speakers of one and a half languages, the half being a classroom pidgin) or even *semilinguals* who are not native-like in either language. Yet certain SL programs have succeeded in producing transitional bilinguals. Explaining the principles whereby this can be done is the main purpose of this book.

A sound theory of SL teaching/learning must take into account all the factors that affect classroom SL learning it must indeed be based on what can and does work in the classroom, *not* in some other situation. That is, it must be a l*a*nguistic theory, even though it should draw from other disciplines,

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such as psychology, linguistics, and so forth whatever information *languists* find relevant and applicable.

In my 1985 book I outlined such an *Integrated Theory*; its broad characteristics and some of its details are also presented here. The method that applies the Integrated Theory can be called the *Cumulative Mastery Method*, abbreviated CMM. 4 Cumulative mastery involves learning to control structural rules and elements one by one while also using them (together with everything else learned to that point) for increasingly freer meaningful communication. Holistic CAN-based methods, on the other hand, rely on and promise a gradual general improvement an improvement that never quite comes about, for a classroom pidgin is soon established and reinforced by continued use. This distinction is the most important difference between the Cumulative Mastery Method and most other SL methods. (Of course, all methods *claim* to yield mastery of the SL.)

The model that represents several key features of the Integrated Theory and the Cumulative Mastery Method is the Two-Cone Model (Hammerly, 1982; 1985). Readers of my previous books are already familiar with this model but may find of interest the new discussion of it that follows.

The Two-Cone Model harmonizes with my definition of SL competence (please refer to Figure 1) as composed of three kinds of competence: the ability
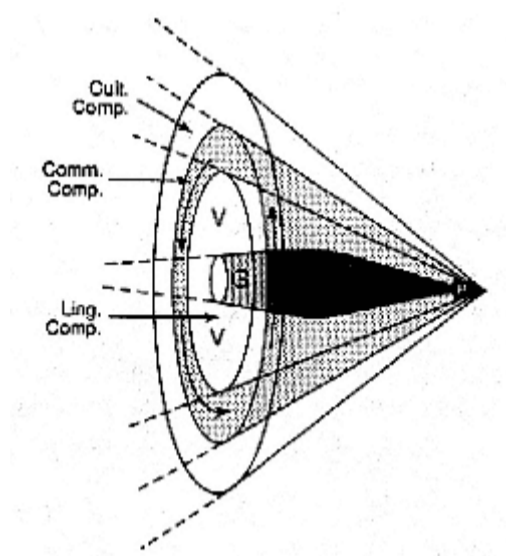
Figure 1

to use the language accurately (linguistic competence) at the core, to communicate (communicative competence) in ways that are appropriate to the second culture (cultural competence). 5 Thus, SL competence is represented as a three-layer cone.

Within the language core of SL competence, the first thing the learner encounters and must learn to differentiate and produce is the sounds of the language, at least in an oral-emphasis program. That requires some attention to pronunciation during the first few hours of the program. This is why pronunciation is shown at the apex or starting point (see Figure 2) of the linguistic competence cone for the SL. (If pronunciation is not attended to appropriately by the teacher at the beginning of the program, poor habits will form that are hard to eradicate later.)
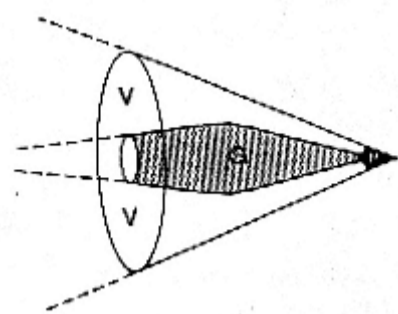
Figure 2

Then emphasis shifts to the grammar (morphology and syntax) of the SL, although of course not all grammatical rules can be taught even within a full-fledged program. Certain infrequent rules will remain to be acquired beyond the program.

Finally, emphasis shifts to the learning of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. While this learning can be well under way within the SL program, vocabulary remains largely to be expanded beyond the program it is, in fact, a lifetime project.

Throughout the program what is learned is put to meaningful use, however limited at first. But the general direction of progress for cumulative mastery in the classroom (see Figure 3) is from the language core out that is, *centrifugal*. The opposite direction simply communicating messages and expecting language structure to emerge as a result of communication may be the reality in natural language acquisition but it doesn't work in the classroom. When such a *centripetal*

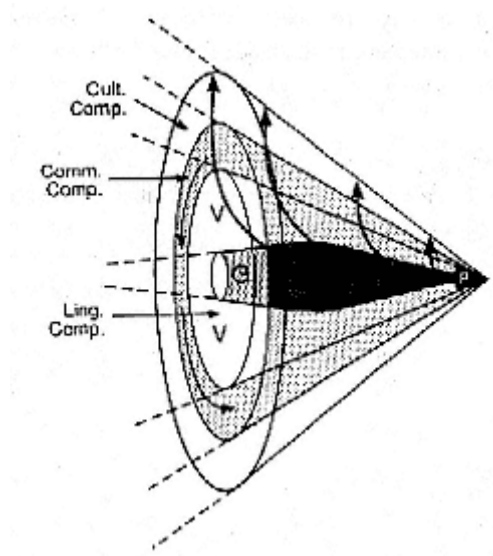< previous page   page_35   next page >

Figure 3

direction (i.e. message to medium) is used, the medium never comes under control, since most ungrammatically worded messages can be communicated effectively.

But the picture would be incomplete if we didn't take the learner's native language into account. This is the other cone in the Two-Cone Model (see Figure 4), and it has three layers too. Except before the age of four or so, the SL learner approaches the SL with a very sophisticated competence in his or her NL, even if much of that competence is largely unconscious. This established

Figure 4

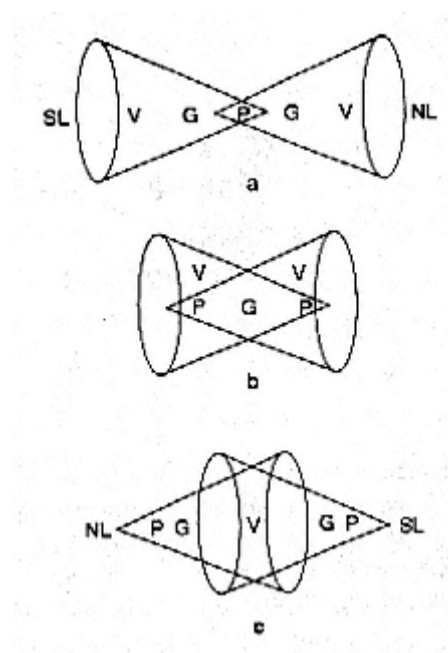< previous page   page_36   next page >
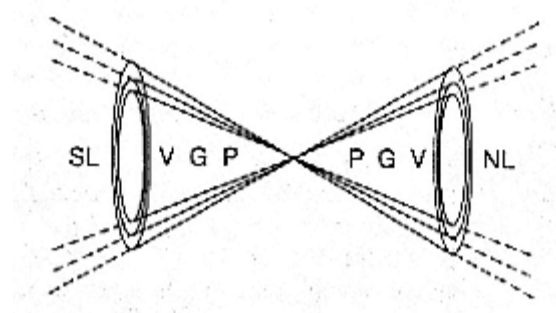
Figure 5

linguistic knowledge is bound to influence the learning of an SL (we shall see some evidence that it does in Chapter 6).

In an oral-emphasis program, the initial point of contact between the two languages (see Figure 5) is in the area of pronunciation and basic intonation patterns (Figure 5(a)). The SL interacts with the NL at every point and gradually emerges from that interaction which instruction can make explicit. Soon after the initial phonological interaction it becomes necessary to concentrate on the differences (and to acknowledge the 'samenesses') between the two grammatical systems (Figure 5(b)). All along, of course, there is lexical influence, both positive and negative. Even after transitional bilingualism is attained at the end of the program, the two languages will remain in strong lexical/semantic contact (Figure 5(c)). Evidence of this is the ease with which many bilinguals switch codes within sentences as well as the need for 'linguistic alertness' on the part of bilinguals who don't like to codeswitch and don't want to use words from one language with denotations or connotations from the other.

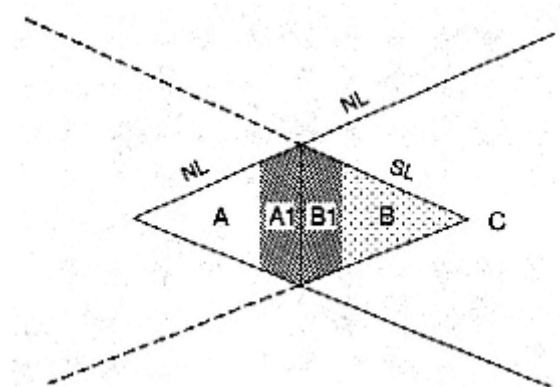< previous page   page_37   next page >

Figure 6

Cross-linguistic interaction is either resolved in favor of correct SL rules and elements or results in the internalization of faulty interlanguage rules and elements. Of course, what has already been learned of the SL can also result in faulty habits through overgeneralization. Figure 6 represents these phenomena. Area A represents that part of the NL that has already interacted with what has been studied of the SL. Area A-1 represents those structures and elements in the NL that have something in common, and therefore are interacting with, the SL rules and elements being learned. The latter are represented by area B-1, which is also affected, as stated earlier, by what has already been learned of the SL (area B). Fossilizations (faulty SL habits) that may occur are represented as dots in area B. Such fossilizations may result from insufficient or poor-quality instruction or, even in the best of programs, from insufficient aptitude or application on the part of learners. (Area C represents the rest of the NL, which hasn't yet interacted with what is to be learned in the SL.)

In terms of the rules that describe linguistic behavior, the progression through the SL can be seen in Figure 7 as the cumulative mastery of rules, which come under control one by one and are used for graded communication in a series of gradually expanded and freer transitional systems (TSs). Thus, after rule 1 (R-1) has come under a considerable degree of control, including some meaningful applications, R-2 is taught and brought under control, at which point TS-1, composed of R-1 and R-2 (plus adequate vocabulary from language samples, of course), is used for the limited communication such a minimal system allows. 6 Then R-3 is learned, and as soon as it has come under a high level of control TS-2 (composed of R-1, R-2 and R-3 plus the necessary vocabulary) is used for communication that is slightly broader than that allowed by TS-2. One by one, rules and elements are learned and integrated into gradually expanded transitional systems of cumulative mastery.

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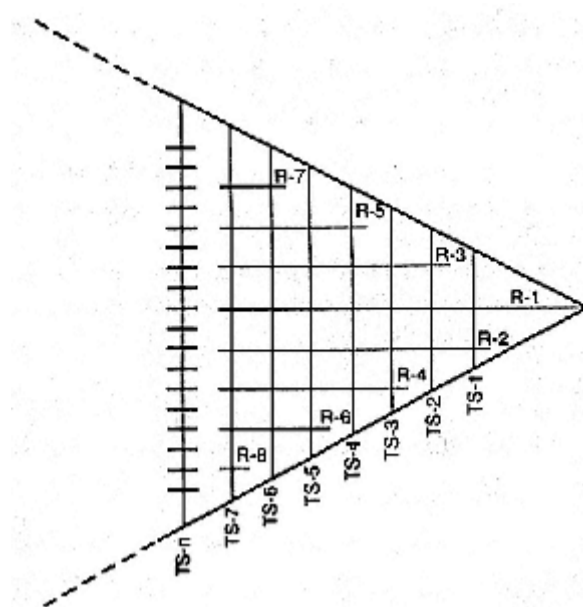
Figure 7

TS-n, the program-terminal system, is also transitional, of course, since many additional, minor rules will have to be acquired (or even learned) by the SL program graduate beyond the program. However, post-program acquisition or learning is mostly lexical. TS-n describes a transitional bilingual with a FSI/ILR S-3/R-3+ rating. This *can* be attained in SL classrooms before students spend time in a SL community, Carroll's (1967) discouraging report on the low proficiency of language majors notwithstanding. But of course it takes a strong program with competent teachers, adequate teaching materials and equipment, and well-motivated students, a combination that is, unfortunately, rare.

The research results of local-SL situations such as ESL seem to contradict my research results and assertions. When research results seem contradictory, one must look for possible flaws. It doesn't take much looking to realize that ESL research is conducted under conditions where there cannot be much control, for the 'subjects' are intensively exposed to, and frequently interact in, the target language outside the classroom, in ways and to an extent that cannot even be determined with any precision. Research on SL teaching/learning must be conducted under conditions that can be controlled, or it will be at best irrelevant and at worst misleading. Adequate controls are

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possible only in a remote-SL situation, such as the teaching of English as a 'foreign' language (EFL) in many countries and the teaching of other languages to monolingual speakers of English in most English-speaking areas of the world.

ESL research is basically unreliable, even for the ESL classroom, and conclusions based on it shouldn't be extrapolated to the remote-SL classroom. SL *acquisition* research cannot justifiedly be extrapolated to *any* classroom SL *teaching and learning*. Yet much of the 'new paradigm' 7 in SL teaching is based on such unjustified extrapolations. And if we value at all the concept of grammaticality, we must conclude that this paradigm *doesn't work*.

The Cumulative Mastery Method based on the Integrated Theory and partially represented by the Two-Cone Model *works*, at least in remote-SL classrooms. How some of these concepts can be adapted to local-SL programs is the subject of later chapters.

Notes to Chapter 3

1 Throughout this book, the words 'approach', 'method', 'procedure' and 'technique' are used to mean pedagogical practices that go, respectively, from most general and widely agreed upon to most specific and individually variable. The original names of various methods, however, are respected, even when their creators use words other than 'method'. For a more detailed discussion of theories and methods, see Hammerly (1982, 1985).

2 I say 'methods' because there were, from the start of the audiolingual movement, three different methods claiming to be *the* Audiolingual Method. Only one of these (the one published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) came somewhat close to the original Structural Approach source.

3 'Paralanguage' refers to everything used with language that isn't language *per se*, e.g. gestures, facial expressions, tone and quality of voice.

4 Previously I have referred to this method by several other names such as 'cognitive audiolingual bilingual', 'cognitive audio-oral bilingual', and 'principled eclectic'.

5 For a chapter on cultural competence and how to impart it, see Hammerly (1982).

6 Each rule, etc goes through a 'cycle' that will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 12.

7 How can people call this a 'new' paradigm? Something going on 15 to 20 years is in decrepit old age as far as trends go.

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4
On Second Language Proficiency

In this chapter I differentiate between the related concepts of SL competence, proficiency, and performance; discuss the proficiency movement and certain of its implications; consider desirable applications of the oral proficiency interview; make suggestions on how SL competence can be tested, as it develops, in the classroom; and conclude with several considerations that a sound SL method aimed at a high level of program-terminal competence should take into account.

SL competence was defined in Chapter 3 as knowledge about, and ability to use, an SL in terms of three components, namely, linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence. In a classroom program, SL competence is developed by extending, step by step, the areas of the SL under control, that is, by cumulative mastery. *Non*-mastery, on the other hand, means corresponding incompetence, and, unlike mastery, it accumulates effortlessly. An SL learner is competent in each component and subcomponent of the SL to the extent that his or her output matches that of the typical educated monolingual native speaker of the language (see below).

The difference between SL competence as I have defined it and SL proficiency is primarily one of emphasis. SL competence focuses on the application of linguistic competence to communicative situations; in the classroom it is developed systematically. Proficiency stresses survival in communicative situations, with lesser focus on the language as such; how proficiency is best developed is not a central question, even though teachers are urged to 'teach for proficiency' (see below).

SL performance is the linguistic, communicative and/or cultural behavior itself. Except for mechanical performance, it is based on knowledge about the language, how to communicate in it, and how to behave in the second culture but the knowledge itself is not the subject of attention when discussing performance. SL performance as defined here is *systematic*; surface performance that includes unsystematic dysfluencies such as inappropriate pauses, hesitation noises ('uh's'), and so forth, is of little interest to anyone but a few psycholinguists.

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The proficiency movement (PM) has had several healthy effects on our profession. One has been its emphasis on *oral* proficiency, welcome because speaking is central to SL competence. Another has been the restoration, to some extent, of linguistic accuracy, which had been allowed to fade from the picture under several coats of communicative varnish. Still another benefit of the PM is the greater observational skill gained by many SL teachers, especially those trained by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to administer the oral proficiency interview (OPI). 1

Of course, a global linguistic evaluation for job certification or placement the original purpose of the OPT differs fundamentally from a measurement of student progress in learning the specific contents of language courses and programs. The former is a *proficiency* evaluation, the latter a *progress* evaluation.

It is imperative therefore not to make decisions on curricular content and methodology based on PM implications that cannot be validly extrapolated to the classroom.

As with bilingualism, so with proficiency: first certain professionals, then much of the general public, have come to see it primarily in 'functional' terms. 'Functionality' has the idea of considerable inaccuracy in SL use built in, as can be seen in the descriptions of proficiency ratings given by the US Foreign Service Institute (FSI)/Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) and the ACTFL guidelines. Calling it 'communicative language proficiency', as some suggest, removes the concept of linguistic accuracy even farther from a central role in SL proficiency.

Furthermore, the ACTFL guidelines imply that in schools and colleges good results are rarely attainable and that poor results are normal, almost inevitable. We see this when we compare the FSI/ILR 0-5 scale with the ACTFL guidelines. Foreign Service officers studying languages at FSI have been required to attain a rating of S-3 to get a commission abroad. Many have succeeded in doing so in about 700 hours (six months) of instruction, at least in some of the common Western languages. As well, they usually attain a comparable reading proficiency level in the same languages. In contrast, the ACTFL guidelines call an S-2 'Advanced' and an S-3 'Superior' implying that both levels are very hard to attain in school. As to confirm this, these two levels lack the number of sublevels given by ACTFL to the 'Novice' (S-0) and 'Intermediate' (S-i) [!] levels. The message to the profession in the ACTFL guidelines is that the 'Advanced' level is not reached often enough to warrant much subclassification and that the 'Superior' level is so unattainable in school programs that there is no need to make any distinctions at all at the S-3 and S-4 levels.

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Although Carroll (1967) found that few college language majors attained a level higher than S-2, many people believe justifiedly, I think that language teaching in North America has been very ineffective. Leaders of the PM have implied that, for the sake of realism, the situation should be accepted. However, being realistic is one thing, and accepting an undesirable status quo as normative is another. Poor results are not normal and should not be institutionalized. Here was an opportunity to inspire our profession to aim, and reach, higher; instead, a mediocre outcome has been analyzed, subclassified, and codified into a system of low expectations.

Equally or even more seriously, by establishing six sublevels at the S-0 and S-1 ratings for oral proficiency, PM leaders have implied that various levels of incompetence, from the extreme to the marked, are part of the normal development of SL students. The more subtle implication is that such levels of incompetence are valid transitional goals for the SL program. But as we have seen in the case of the immersion approach, in the classroom 'transitional' incompetence easily becomes terminal.

In teaching, as in most other activities, if one aims low one will hit even lower. On the other hand, high but realizable goals can yield excellent results. (I know, from many years' experience with Spanish as a remote SL, 2 that well-motivated college students *can* attain an S-3 rating, even without majoring in the SL, provided they are offered appropriate guidance and instruction.) Instead of adopting a defeatist attitude, we should concentrate on what can be done to help bring students up to a transitional-bilingual S-3 level by identifying students and programs that attain it and analyzing and describing their characteristics. The S-3 rating indicates the ability to function with considerable accuracy and reasonable fluency in most situations in an SL. An SL learner needs an S-3 free of faulty habits as a sound base from which to expand vocabulary and increase fluency through intensive interaction with native speakers. Surely an S-3 and good ratings in the other components of SL proficiency should be the aim of all full-fledged SL programs.

Although the word is not used in any of the descriptions and guidelines I have read, the idea of *survival* is built right into the OPI and the PM. In order to determine the level of the interviewee's proficiency, the tester leads the interviewee to communicate well beyond the limits of his or her linguistic competence. Though artificial, the OPT is a linguistic and communicative survival situation. But students in a remote-SL classroom face no immediate survival needs. No benefit can derive from putting them prematurely through a series of artificial survival situations and for a significant part of the course grade at that. Students should have the opportunity to develop, step by step, a basic control of the language before they have to face any such global situation. Besides, most

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remote-SL students at least initially don't want just to survive but rather to learn the SL well.

Degree of mastery of language structure is central to the OPI. 3 A balanced emphasis on both fluency *and* accuracy was part of the PM from the start, ACTFL having continued it from FSI/ILR. It is curious therefore but in keeping with their views to see CAN/SLACC/I/immersion advocates urge that proficiency be evaluated only on the basis of communication, not accuracy. *Proficiency without linguistic control is not proficiency but just communicative survival skill.* Communication is most effective when it is grammatical, when the attention of the listener is not drawn away from the message to linguistic errors.

The OPI was never meant to be just a measurement of 'fluency' and should not be reduced to one. In harmony with the CAN view, Barnwell (1989: 44) has suggested that if the OPI does not reflect the value of a year interacting with native speakers then the OPI deserves scrutiny. This was in response to James's (1985) description of Middlebury College students coming back after a year in France chattering in French but in serious danger of becoming 'terminal 2+'s with fossilized mistakes' (James, 1985: 11). The problem not being addressed here is *when* the SL immersion4 experience takes place. My observation of numerous SL learners who picked up Spanish or English in the field is that premature immersion that is, immersion before a solid foundation has been established systematically invariably results in the development and habituation of a fluent but very inaccurate terminal interlanguage. It is the idea that free communication results in SL proficiency that deserves scrutiny.

There are evidently several definitions of SL proficiency. This was only to be expected: In the absence of an established body of knowledge in our discipline, when a concept spreads throughout the profession people interpret it according to their particular background and orientation and then proceed to try to impose their interpretation on the whole discipline. More serious, and more damaging to SL teaching and learning, is the view of SL proficiency development that many have extrapolated from the FSI/ILR descriptions and the ACTFL guidelines.

The OPI evaluates how a person communicates orally regardless of the quality or even the existence of instruction. From the start its aims have been global and are therefore quite unrelated to the specific sequential goals of SL instruction. The OPI explores the examinee's oral proficiency by encouraging him or her to use limited linguistic means for global ends, in the process revealing both strengths and weaknesses. That the interview goes beyond what the examinee knows is seen in the fact that all the descriptions of oral proficiency levels below S-4 list linguistic weaknesses. These ratings take for granted that if

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examinees are pushed beyond their limited linguistic competence they will produce error-laden interlanguage output.

ACTFL's OPI guidelines the heart of the PM describe the output of interviewees in such a way that one expects them to be highly inaccurate at the 0/'Novice' level, somewhat less inaccurate at the 1/'Intermediate' level, better but still quite inaccurate at the 2/'Advanced' level, and so on. It is easy, from such a series of unrelated snapshots, to form a motion picture in one's mind and assume that SL students can become proficient by plunging in, communicating with many errors at first (even speaking in single words!) and gradually overcoming their linguistic inaccuracy. This developmental sequence extrapolated from OPI ratings and supported by SLA researchers and CAN/SLACC/I advocates portrays SL proficiency as being attained through successive approximations.

While this may apply to natural, long-term local-SL acquisition situations, especially in childhood, the available evidence mostly from immersion programs shows that this is not the case in remote-SL classrooms. In the latter the degree of approximation to a native standard does increase up to a (rather low) point via communicative interaction, but the outcome is far short even if the program is greatly extended of the SL competence attainable by more systematic means.

Since the dominant concept of SL proficiency has come to stress, or even focus exclusively on, communicative survival at the expense of linguistic accuracy, the phrase 'SL proficiency' has lost much of its value. *In the classroom, rather than 'teaching for SL proficiency' by encouraging students, from the start, to try to survive communicative situations and develop linguistically through successive approximations, we need to impart SL competence by expanding mastery point by point.* This means ensuring that the students learn 'A' well, then having them use it for the limited, directed communication it allows; helping them attain a high level of mastery over 'B', then having them use 'A' plus 'B' in graded communication; making sure they control 'C', then integrating it with 'A' and 'B' so that all three are used to convey meaning; and so on. It means, of course, actively discouraging students from trying to communicate with structures they do not yet control and have no reason to control, because the structures have not yet been taught systematically and the students have not yet had a chance to practice them systematically.

Meaningful use before a threshold of control has been reached results in far more errors than can be effectively corrected, and this in turn results in faulty rules becoming habitual and then terminal. Notice that SL competence through cumulative mastery is far more than a 'linear' process: it involves linguistic and communicative *integration* every step of the way.

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If OPI ratings are used to evaluate the progress of individual students especially to assign them grades within a SL program or to determine whether they have met a SL requirement, we can expect that the students will concentrate on meeting the demands of the interview(s). This means they will try to survive communicatively at all costs, and the biggest of these costs unfortunately obvious only in the long run is that linguistic accuracy will be sacrificed to communication and will become terminal linguistic inaccuracy. This is the consequence of turning Proficiency from a global evaluative tool independent of instruction into a curriculum-determining 'organizing principle'.

The inadvisability of basing curriculum design, methodology, or goal decisions in academic settings on the OPI has already been noted by others, e.g. Lowe (1986). OPI ratings are based on assumptions of what is easier and harder to learn irrespective of instruction; such assumptions have little or nothing to say about desirable instructional sequences. The current popularity of such phrases as 'teaching for proficiency' and 'proficiency-based instruction' shows therefore confusion between a global evaluation of outcomes and the means to get there.

We must differentiate between *progress* in SL learning that is, the ability to use accurately things that have been systematically taught and practiced and the global evaluation of SL *proficiency*. Teachers naturally want to concentrate on the measurement of progress, that is, to answer the question, 'Have the students learned what I (or the materials, etc) taught them?' The early or, worse yet, the repeated substitution of global proficiency evaluations for progress tests cannot but bring a prompt end to good progress in mastering SL structure, as much as it may make students more 'fluent'. 5

The claim made by certain SLA researchers and CAN/SLACC/I/immersion advocates that an SL 'cannot be taught' shows such an extreme detachment from the realities of the classroom that it need not concern us. CAN/SLACC/I advocates object even to the idea of a language-based SL curriculum. The lack of logic in *not* basing second language teaching/learning on the *language* doesn't seem to impress them. While it is true that the grammar-translation method and (as practiced in many places) oral methods have been language-based and produced poor results, the fault is not in the language basis but in their misapplications of it. A systematic language basis is not only possible but essential in learning a *language*, provided of course that what is learned linguistically is also used communicatively as it is learned. The original OPI ratings were frankly based, to a large extent, on language structure. There is nothing wrong with that and the PM doesn't need to change it. Language structure is hardly a 'tyrant' to be escaped from but a central necessity when we claim to teach *languages*.

The concept of the 'educated native speaker' though not stated in so many words underlies FSI/ILR/ACTFL ratings. Recently this concept has

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been criticized as 'elitist' by certain SLA researchers. It has even been suggested that communicatively-oriented SL instruction requires that students should master vernacular forms rather than a relatively variable but standard form of the language (Valdman, 1988). The question is one of standards.

The 'native speaker' part of the 'educated native speaker' concept is reasonably easy to deal with if a monolingual model is used. In those terms, speakers of a language can be said to be native-like to the extent that their output does not exhibit characteristics of another language or avoidance of language features natives use (i.e. the percentage of usage of structures must be similar to that of native speakers). While much more research on certain aspects of native-speaker output is needed, linguists have long been describing it for the commonly-taught languages. Of course, bilinguals tend to speak differently from monolingual native speakers in each language. Even the speech of a firmly established monolingual native speaker will, after a few years in an SL environment, show some effects of the SL on the NL.

The 'educated' part is harder to define. There are of course cultures in which few people, if any, are educated in the traditional Western sense. But even in such cultures, there is a way or ways of speaking which average native speakers consider acceptable or desirable. Social acceptability/desirability as seen by (monolingual) native speakers of any target language is, then, a working criterion for SL programs one that has to be (and probably in most cases can be) applied without waiting for the results of future sociolinguistic research.

Another criterion regarding educational level a very practical one is for SL programs to teach, and students to learn, the form of the language that matches (1) the students' level of education and (2) the level of education characteristic of their most likely interlocutors. These will not necessarily be the same. SL program graduates should be able (and apparently want) to sound like their counterparts with the same level of education, at least on those occasions when they have to interact with them. This means that the aim of SL programs should be a standard form of the language. This should in no way be taken as discouraging the teaching and learning, *as an advanced additional activity*, of a nonstandard form or forms spoken by prospective interlocutors.

If students learn *only* a nonstandard form, they will be unable to meet the first criterion mentioned in the preceding paragraph when they wish to do so, and possibly the second criterion as well. Even in a diglossic situation such as the one in Haiti, which Valdman (1988) refers to, speaking only the nonstandard form i.e. Haitian Creole would present problems. Not only would the SL learner be unable to communicate with educated Haitians at their level, but there could be sociopsychological difficulties with the Creole speakers themselves. The situation that I think most seems to resemble that within the North

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American continent is what I believe would happen if an educated white American turned up in a black city ghetto speaking Black English: after their initial puzzlement and amusement ceased, the black interlocutors would probably consider the white speaker's behavior condescending.

Coming back to the SL context, perhaps SLA researchers can dispense with a linguistic standard, but SL programs and SL competence evaluators cannot. They have to have one at which to aim or to which to refer. The 'educated native speaker' is as 'real' as a letter of the alphabet: while one cannot speak of a particular letter as *the* letter 'a', we know what is and what isn't an 'a' it is a perfectly valid and useful symbol and model, with flexible but definite characteristics. SL programs need to maintain (and refine) a similarly flexible but specific model of competence for their students to emulate the educated native speaker. In most situations, to communicate effectively our students will have to use the language the way 'he'/'she' does.

While, as explained earlier, the OPI should not be used for curricular decision-making or to provide SL students with evaluations of their progress, it still has, as a global measurement, certain valid applications. Provided linguistic competence is central to it, the OPI can be used as one of several means of setting and maintaining standards for the hiring of SL teachers, and to help compare the overall results of different SL methods and programs by evaluating the SL competence of their graduates.

Ideally, SL teachers, in addition to knowing what to teach and how to teach it, should be native or native-like speakers (and readers and writers) of both languages. This can seldom be the case, of course. For the non-native teacher, an S-4 rating without faulty habits should be a requirement for admission to the profession. This would require a period of residence in an SL environment beyond the attainment of a transitional bilingual S-3. Expecting teachers with an S-3 or lower to help students attain an S-3 or higher is logically and practically untenable. The inadequate SL proficiency of many language teachers is one of the important reasons why many language programs are ineffective.

It would be very illuminating if rotating teams of neutral, certified testers could evaluate the oral proficiency of SL program graduates and majors from many colleges and universities every few years. As long as data for students who have had extracurricular exposure to the language are excluded, and the emphasis of the analysis is not on 'fluency' at the expense of accuracy, such information would be extremely valuable, as it would allow an objective comparison of methods and programs.

For the evaluation of individual student progress and the assignment of oral

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grades *within* programs, particularly for final course and program exams, we need *oral progress tests and interviews*. These measure how well the students can use orally what they have been appropriately taught and have had sufficient opportunity to practice and learn. Only such specific expectations are justified in an SL classroom program. Within SL programs, including final program evaluations, we need to use *accurate-control ratings* rather than error-including and -condoning global proficiency ratings.

Oral progress tests can be conducted in language laboratories and designed so as to elicit output requiring the use of specific structures and lexical items. Such tests should include a section in which the students generate meaningful sentences they are capable of generating because the sentences recombine in novel ways what they already know. The testees do this under close recorded guidance, especially at the beginning.

Oral progress interviews also focus strictly on what has been taught and used. Since interviews have to be conducted individually, this cannot be done frequently, although about five minutes per student proves adequate. The best arrangement for measuring oral progress may be several oral tests plus one progress interview per term.

Since cultural competence is one of the components of SL competence, it must be a significant part of a language teacher's training; it should be imparted to all SL students and, of course, tested. While knowledge of informational and achievement culture can be tested with relative ease, the teaching and testing of behavioral culture require interpreting native speakers' behavior and acting it out, which call for situations and simulations.

A method of SL teaching that purports to help students reach an S-3 level of oral proficiency (and appropriate levels in listening, reading, writing, and culture) *free of systematic errors* must offer an integrated solution to what is a multifaceted problem. The solution evidently does not lie in encouraging students to communicate freely from the start, for while some errors disappear through communicative interaction, most do not. Communication plus secondary attention to structure is not the answer either, especially at the beginning and intermediate levels of SL study, when rules, correct *or not*, are internalized, soon becoming impervious to correction.

Instead, the answer lies in a step-by-step progression in both structure and communication, with growing control of the structure core being applied continually to gradually freer and more sophisticated communication, and with appropriate feedback on both structure and communication throughout. (Chapters 11 and 12 discuss the assumptions and some of the procedures of this Cumulative Mastery Method [CMM].)

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Encouraging students to communicate freely beyond their linguistic competence is contrary to the aims and procedures of the CMM, so the OPI and other global proficiency measurements should not be used within SL programs, as useful as they may be in research. The CMM stresses oral development too, but systematically, using oral tests and interviews only to determine whether students have accurate control of what they have studied and can use it for controlled communication.

Communicative competence, and fluency in particular, should be long-term, *terminal* goals of the SL program, to be further enhanced beyond the program. To emphasize the attainment of communicative competence/fluency at the beginning or in the middle of the program guarantees the internalization of Spanglish, Frenglish, and other such classroom pidgins, for under the pressure to communicate prematurely, accuracy is sacrificed. In a classroom program, conversational fluency in the SL is best developed gradually, by encouraging students to use only what they have learned through systematic instruction.

Theory and practice that yield transitional bilinguals (with an S-3 level of SL proficiency but free from habitual errors) in academic settings must answer correctly many questions. As noted, a few such answers are attempted elsewhere in this book. Furthermore, most of these questions all those whose answers are not conspicuously obvious still need to be the object of classroom research based on sound premises. Unfortunately, much of the armchair theorizing and of the experimental research done in the last fifteen to twenty years seems to have taken certain incorrect assumptions for granted; it is only natural therefore that much of it has led to implications and applications that fail to produce competent SL program graduates.

Our students can attain a high level of SL competence if we teach them in such a way that they do not internalize a faulty interlanguage. (Some ideas on how this can be done are suggested in Chapter 7.) The present structure of, and recommended uses for, the ACTFL proficiency guidelines are not much help in securing a high level of SL competence for our students at the end of what may be long and arduous learning efforts. The PM will be more helpful if it acknowledges that an error-laden interlanguage is not a valid educational goal or standard at *any* point in the SL curriculum.

Notes to Chapter 4

1 The OPI was developed at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), US Department of State, in 1956. (In 1960 and 1961 I assisted with such interviews, in Spanish, at FSI.) Widely used by US government agencies, the interview came to be known as the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) OPI. The idea has been adapted by

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ACTFL for use by educational institutions. For many years ACTFL has been developing guidelines for the use of the OPI and for the evaluation of the other components of SL proficiency. They published the latest comprehensive version of these guidelines in 1986.

2 That is, in several states and in British Columbia, in all of which the community language is English.

3 While some see 'mastery' as an absolute, all-or-nothing term, one can speak more usefully of degrees (percentages) of mastery, that is, approximations to full control; if necessary, the concept could be quantified in detail down to individual rules and elements.

4 Here the word 'immersion' is used in its true sense being surrounded by the language (not by a classroom pidgin), the way a person or object is surrounded, and usually covered, by water when he/she/it is immersed in it.

5 As the average English speaker understands it, fluency in an SL doesn't just mean speaking it rapidly and smoothly but also accurately. In our field, however, 'fluency' has come to emphasize rapidity, smoothness and 'confidence' (often false confidence) in communication. It is this narrower usage of 'fluency' in our field that is differentiated from 'accuracy' in this book.

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Balance in Language Teaching and Learning

What would you think of a centipede that tried to walk forward by insisting on raising all of its left legs way up in the air until it lost its balance, then switching and doing the same with all its right legs, and proceeding in this fashion, back and forth, never quite in balance?

Our field is like that. It has been subject to frequent major shifts in philosophy shifts that reflect changing assumptions about the purpose of language study, the nature of language, the process of learning and language learning, and the role of teaching in general and language teaching in particular. These shifts have naturally had major pedagogical consequences affecting approaches, methods, procedures, and even the choice of specific teaching techniques.

Change is inevitable in any field, and we must learn not only to live with it but to benefit from it and, indeed, to contribute to it. Yet, changes affecting millions of people shouldn't be left to chance or to the whims of a few outspoken leaders. And since as I argued in Chapter 2 all changes aren't necessarily improvements, we need to look carefully at new ideas and test them through several questions. Otherwise we can, like that centipede, lose our balance. Which is a serious matter, for when we do so, we mislead and harm many people.

One basic question that needs to be asked is *whether a new idea or practice is supported by objectively derived conclusions that fully take counterevidence into account*. By 'objectively derived conclusions' I am not referring to 'facts' obtained in an effort to demonstrate the validity of untested (and often untestable) assumptions. When people set out to prove something, they are no longer scholars but advocates, and objectivity is lost. When that happens (and, unfortunately, it seems to happen often) the whole research process is slanted, from the decision about which hypotheses to test which is also a decision about which hypotheses to ignore to the choice of data to be collected, the manner in which they are collected and analyzed, and, especially, the ways in which they are interpreted. The numerous research studies that follow this path

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are therefore suspect, regardless of how many statistical calculations and tables they include and of the scientific language in which they are couched.

There are many examples of this. Perhaps the most blatant one in recent years involves the immersion approach, already discussed in Chapter 1. For nearly two decades the Canadian SL establishment produced an enormous number of (usually) statistically spotless research reports on many aspects of French immersion while minimizing or ignoring the substantial evidence that immersion results in a classroom pidgin, Frenglish. They have paid little attention to evidence showing that a second language cannot be successfully acquired 'naturally' in the classroom and that, therefore, systematic instruction is needed.

This is not to impugn these leaders' integrity. One can see this phenomenon in any field: when professionals commit themselves to a theory and a course of action, they develop blinders for everything else. To keep on erring is human too, up to a point.

Another important question to ask is *whether the new idea (or practice derived therefrom) is likely to yield better practical results, both short- and long-term, than the idea or practice it would replace*. This is a key factor in an applied discipline like ours. Replacing something that works fairly well with something whose results are not known to be better borders on the irresponsible. Careful, objectively analyzed pilot testing or experimentation should precede any large-scale implementation. And, of course, we should take into account whether the new idea or practice can be implemented without major distortion resulting from our inability to meet human and material requirements in the field. (For example, for a proposed change in teaching practices: Are most teachers qualified to implement the new idea or could they be retrained in a short time to do so? Are appropriate teaching materials available or could they be made available without much difficulty?)

Educators often fail to consider the long-term effects of a particular innovation. Instead they simply push forward, hoping for the best. The long-term effects of SLACC/I/immersion, for instance, were not carefully thought out. While in the short term an emphasis on communication from the start of the program predictably leads to greater 'fluency' (rapidity and smoothness of output), its serious long-term damage to accuracy appears not to have been foreseen. As the evidence of this deficiency mounted, it was not taken into account.

The communicative approach has been widely promoted without carefully controlled methodological comparison studies. While a few studies have attempted to compare certain teaching procedures, I know of no major study in which a communicative method was carefully compared with a structural method, much less a balanced method emphasizing *both* structure and

communication as needed. The lack of such objective data should have led to concern and caution.

A third question re proposed changes is *whether the new idea or practice appeals to the common-sense logic and intuition of successful practitioners*. Although languistics must be theoretically sound, it should not be primarily a matter of theory. The views of successful, experienced practitioners should carry much weight, maybe as much as those of theoreticians and experimental researchers. It is no secret that several of the theorists whose views have underpinned the current CAN megatheory and its SLACC/I approach have had little or no experience in SL teaching; thus they lack the common-sense logic and intuition that are born of many years of experience and observation. Can largely inexperienced theorists make valid contributions to languistic theory and practice? Should their theories be the columns on which the languistic building rests?

A fourth question that needs to be asked is *whether the new idea will contribute to the further, balanced development of languistic theory and practice*. For a discipline to mature, its members must establish a foundation of demonstrated knowledge and then try to expand that knowledge base on all viable fronts. Areas of theoretical and practical activity should not be neglected or abandoned according to the dictates of fashion but only if they are demonstrably unsound or unproductive.

It is doubtful that there ever has been balance in languistics we have yet to establish the necessary knowledge base but I think we are now going through a period of great imbalance. When it comes to balance, our field has often resembled the centipede described above.

Major philosophical dividing lines in languistics involve choices, emphases, and teaching practices with components of SL competence (linguistic, communicative, and cultural), language skills (on both the audio-oral/graphic and the intra-/interlingual dimensions), and language components (phonology, morphosyntax, vocabulary, and discourse). Another important area of disagreement in languistic theory in recent years has been the natural acquisition *versus* systematic instruction dichotomy.

Balance will not be achieved by focusing almost exclusively on one type of competence, one skill, or one language component. Neither is balance attained by mindlessly trying to do everything at the same time. Thus an early emphasis on fluency with communicative competence in mind results in a major and apparently permanent loss of accuracy, making the attainment of a high level of SL competence impossible. An early emphasis on accuracy, however, does not impede but rather helps the later gradual development of fluency. *The*

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central thesis of this book is that balanced results in SL teaching are possible only when a beginning and intermediate emphasis on linguistic accuracy gradually shifts to an advanced emphasis on communicative fluency with accuracy built in; cultural knowledge can be imparted as needed throughout the program.

Perhaps the best-known off-balance step in languistics is the shift in the purpose of SL learning. For a long time it was maintained that languages should be learned so that one could read, write, and translate them well. Now many support the idea that communication, grammatical or not, is all that matters. But for native speakers who value their language and for conscientious SL learners who do not wish to butcher it, mere communication is unacceptable.

In their assumptions about language, many in our profession have gone from overbehavioristically stressing SL performance details to dealing with the SL globally. The latter view assumes that as the SL learner skips from meaningful cognitive peak to meaningful cognitive peak, fundamental lower-level details will automatically fall into place in his or her mind. Clearly this is not, and cannot be, the case in the classroom environment. In that situation, the mountain must be scaled *as* it is built boulder by boulder.

Instructionally useful descriptions of target languages are largely unavailable. By neglecting surface-structure descriptions, linguists and cognitive psycholinguists have left the language teacher with the Hobson's choice of mounting the weak old horse of traditional grammar, since a deep-structure linguistic grammar is far too technical and abstract for use in the classroom. Here, again, there is no balance.

Changing assumptions about the process of learning in general and SL learning in particular also show imbalance. Many have abandoned the once-widely accepted view that the best SL learning results from focused, explicit, step-by-step instruction and have embraced the idea that (as in early childhood) a language can be learned quite well in the classroom through 'natural acquisition', as an unconscious byproduct of doing other things in the language. The fact that the classroom is a fundamentally different environment from the crib, the playpen, and the playground does not seem to shake believers in natural acquisition.

Assumptions about teaching, language teaching, and the roles of the teacher and the student have also shifted from one extreme to the other. From teacher-centered instruction in which learners had facts and rules hammered into their minds, many have gone to a student-centered situation where the teacher's primary role is to provide a favorable environment in which the students themselves create their own version of linguistic reality by unconsciously 'testing hypotheses'. The realization that most SL students need considerable guidance

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has been removed from the front burner and may be off the professional stove altogether.

Approaches to and methods of language teaching, which of course follow assumptions, exhibit the same imbalance. From an overconcern with structure, methodologists have moved to an overconcern with communication and, in many programs, neglect of structure. Students are expected to communicate however they can. Control of structure, these theorists say, will gradually emerge unconsciously. Well, this *doesn't* happen and it *cannot* happen within the SL classroom. Encouraging students to communicate freely beyond what they know of the SL leads them to make far more errors than can possibly be corrected effectively (even if the students are old enough to benefit from linguistically focused correction); as a result, the deficient mental rules on which those errors are based become habitual, and soon there is a terminal Frenglish, Spanglish, or whatever. 1

Teaching procedures have also been influenced by the present imbalance. For example, according to currently popular methods teachers do not see a need to teach pronunciation, to have the students thoroughly learn and manipulate oral language samples, or to correct linguistic errors. But this neglect clearly leads to poor long-term results in these examples, respectively, a noticeable foreign accent, no linguistic foundation to fall back on (other than, of course, the NL!), and terminal ungrammaticality. The sad part is that such outcomes are avoidable.

Even teaching techniques have been affected by the philosophical shift in language teaching. Communicationists do not think that careful, purposeful imitation is an important procedure, so they frown upon teaching techniques designed to enhance it. They reject any sort of mechanical practice, so the study of successful drilling techniques has been largely abandoned. Because they don't think it's important to correct errors, research on the effectiveness of various error correction techniques is at a standstill.

There is presently a serious imbalance in our field. The rest of this chapter focuses on how to restore balance. This is a process that should be undertaken with care, for it is only too easy to go from one form of imbalance to another. Several attitudes need to be avoided if true, productive balance is to be attained.

Balance is not a matter of haphazard eclecticism. Second language teaching must be *principled*. Ideas and practices from many sources must be put together in such a way that they form a harmonious whole, with all the parts contributing to the attainment of the established goals and none interfering with their attainment.

Professionally, our most fundamental weakness may be lack of agreement on what our goals should be. We may not have been ambitious enough in our

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goal-setting. Time and again we have aimed at partial goals that emphasize one aspect of SL competence and neglect others. For a long time, our goal was the ability to read and translate, and never mind oral communication. Then the goal shifted to a knowledge of structure, without much communication within the program. Then the goal changed to the ability to communicate, no matter how. But these are all partial goals. Instead, *we should set as the goal of all fullfledged SL programs the imparting of transitional bilingualism*, as defined in Chapter 3. (Of course, to develop vocabulary size, fluency, and cultural competence beyond the S-3 proficiency level learners normally need to live for some time in the SL environment.)

If our goal is a high level of balanced SL competence, the 'ideal' approach to language teaching would be the one that best succeeds in reaching that goal. The elements of this ideal approach can be taken from any source, past or present, as long as they (1) can be applied in such a way that they do not clash with each other and (2) contribute to the reaching of the goal. If each element does this, and the approach as a whole is harmonious and effective, neither the approach nor its elements need to conform to any given theory, whether from particular languists or from any of the feeder disciplines outside linguistics linguistics, psychology, education, or whatever. *This is what I mean by balanced, principled SL teaching.*

Attaining balance in our discipline is clearly not a matter of thinking that all ideas and practices are equally valid. Being nonjudgmental is desirable in many social contexts, but when faced with a definite practical goal, we must choose among all the options those procedures and techniques that will make a positive contribution and discard those that won't. We must approach and carry out SL teaching with open but discriminating minds.

Let us consider a few examples of the need to be discriminating in the planning and conduct of SL teaching so as to have balance.

The question of which of the intralingual 2 and interlingual3 language skills to emphasize, if any, and when, is very important and a good case in point. Many would say that we should concentrate on the intralingual skills and leave the interlingual skills aside. Postponing for the time being discussion of this subissue, let's consider briefly the four intralingual skills.

Should listening, speaking, reading, and writing be equally stressed at all times? As early as the 1930s long before television, transistor radios and VCRs several studies showed that in the United States oral communication exceeds, by far, written communication in frequency and the time devoted to it. This shows that the audio-oral skills are communicatively more useful, even in a literate society. Other studies have consistently shown that what most SL

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students want and in many programs, don't get is to learn to communicate orally (but *well*). A still further consideration is that in the linguistic development of the individual, reading and writing are based on and go beyond listening comprehension and speaking ability not the other way around. One last point is that in a remote-SL teaching/learning situation it is the speaking skill that must be largely developed and practiced in the classroom; the other three intralingual skills *can* be developed (I'm not saying that they should be) mostly outside the classroom listening comprehension via recordings and the media, reading comprehension through special readers and regular books, and writing ability possibly by correspondence.

Thus a principled method that aims at imparting balanced SL competence would have to emphasize the speaking skill, at least in the classroom.

Another matter that requires discrimination if we are to establish principled balance is this question: Should the knowledge beginning students bring to the SL learning process be taken into account? If the answer is affirmative, how should it be used? SL learners who are past early childhood bring with them a very good oral knowledge of their NL. Some also bring with them ideas, many of which may be incorrect, about language, learning, and SL learning. They have personal preferences some of which may be inappropriate to SL learning about how to approach various learning tasks.

Psychologists have thoroughly demonstrated that new knowledge is developed in reference to previous knowledge, which may facilitate or hinder the learning process. Thus it doesn't make much sense to treat beginning SL students as if they didn't already know their NL, the world around them, and everything else they know or think they know. Languages is the only subject in the curriculum in which many teachers think this is advantageous. This attitude no doubt arose in situations where SL teachers did not speak the language(s) of their students, such as in linguistically and culturally heterogeneous French classes for foreigners in France or ESL classes for immigrants in English-speaking countries. But there is no reason why this practice of setting aside what the students already know should be followed, especially with classes that are sufficiently homogeneous, linguistically and culturally, for the teachers to be able to make use of their students' rich knowledge.

Of course our students' previous knowledge is a two-edged sword that has to be used with care. Such a major store of cognitive (facts and ideas) and behavioral knowledge (habits) has to be used discerningly, exploiting the parts of it that facilitate SL learning and counteracting those that hinder it. But that knowledge is there *active* in the minds of our students, affecting cognitive and behavioral learning at every step, so ignoring it is foolish.

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A principled, balanced approach to SL teaching would take into account all the important factors and would not ignore any in the SL learning equation. The students' previous knowledge is such a factor, so it should be dealt with overtly, not left to quietly (whether consciously or unconsciously) disrupt learning in ways we don't know for sure because we haven't allowed them to manifest themselves openly.

Another factor that should not be ignored for it can greatly contribute to SL teaching/learning, especially with older children and adults is the minds of the students. The ability of the learners to understand exactly what is to be learned and how it is to be used should be enlisted in SL teaching. With learners who have reached a basic level of cognitive maturity (i.e. about age 10 and older), most learning behavior can benefit from, and be highly speeded up, by conscious mental processing.

Our profession has been wary of the use of explanations because they are misused and overused in the grammar-translation method. But the main problem with that method does not lie in its use of conscious awareness; it lies in the fact that once awareness is established the students are not led to practice and use orally what they have learned. 4

Our students need not only to be encouraged to behave linguistically and communicatively; they also need to learn facts *about* that behavior. Our students have minds and we should, therefore, treat them neither as cognitively underdeveloped young children nor as laboratory rats.

Still another area in which balance needs to be re-established concerns aspects of SL learning which students cannot master well by themselves and yet are not taught systematically in many SL programs. These include cultural competence and performance, which few programs seem to be trying to impart; language structure, which some think need not be taught overtly and systematically; and pronunciation and intonation, which many believe can gradually improve and become very acceptable without instruction.

I believe that the desire for principled, balanced SL teaching obliges us to aim at quality learning in all aspects of SL competence. As an example of a neglected area that should be attended to, I shall now focus briefly on the teaching and learning of SL pronunciation, leaving a more detailed practical discussion of this and other aspects of SL teaching for Chapter 12.

The results of immersion programs show that in the absence of specific pronunciation instruction, many years of communicative classroom interaction in an SL fail to result in accent-free speech. Early French immersion pupils, who enter the program at age five or six, still have an English accent 12 years later, though, to be sure, not nearly as marked as that of late immersion students who

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start at puberty. Many years of communicative interaction do not eliminate NL accent from the speech of SL students (nor from that of older immigrants). Except for the occasional outstanding mimic, in the classroom the natural, gradual improvement of pronunciation can only reach a point far short of a native accent. As there is no communicative need for a native accent, it cannot be 'negotiated' into existence and thus the NL accent doesn't disappear. Whatever isn't a goal has little chance of being attained. In the area of SL pronunciation, what little practice there is often follows incorrect theories.

With pronunciation, as with all other linguistic areas of SL learning, students do not learn to do something well by receiving broad and indiscriminate praise for communication that is linguistically inaccurate. Even more than with other language components, developing excellent pronunciation is a matter of forming habits. Good habits are not difficult to develop if care is taken to behave correctly and consistently from the very start. If students are taught to produce sounds and sound sequences in the desired way from the beginning of the program and are given appropriate and consistent feedback, they will gradually produce them less consciously and, after a while, unconsciously (habitually). Faulty habits, on the other hand, once formed and reinforced through many years of practice, are extremely hard to break; while some improvement is possible even then, remedial action is very inefficient and generally not very effective.

Without timely and explicit guidance and linguistically focused feedback, only the very few natural mimics can develop native-like control of SL pronunciation and intonation in the classroom. Even they lose much of their motivation when they see that excellence in pronunciation is not rewarded, that about the only thing that is rewarded is success in communicating ideas, however inaccurately. With careful guidance, systematic practice, managed output, and discriminative feedback, especially in the first 1520 hours of exposure to the language, many SL students can develop excellent pronunciation. In the 20 years I taught beginning college Spanish as a remote SL, I noticed that when careful pronunciation instruction was provided in the first few hours of the program, some students learned to speak the language with a native-like accent; but when such early systematic instruction was not provided, good pronunciation was rare. I am satisfied that excellent results *are* possible, with timely and appropriate pronunciation instruction, even with young adults.

The point of the brief discussion above on the teaching and learning of SL pronunciation is that advocates of principled, balanced SL teaching should not give up any desirable outcome with any SL competence component or skill. Neither overoptimistic claims that something can be acquired naturally, holistically, without instruction or effort, nor pessimistic views that we should forget about teaching it because it can't be done successfully should deter us

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from offering our students the best systematic instruction of which we are capable.

The attitude 'it's good enough' is the enemy of the better and 'we're better off now' is the enemy of the best. With careful teaching, excellent results in learning usually follow. The results reported in Appendix A attest to that.

Notes to Chapter 5

1 By 'habitual' I simply mean that the rules have been used enough times that they come to be applied automatically whenever the structures are called for.

2 That is, listening comprehension, speaking ability, reading comprehension, and writing ability.

3 That is, oral translation from the SL to the NL and *vice versa*, and written translation, also in both directions.

4 There are, of course, other serious problems with the grammar-translation method, such as faulty rule statements, failure to provide rules for the spoken language, the misuse and overuse of translation, etc.

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6
Language Transfer Revisited

The 1960s saw the establishment of the Chomskyan revolution in linguistic theory and the cognitive revolution in psychology. These ideas were embraced with characteristic North American neophilia. Not surprizingly, there was a corresponding wave of 'archaeophobia' (dislike for the old) toward anything associated with earlier theories. This attitude included not only approaches to the study of language or its various components, and language teaching practices derived from those approaches, but studies of language transfer as well.

The new school of linguistics was interested in discovering language universals, not differences between languages, so contrastive analysis (CA) was relegated to a dark corner. It did not matter to the then-new linguists that the differences between languages *are* very important and that an awareness of such differences can help languists in their work.

The disfavor into which the study of language transfer fell is also puzzling because, although CA was proposed by structural linguists, it can be conducted within any theoretical framework. Not long ago, for example, Stanley Whitley (1986) showed how Spanish and English can be contrasted by applying transformational-generative theory. Evidently the new anti-CA attitude was a case of guilt by association CA had its roots in structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology, so it had to go.

The opponents of CA set up a revised CA hypothesis (CAH) as a straw man: they exaggerated its predictive claims (thus the 'strong hypothesis' that almost no one believed in) and then 'disproved' them. Then they proposed a 'weak hypothesis' that states that CA can serve only to explain certain errors after they occur. If that were all CA could do, it would be a nearly useless tool indeed.

Most SLA research of the last fifteen to twenty years has followed the anti-CA tendency of the Chomskyan school of linguistics. SLA researchers have been only too ready to assign intralingual, developmental causes such as SL

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overgeneralization to errors which could just as well be due to interlingual interference. Thus some have concluded that SLA does not differ much from NL acquisition. But for the errors of SL learners to have the same developmental causes as the errors of young NL learners, both would have to be in a similar linguistic position as learners. Clearly, this is not the case, one major difference being that SL learners already know a language and young children do not.

The role of the NL has come to be seen as relatively unimportant in SLA research. But is it unreasonable to state that previous knowledge affects new learning? Subjective experience, logic, and abundant empirical evidence indicate that it does. Transfer psychologists agree is a pervasive phenomenon, not only in language learning but in all learning. As David Ausubel put it in the motto of his book *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View* (Ausubel *et al.*, 1978: iv):

> If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly.

And what the monolingual SL learner already knows about language is his or her NL.

We need to distinguish, furthermore, between SLA in the natural environment and SL learning in the classroom. 1 The two situations are very different, so this distinction is important. In some respects, the classroom is at a disadvantage: it is an essentially artificial environment; the time available to learn the SL is usually very limited; and the amount of linguistically useful communicative feedback is small. On the other hand, the classroom offers certain advantages: the development of SL skills and language components can be controlled and sequenced as desired; input can be carefully selected, presented step by step, and practiced until each new point is mastered; learning can be facilitated by conscious attention, understanding, and the use of study skills; and effective linguistically-focused instruction and feedback can be applied.

Both of these situations involve NL transfer or, more generally, cross-linguistic influence. Previous knowledge can facilitate learning (positive transfer or facilitation) to the extent that the established knowledge and the 'new' are identical and an effort therefore need not be made to learn the 'new' (which is not new, since it's already known). But established knowledge can also interfere with learning (negative transfer or interference), either by leading to inappropriate behavior in the new context (*intrusive interference*) or by preventing or inhibiting the learning of the new (*inhibitive interference*). Furthermore, cross-linguistic influence affects typologically distant or close target languages and their components in different ways.

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(We are not concerned here with monolingual *linguistic competence* as defined by Chomsky 2 in the development of which language transfer is not a factor but with *SL competence*, which includes the ability to *use* a target language correctly. Of course, all linguistic behavior is based on knowledge *about* the language, whether partial or complete, conscious or unconscious. But whatever is unsystematic in SL performance is of little or no interest to languists.)

The SL is of the same basic nature and is used for the same purposes as the NL. Thus, previous knowledge as pervasive and deeply ingrained as that of the NL is bound to have major effects on the learning of the SL.

The argument that the NL accounts for only a small percentage of SL errors becomes quite untenable when one considers its weaknesses. In the first place, the evidence for this '*minimal interference hypothesis*' (MIH) has not been drawn from careful longitudinal studies with particular attention to beginners and near-natives, for whom intrusive interference (NL phenomena in the SL output) is found in a high percentage of errors. By the middle of the SL program, or, in natural SLA, once the process is well underway, learners rely more on the SL, so the percentage of NL intrusions out of the total number of errors is smaller. NL transfer is most evident at those points MIH researchers have largely neglected.

Transfer theory helps explain the differences in cross-linguistic influence at these three points of the SL learning process. Faced with something to learn (the SL) that is similar to something they know and use for the same communicative purposes (the NL), beginners tend to rely initially on their mother tongue thus the frequent NL intrusions in their SL output. As students learn more of the SL, they base more and more of their output on what they have learned of the new language. Consequently, after a while many of their SL errors are due to SL overgeneralization. At the same time, faulty rules resulting in persistent errors that are not effectively corrected come to be used habitually, that is, automatically, when needed in communication. Thus a high percentage of the proportionately fewer errors made by very advanced or near-native SL learners can be traced to NL structure.

Another reason for questioning the MIH is that many of the studies often used to support it e.g. the series of studies by Dulay and Burt in the 1970s were primarily concerned with the acquisition and use (correct or not) of morphemes. Morphology is the language component that causes the *least* linguistic interference, for morphology is almost exclusively language-specific and thus rarely subject to transfer. To draw general conclusions about natural SLA (and even classroom SL teaching/learning!) from primarily morphological studies is thus unjustified.

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Furthermore, much of the analysis of the evidence supporting the MIH is tainted. Upon carefully checking the data published in several of these studies, I have discovered that many of the errors classified as developmental or due to SL overgeneralization, etc, could *also* have been attributed to NL interference. The underlying principle of analysis, probably unconscious, seemed to be that an error should be classified as due to NL interference only when this was so obvious that the researchers could not defend interpreting it any other way. When data are analyzed according to a pre-established theoretical bent, can we rely on whatever conclusions are reached?

There is one further reason for doubting the validity of the MIH and of the noncontrastive approach to error analysis and SL teaching based on it. This is a matter of theoretical significance and a strong argument for re-evaluating the whole issue of language transfer. I am referring to the phenomenon, previously noted, of *inhibitive interference*.

In the professional literature, the CAH has been discussed almost exclusively in terms of *intrusive interference*. The other side of the coin (facilitation) has been largely ignored. So has the idea that the NL also affects the SL learning process by *inhibiting* the learning of specific SL structures. I will refer to this as the '*inhibitive interference hypothesis*' (InhIH). 3

The InhIH is based on the following reasoning: as learners learn more of the SL, they will come across more and more structures and distinctions that are peculiar to the SL and that have no counterpart in the NL. Having expressed themselves quite well all their lives without such structures or distinctions, the learners will feel no pressing need to learn them. This applies especially to SL structures that are communicatively redundant (such as the gender of most nouns in Spanish or French), but also to many of the structures that native speakers of the SL consider essential to clear communication (such as past tense aspect in the same two languages). According to the InhIH, *SL learners will tend not to learn those SL structures that are absent from their NL*. In other words, their NL inhibits them from learning the features of the SL for which their NL offers no equivalence.

The InhIH further asserts that the pattern of linguistic structure of each NL psychologically inhibits the learning of specific SL structures and distinctions absent from that NL. For example, speakers of Chinese and Japanese. whose languages lack articles, will be psycholinguistically inhibited *by the structure of their mother tongues* from learning to use the articles, *in general*, in Western European languages, while French or Spanish speakers, on the other hand, will be inhibited from learning certain *specific uses* of English articles, but will not have a general problem with them. Because there is no overt, consistent distinction in past tense aspect in English as there is in French (*passé composé versus*

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imparfait) or Spanish (preterite *versus* imperfect), English speakers will be inhibited from learning it. But speakers of other Romance languages will have no such difficulty.

Thus, unlike intrusive interference, which results in the presence of NL features in the learners' SL output, inhibitive interference causes learners to omit from their SL output the specific structures or distinctions lacking equivalence in their Nls. If the InhIH is shown to be valid, this would lend even further support to the view that the student's NL is indeed very important in classroom SL learning.

Informal evidence of the validity of the InhIH has long been available. There is inhibition even across modalities within one language. For example, speakers of English as a second language whose Nls have no weak syllables and a close sound-spelling fit make better spellers and proofreaders in English than native speakers of English with the same level of education. This is because native speakers of English tend to selectively ignore the spellings that have no distinct oral counterparts. Coming back to the SL-learning situation, people whose Nls lack prepositions seem to have more difficulties with them than those whose Nls have prepositions the former tend to omit many prepositions, while the latter sometimes use the wrong one.

Several studies have yielded evidence supportive of the InhIH. Oller and Redding (1971) found statistically significant differences in the use of articles between students whose Nls have articles and those whose Nls lack articles. Schachter (1974) found that Chinese and Japanese speakers, whose languages lack relative clauses, avoid English relative clauses, while Arabic and Persian speakers, whose languages have relative clauses, use them.

An attempt to test the InhIH is an unpublished pilot study conducted by Lucie Nielson (1986), then a (trilingual) graduate student at Simon Fraser University. [4] In Nielson's study, the errors made with carefully selected French structures by 21 Grade 11 English-speaking students beginning their fourth year of audio-oral French in Winfield, British Columbia were compared with the errors made with the same structures by 19 native Germans beginning their fourth year of French in the equivalent of Grade 10 at a Gymnasium in North Rhine Westphalia. West Germany. Both groups were from small rural communities. The students were close in age, the German subjects being about one year younger than the Canadian ones. The groups had received about the same amount of instructional time per week. Both classes used varieties of the audio-oral method, with formal oral practice, visual aids and some use of the NL, if not in the classroom at least in the textbooks.

While the basic teaching conditions were thus similar, there were a few differences whose effect on performance is impossible to estimate with any

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precision (but which are possibly significant): there was considerably more use of the NL with the Canadian group; German students (unlike Canadians) are taught NL grammar formally from Grade 5; and apparently German students have more homework to do than Canadians. Otherwise, the two groups were similar in their composition and pedagogical treatment in the most important variables, so Nielson's pilot comparison can throw some light on the validity of the InhIH.

Nielson tested the InhIH in terms of the following French rules and distinctions that also exist in German but not in English:

(1) Noun gender. As a system, it doesn't exist in English, so this would inhibit its learning by English speakers. German learners of French would be expected to make fewer errors with gender in general, although of course they would still make errors due to intrusive interference with specific words that have different genders in French and German.

(2) Adjective agreement. Again, English speakers would be expected to make more errors, as adjective agreement is absent in English.

(3) Pronouns. In French and German, the use of relative pronouns is obligatory, while in English it is optional. Thus one would expect English-speaking learners of French to have more problems with this than their German-speaking counterparts.

(4) Verb system. English lacks a distinction between two auxiliaries to form the perfect tense, while German has such a distinction but with important differences in detail from French. German speakers should therefore find the formation and use of the French *passé composé* easier, but would make errors with verbs that take *avoir* in French but *sein* in German, and with reflexive verbs, which take *être* in French and *haben* in German.

(5) Prepositions. Contractions with *à* and *de* would be expected to cause English speakers more difficulty, as the concept of prepositional contraction does not exist in English but exists in German. 5

Nielson administered to each group two kinds of measurement, a grammar test and a composition test. She felt that a composition test would not be enough because, while compositions are highly error-productive, they, as well as other communicative situations, invite avoidance behavior (circumlocution, etc) in order not to use a structure that is not under full control. A grammar test, on the other hand, would force the students to attempt to produce the desired grammar constructs (Nielson, 1986: 2931). Both tests were presented as a regular part of classroom procedure, as tests that would be scored and assigned a grade. Neither class knew that their output was to be studied for research purposes.

The grammar test had five parts, corresponding to the five types of grammatical problems listed above, and student responses consisted of phrase

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writing, replacements, completions, and filling in blanks. The composition test required the students to write 120150 words on the topic *Le cadeau*, with instructions in the NL in order to prevent the use or simple adaptation of prefabricated French models.

On the grammar test, the English speakers made errors with 64% of gender constructs, the German speakers with only 47%. Contrary to expectations, both groups did about equally well with written adjective agreement. The English class had greater difficulty with pronouns and, unlike the German students, who made virtually no errors with relative pronouns, the English-speaking students made frequent errors with them, especially by omitting them. Error in the choice of auxiliaries was greater (21.6%) for English speakers than for German speakers (14.7%). Both groups showed difficulty with the choice of prepositions, but the English speakers did not fail to contract them.

For the composition, the average number of errors relevant to the hypothesis being tested was 9.71 for the English-speaking Canadians and 6.10 for the German students. Unpredicted, though not unpredictable, errors were numerous in both sets of compositions.

Despite its lack of inferential statistical analysis and the possible influence of the uncontrollable factors already alluded to, the descriptive statistics marked differences in group means in this pilot study lend support to the hypothesis that inhibitive interference plays a significant role in classroom SL learning. The role of inhibitive interference may even be larger in many cross-linguistic situations than that of intrusive interference.

More carefully controlled studies are of course needed before one can say with confidence that the InhIH is valid. Moreover, such studies must avoid differences in sociocultural and educational backgrounds such as those between Germany and Canada, which may have affected results in unknown ways in the Nielson study.

A recently published study by Håkan Ringbom (1987) neatly took care of the student background problem. This study conducted in Finnish schools involved an analysis of errors in English as a remote SL made by monolingual Finnish-speaking students as opposed to Finnish students whose native language was Swedish (though they also spoke Finnish). Swedish is a linguistic relative of English, while Finnish is typologically quite unrelated to English. Finland is as unicultural a bilingual country as one can hope to find anywhere (Ringbom, 1987: 19). It is therefore safe to attribute differences in systematic English performance to the two different Nls. The only nonlinguistic difference that could have helped the Swedish-speaking bilingual students was that they were less apprehensive about speaking in a second language than monolingual Finns

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(Ringbom, 1987: 17). (But, as we have seen with French immersion, lack of inhibition isn't an advantage.)

Ringbom assumed that Swedish-speaking Finns would find it easier to learn English than monolingual Finnish-speaking Finns. This assumption, if confirmed, would validate what I call the '*differential facilitation hypothesis*' (DFH), which, as the 'other side' of the CAH, also supports the notion of strong cross-linguistic influence in SL learning. The results of Ringbom's study confirmed his assumption and support the various cross-linguistic hypotheses under discussion. Finnish speakers made far more errors with English articles (Finnish has no articles), frequently by omitting them, than Swedish speakers, whose NL has articles. The same thing happened with English prepositions, although (as further support for the InhIH) the English prepositions with equivalent Finnish cases or postpositions did not cause any serious difficulty. Swedish speakers outscored monolingual Finnish speakers in English reading and listening comprehension as well as in sound recognition, partial dictation, a cloze test, grammar and vocabulary, an essay, translation, and sentence production. On the other hand, where English conflicts with Swedish but not with Finnish, Swedish-speaking students made more errors. While these differences were especially observable among beginning and intermediate students, a considerable number of Finnish-speaking students but very few Swedish-speaking students did poorly on university entrance English essays.

SL teachers have known for a long time that knowledge of a close language facilitates SL learning. Both US and British government language-teaching institutions have determined that it takes far longer for an English speaker to reach the same level of proficiency in, say, Korean than in French. Even the Dulay and Burt data show that Spanish-speaking children consistently performed better in English than Chinese-speaking children.

The main effect of NL-SL closeness is to aid comprehension through the presence of many cognate words and similar structures. Even when a target language is taught inductively, this closeness facilitates learning and therefore production (though not necessarily *accurate* production; see below). The result is that a typologically close language can come to be understood much faster than a typologically distant language.

But typological closeness causes difficulties in accurate production, as noted over ninety years ago by Henry Sweet (1899/1964: 54). When it comes to the control of linguistic output (i.e. systematic performance), it is hard to keep close languages apart. Learners of a close SL find it difficult to understand why accuracy in the SL is important, as Harold Palmer pointed out (1917/1968: 45), for they can easily communicate their ideas without having to pay attention to grammatical rules or having to learn the more difficult

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words (Ringbom, 1987: 143). As a result, the learner of a close SL is in greater danger of internalizing, quite early, a faulty classroom pidgin. This is because he or she bases SL output on the NL instead of on the SL.

With typologically distant languages, on the other hand, students develop comprehension much more slowly. This in fact may be an advantage, for the inability to start communicating right away forces the beginning learner to pay more attention to language structure than to content. Attending early to structure results in greater accuracy in the long run than plunging right away into communication. Evidence for this is Ringbom's finding that where English conflicts with Swedish but not with Finnish, Swedish-speaking Finns ended up making more errors. Ringbom also found that monolingual Finnish speakers (whose language has a regular spelling system) outscored Swedish-speaking Finns (Swedish has an irregular spelling system, like English) in English spelling. This shows that distant-language speakers may perform better than close-language speakers on tasks requiring detailed accuracy.

These various studies, especially Ringbom's and Nielson's, validate the long-standing observation that the NL is of crucial, 'absolutely fundamental' importance in SL learning (Ringbom, 1987: 134). They provide strong support for the general CAH and for the intrusive interference hypothesis (IntIH), the inhibitive interference hypothesis (InhIH), and the differential facilitation hypothesis (DFH). They offer strong counterevidence to the minimal interference hypothesis (MIH) which has underlain work on SLA for many years.

A more sophisticated language transfer or cross-linguistic influence theory than traditional CA would incorporate the concepts of differential facilitation (DFH) and inhibitive interference (InhIH). Thus 'points of facilitation' and 'points of inhibitive interference' would have to be added to the older IntIH concept of 'points of (intrusive) interference'. *The CAH would thus be recast into three complementary hypotheses; the Differential Facilitation Hypothesis, the Intrusive Interference Hypothesis, and the Inhibitive Interference Hypothesis.*

Although cross-linguistic influence studies have been neglected in American linguistic theory, language transfer never lost its usefulness to languists. In languistics, transfer theory can perform several important functions, some of which cannot be performed by any other tool.

CA never had and hardly anyone claimed it had a predictive power so great that it could be relied upon as the *sole* basis for the preparation of SL teaching materials. One would have to rely heavily on language transfer theory only with first-generation materials, when no classroom learner data were available and only until such data became available. But language transfer theory, especially with the broader scope proposed here, helps specify the difficulties

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SL teachers can expect their students to have and the relative degree of such difficulties. It enables teachers to be ready to deal with these difficulties if/when they arise and to better understand the causes of errors and how to deal effectively with them.

Whether overtly or covertly, two languages frequently interact in the remote-SL classroom and several in the local-SL classroom. If we choose to ignore the interrelationships between the language(s) of the learners and the target language and decide to disregard the numerous ways in which the former evidently influences the learning of the latter, we are closing our eyes to much of what is going on, overtly or covertly, in the SL classroom a sure way of making instruction less effective.

Many leaders in local-SL teaching subfields such as ESL have chosen to ignore NLs, perhaps because they saw no way the teacher could handle several unfamiliar Nls in the classroom. 6 Remote-SL teachers who know their students' NL, such as most teachers of EFL (e.g. English in Japan, Finland, or Argentina) or any other remote SL (e.g. Spanish and French in most of North America), have no such linguistic communication problem. They would greatly improve the effectiveness of their teaching by overtly exploiting the full facilitative potential of the NL and being prepared to counteract its intrusive and inhibitive interference effects. That is the best, most informed way of helping students add, to competence in their NL, competence in the SL being taught.

Notes to Chapter 6

1 The word 'acquisition' is primarily associated with picking up a language naturally. Unfortunately, many have used 'SLA' as a cover term for any SL learning situation, including learning that results from instruction. As such a broad use of 'SLA' obscures important distinctions, it should be avoided. In this book, 'SLA' consistently refers to the natural, communicative, linguistically untutored learning of a second language which, as we have seen, doesn't work well in the classroom.

2 Roughly, the ideal (monolingual) native speaker's abstract (symbolic) and largely unconscious knowledge of how his or her language 'works'.

3 In my 1982 book *Synthesis in Language Teaching* (Hammerly, 1982: 14748), where this hypothesis was first proposed, I referred to this aspect of interference as 'preclusive interference'; the term '*inhibitive* interference' is more appropriate.

4 This study is discussed in some detail in this book because it is not generally available.

5 Since, as stated earlier, morphology is language-specific, this seems to be an unjustified prediction.

6 It *could* be done; see Chapter 13 for suggestions.

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7

On Preventing the Establishment of an Interlanguage

As defined by Selinker (1972) an interlanguage (IL) is a system distinct from both the SL and the NL that results from learners' attempts to produce SL output. Many in our field assume, furthermore, that a series of ILs is inevitable in the development of SL proficiency.

The name 'interlanguage' itself suggests a stable linguistic system (for such is language). But an IL is really a faulty mixture of SL rules and overgeneralizations, and interlingual intrusions and inhibitions that results from trying to use limited linguistic means for global ends. It is hardly something we want to encourage, much less allow to stabilize. Instead, we must prevent an error-laden IL from developing in the first place. This seems far easier than uprooting it after it has grown deep into the learner's psycholinguistic soil.

In theory, a SL program could be designed with such minute steps that learners would make very few errors. This is what many 'audiolingualists' tried to do. However, in order to internalize structures and words, learners must have from the start opportunities to use them meaningfully. In fact, a structure or element in the SL has *not* been learned until it can be used correctly with attention on the message. But when learners are given the freedom needed to use SL structures and words meaningfully, they make more errors than when their attention is focused on the structures and words themselves.

As important as meaningful use is to internalization, we must distinguish between (1) a situation in which *some* errors occur as known structures begin to be used meaningfully and (2) one in which SL learners make *numerous* errors as they attempt to express freely ideas that require the use of structures they haven't yet learned. The former is unavoidable and, indeed, necessary for the full learning of structures. The latter is both avoidable and, in its long-term results, undesirable.

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Situation 1:	*Situation 2*:
(1) Controlled communication within gradually expanding linguistic boundaries: Students directed to use what they know and discouraged from 'linguistic adventurism'.	Linguistically free communication encouraged from the start: Students encouraged to use the SL globally, whether they have learned the structures they need or not.
(2) Some errors result from the above.	Numerous errors result from the above.
(3) Effective, grammatically focused feedback possible.	Too many errors make effective linguistic feedback impossible.
(4) Long-term, gradual expansion of essentially accurate linguistic control, that is, 'cumulative mastery'.	Establishment of a classroom pidgin (IL) that continues to grow lexically but is structurally stagnant.
(5) Increasing student satisfaction as justified confidence grows in the use of the SL that is cumulatively being mastered.	Early satisfaction based on false confidence turns to discouragement over faulty terminal IL and reluctance to use it.

Figure 8

There are many important differences between the two situations just described. Five are shown in Figure 8.

The idea of controlling or managing output runs counter to the current philosophy of education with its emphasis on unrestrained student choice and creativity. Yet I contend that if *accurate output* is a goal, then *managed output* is essential. This applies not only to classroom SL learning but to the development of any complex skill, in and out of the classroom. Education as smorgasbord is a harmful misconception; for their healthy development, all but the most advanced learners need careful guidance by dietitians.

The way to learn to use a complex tool is not to put it to its most difficult use from the start but to gradually develop skill through simple tasks

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first, slowly learning how to handle it in more complex tasks, and delaying the most challenging tasks until one is quite skillful in its use. This particularly applies to a very complex decoding-encoding tool like an SL, especially in the classroom, which lacks a rich linguistic environment that can provide some support through indirect feedback.

Generating correct novel sentences in the SL with attention on the message is the most difficult and challenging use to which the SL 'tool' can be put. And yet, many think SL students should do this from the start! They assume that if learners are encouraged to merrily skip along from one linguistic cognitive peak to another, the precisely shaped boulders that support each linguistic mountain-top will automatically fall into place. But this just doesn't happen.

The top-down Chomskyan model of sentence generation may apply, in an abstract way, only to an ideal native speaker's knowledge of a language. It is an incorrect extrapolation made, unfortunately, by many to assume that this top-down model holds true for the process of *learning* a language, whether first or, even more so, second. Learning to use a complex code well must proceed from the bottom up; it is only as one masters increasingly higher-level skills that one can apply them correctly, and largely unconsciously, and, of course, top down. To get to the top of the SL mountain so that one can unselfconsciously and safely ski down its slopes, one must first build the mountain itself, carefully shaped boulder by carefully shaped boulder.

This need to proceed from lower and simpler tasks to higher and more complex ones in classroom SL learning can perhaps be expressed more appropriately in terms of the taxonomy of the cognitive domain agreed upon, after much research, by Benjamin Bloom and his associates (Bloom *et al.*, 1956). They described six levels of cognitive educational objectives: knowledge (recall), comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Of these, putting together novel sentences is a form of synthesis involving the second-highest level of difficulty, surpassed only by evaluation. It is clear that, from this point of view, CAN theorists who advocate SLACC/I/immersion are asking teachers and students to start the SL learning process from the wrong end.

Managing output so that students may have a chance to be accurate is of course not a matter of speaking one day in the present indicative, the next in the imperfect, and the day after that in the preterite, leaving the subjunctive mood for the last week of the program. The process is not linear but cumulative and integrative. (Suggestions on how to achieve it are given later in this chapter and in Chapters 11 and 12.)

SL students who frequently produce output beyond what they know are engaging in linguistic adventurism. This must be discouraged because it results

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in far more errors than the students can self-correct or the teacher can correct effectively. Encouraging students to concentrate on conveying meaning and to approach the SL globally guarantees that most linguistic details and many major structures will not be mastered.

Many linguists argue that SL students need to be free to engage in unrestrained communication so that they can 'test linguistic hypotheses' the way very young children are supposed to acquire their NL. Let us leave aside the question of how a very young child can possibly do, unconsciously, what PhDs in Linguistics find hard to do, consciously, after many years of training. There are major differences, already discussed in this book, between the cognitively immature young child in the nursery and the cognitively mature SL student in the classroom. For the latter to get feedback useful to hypothesis testing, this feedback must come primarily from the teacher, not from classmates who make the same errors. Cognitively mature learners can test hypotheses much more effectively if guided systematically and overtly by a knowledgable teacher through one hypothesis at a time than by unconsciously riding linguistically in all directions at the same time and not getting (because it *can't* be given) effective, specific feedback.

I wish one could say that by testing linguistic hypotheses unconsciously, holistically, and nearly at random, SL students don't learn anything. Actually, the result is even worse, for they do learn to make an inordinate number of errors, to accept this as a normal way of putting ideas across, and to internalize an error-ridden classroom pidgin.

The high frequency of errors by SL students who are prematurely encouraged to communicate freely makes effective correction impossible. To be effective, a correcting intervention must, among other things, focus on the error in its context. But how can an error and its context be properly attended to when one of every two or three words is incorrect? It's no wonder that many SL teachers give up correcting most errors when these are so numerous that correction makes no dent on inaccuracy.

If they are to be corrected effectively, then, errors must be kept to a minimum. But teachers should not achieve this by keeping students from using what they know of the language meaningfully. Instead, they should avoid either extreme ungrammatical glibness or no communication and follow a balanced course of controlled but gradually freer and richer communication. Indeed, this is the only way of producing SL program graduates who are both reasonably fluent *and* highly accurate. *With no established step-by-step focus on structure, SL teachers cannot tell what the students should know at various points in the program, so they cannot hold them accountable for what they should have learned. The results of this lack of control and accountability are disastrous.*

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Some have advocated the establishment of an SL learning sequence based not on language structure but on communicative functions and acts. There are several difficulties with that, the main one being that the same communication act can be performed at many different levels of communicative and linguistic sophistication. Moreover, communication acts cannot be arranged in the type of logical, step-by-step progression that a sound curriculum demands. Language structure, on the other hand, can be so arranged, from simple to complex, frequent to infrequent, basic to derived, largely independent to concomitant, etc. 1 The solution, therefore, is an SL program with a structural sequence as its core, using the growing linguistic competence at each step for increasingly sophisticated communication, but discouraging communication that requires the use of linguistic structures not yet under control. This is the idea behind the cumulative mastery method (CMM).

In early immersion communicative programs, not following a systematic linguistic progression results in the establishment of a terminal interlanguage or classroom pidgin soon after the children begin to produce SL output as early as Grade 3. By 'terminal' interlanguage or classroom pidgin I mean a form of communication that is structurally stagnant; lexically, it may continue to grow indefinitely. Many adults who 'picked up' a second language in the field exhibit such a terminal interlanguage; they manage to communicate, sometimes with some difficulty, but they do so in a very ungrammatical way. We can do far better than that when we guide the SL learning process through systematic classroom instruction.

Broadly speaking, this guidance is primarily a matter of focus. H. Douglas Brown (1989: 22) has compared SL teaching/learning to the use of a zoom lens, with telephoto settings for specific structures alternating with wide angle shots. My own elaboration of that analogy is as follows: Largely linear programs such as the grammar-translation method consist of a series of telephoto shots with few or no wide-angle ones, with the result that students do not learn to communicate in the SL. CAN/SLACC/I/immersion methods avoid telephoto settings and concentrate on the use of wide-angle shots, so graduates of such programs are glib but very inaccurate, that is, speak and write in a terminal IL. The solution is to alternate between telephoto and wide-angle settings but in a particular way. To prevent the establishment of an IL, we should use a telephoto shot for point A first, then slowly move to a slightly wider angle that puts A in communicative context; then use the telephoto setting for point B, followed by a gradual opening to a somewhat wider-angle view that includes A and B but not much else; this is followed by a telephoto shot of C and a slow shift to a little wider view that covers A, B and C; and so forth, until finally, at the advanced level of the SL program, the widest angle can be used safely, that is, without linguistic harm being done.

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Of course, we can't expect a high level of SL competence from all students. For some students especially those whose primary interest is meeting a language requirement speaking and writing the SL well is not a high priority, so they won't make the effort needed to learn to do so. 2 But many students either have the goal of excellence or will accept it if it is properly presented. To deny them the opportunity of realizing it by putting them through a program that condones linguistic sloppiness and, after a large investment of time, produces terminally discouraging results is something that no conscientious SL teacher will want to do. For SL specialists to promote such programs despite considerable evidence that they don't work is professionally unethical.

In the present educational climate, many teachers have abandoned the idea of requiring their students to exercise discipline in reaching goals. The necessary discipline can be defined in two words: *delayed gratification*. This is a factor at all turns of life. For example, those who wish to start a small business have to forgo the immediate gratification of spending on nonessentials so as to accumulate capital and have the delayed gratification of getting their business started. Those who want to lose weight have to forgo the immediate gratification of eating ice cream and chocolate bars for the delayed gratification of a healthier and better-looking body. Similarly, those who want to speak an SL well have to forgo the immediate gratification of communicating freely from the start in order to be able to enjoy the delayed gratification of being able to use the language accurately.

One thing we don't need to do is devise various techniques to put pressure on SL students to speak faster. When students speak ungrammatically, what they need is intensive remedial work, not encouragement to speak faster and thereby entrench their errors even more deeply. Native speakers are patient with SL learners who speak slowly and carefully in an effort to produce clear and correct messages; what they don't appreciate, and often cannot understand, are the glib messages of someone who butchers their language. Before we encourage our students to speak rapidly, then, we should make sure they speak accurately.

This brings us to the question of how to go about developing SL competence in our students, while preventing their internalization of a faulty IL. By now the reader must have an idea of what I am going to propose; this, however, does not obviate the necessity to spell it out.

An effective SL program must be based, first of all, on the assumption that it is possible to select, describe, place in a desirable sequence, and teach all the basic structures, while taking into account the characteristics of the NL(s) of the learners. Some of the principles of selection and ordering have already been mentioned. Linguists continue to speculate and disagree about many grammatical details, even in a language as thoroughly analyzed as English; it is true

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nonetheless that agreement on the basic structural aspects of most languages is more than sufficient to allow its application to SL curriculum design. And while not everything in an SL can be taught (since some of it still awaits adequate description) or needs to be formally taught (some informal acquisition taking place even in the most formal of classrooms), the basic structures can and should be taught: only by so doing can we make sure that every student in the SL program has the opportunity to develop a sound structural foundation, and thus be not only fluent but also accurate in the use of the SL.

Each of the structures of the SL should be processed through a series of steps from easiest to most challenging. The easiest steps involve mechanical language activity, while the most challenging involve communicative (message-oriented) use. Paralleling most of these steps from linguistic mechanics to meaningful communication are a series of cognitive operations ranging from perception to guided understanding and application, to creative use of what is known.

The idea is to help the students shift with full understanding through five stages from form to meaning, *for each point*: (1) initial, brief attention on form only, (2) primary attention on form with some attention on meaning, (3) about equal attention on form and meaning, (4) primary attention on meaning with some attention on form, and then (5) attention on meaning only while form is under unconscious control this last stage mostly beyond the program. Starting with attention on meaning only as many nowadays recommend does not result in acceptable control of form, either conscious or unconscious, as we have seen. Starting each point with attention on form only and gradually shifting to attention on meaning usually ensures control of both.

The easiest thing for SL students to do although even this is difficult without adequate training and guidance is to perceive and reproduce language data. In a program with an audio-oral emphasis this means listening, repeating, and recalling SL utterances. This happens to clearly correspond to Bloom's first, easiest cognitive educational objective what he called 'knowledge'. A more appropriate term would be 'familiarization with data'. At the beginning of the program such SL data usually consist of short sentences in explicit sociolinguistic and cultural contexts for example, little dialogues or narrations.

Immediately after listening to, repeating, and recalling each sentence or sentence part comes the step of understanding its meaning. Long before I independently came to this conclusion, Bloom had already done so, calling this next higher cognitive objective 'comprehension'. The ability to perceive, repeat, recall, and understand relevant examples must be established for each structure before it can be gainfully manipulated.

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The third step is analysis of the structure, that is, making sure the students understand how it works and how it relates to other structures. In ordering the steps this way, I disagree with Bloom, who has application as the third cognitive objective, before analysis. 3 It seems to me that, unless we rely exclusively on the unconscious learning of structures (and I don't see why we should), understanding how a structure functions should greatly help students apply it. I know from many years' experience that it does.

This is not to say that all structural instruction should be deductive. How an SL rule is handled in the classroom should depend on the nature of the rule and on its relationship to NL structure. When an SL rule has a close NL equivalent, only those minor aspects in which they differ need be emphasized in classroom instruction. When there are no close equivalences, the inherent difficulty of the rule within the SL becomes a more important factor: while a few very simple rules could be acquired inductively (via autonomous, structurally unfocused discovery) in an efficient manner, students benefit from some analytic attention to all rules, and some very difficult rules require deductive treatment for successful learning with any semblance of efficiency. Most structures possibly all can be handled quite well by the simple manipulation of examples that are understood, followed by overt, expressed guided discovery of the rule or pattern by the students (in their own words, with the teacher asking questions as needed), followed by application.

In the fourth major step, application, the teacher starts by giving the class simple drills focusing on form and then moves on to more challenging exercises that are increasingly message-orientated, until student attention is about 50/50 on form and meaning. If more attention on meaning results in a large increase in errors, this means that insufficient time was spent on previous steps and the class needs to go back to them, as needed, one at a time.

Once students can use a structure correctly while paying equal attention to the message, they are ready to go on to the next stage primary attention on the message. This involves synthesis (step 5), an activity that is difficult to perform well without gradually building up to it. Synthesis involves combining elements from various sources to produce new 'wholes'. For the SL learner, this means generating novel sentences, but no longer primarily by a process of substitution or transformation, as in step 4 (application), and especially not through translation, which results in linguistic monstrosities. Instead, it involves sentence generation largely from 'scratch', making use of all knowledge of the language developed thus far. Every previous step comes into play as students (1) recall data (2) they understand lexically and (3) analytically, and through selection guided by analogy and analysis (4) apply this knowledge, mechanically at first and then (5) synthetically, by generating

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novel sentences. To expect students to *start* with this complex synthetic process, and moreover to unconsciously develop control of its linguistic building blocks as a consequence, is totally unrealistic.

Consistently applied, this gradual shift from attention on form to attention on meaning results in the internalization of correct grammatical structures. What starts as a process of conscious sentence generation gradually becomes unconscious. Experienced SL teachers know that this *can* be done and many have done it successfully for many years. Their work disproves Stephen Krashen's assertion that the 'Monitor' is available only when there is focus on grammar and that sentences can only be generated unconsciously. That is, it disproves claims that there is no connection between conscious SL learning and SL use. It shows how far removed such claims are from the realities of successful classroom SL instruction.

The last step (step 6)is evaluation in this too I agree with Bloom. SL students need to develop the ability to evaluate their own and their classmates' output. This is an essential skill. During most practice and when they go out into the real world, SL learners will not have a teacher evaluating their output, so they must learn to fend linguistically for themselves. Native speakers of the language will of course evaluate their speech and will react to their attempts at communication, but they will seldom offer the learners linguistic feedback. While communicative feedback no doubt helps SL learners become more effective communicators, it rarely has a sufficiently linguistic focus to help improve control of specific SL structures. Beyond the SL program learners are, then, largely on their own, so they need to be trained into becoming sophisticated in evaluating output, their own and others'. A variety of techniques can be used to enhance evaluation skills.

These six major steps in the hierarchy of cognitive activity in SL learning familiarization with data, comprehension, analysis, application, synthesis, and evaluation are distinct and can be described separately. But since they overlap to some extent, more than one may be present in many classroom activities. The five stages of emphasis from exclusive attention on linguistic form to exclusive attention on the message which roughly parallel the first five steps of cognitive activity apply to each structure or rule, one at a time. At any given time, SL learners would be using some rules with the freedom the accumulated knowledge of the language allows, recycling others as needed, and being introduced to still others at the level of 'familiarization with data'/attention only on form.

Long experience in the SL classroom has convinced me that this scheme helps most students avoid internalizing an error-laden interlanguage and learn instead to use a second language with reasonable fluency *and* a high level of accuracy.

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Notes to Chapter 7

1 Cf. Hammerly (1982: 403406).

2 In some institutions they have separate streams for those who just want to meet the 'foreign language requirement' and those who are interested in learning the SL well. This may be a good policy.

3 My perspective is based on the cognitive skills of older children (at least 10 years old) and adults, who are capable of, and benefit from, some analysis before application.

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8

A New Way to Look at Student Errors

How we see any person, idea, event, place or thing around us depends to a large extent on our individual viewpoint, our worldview, our mental models of how people, thoughts, actions, locales or objects relate to each other and to ourselves.

Nevertheless, if we are flexible and versatile, we will adapt our views on most things to changing circumstances and needs. For example, our background and worldview may lead us to champion the idea of freedom. But it would be disastrous to emphasize freedom during rush hour, a situation that demands control.

Similarly, how SL errors are seen depends on the background and philosophical orientation of the observer. Moreover, SL errors are probably not seen the same way in widely different circumstances, even by the same observers.

For a long time, SL errors have been described and classified as they relate to the natural process of SL acquisition in a sociolinguistically rich environment. This process is at work in non-academic, non-instructional linguistic settings such as those in which many immigrants, foreign students, or families residing abroad have found themselves. Unfortunately this process, if not continued for a long time under challenging linguistic conditions, results in a stagnant, structurally deficient interlanguage, however large the vocabulary may become and however fast the person may speak. Furthermore, the circumstances and needs of such unaided SL acquirers are very different from those of students learning a remote language in the sociolinguistically anemic environment of a classroom in their home country.

In natural SL acquisition, where learning is not under control and does not result from systematic instruction, it makes sense to see many errors in terms of what they reveal about the learner's unaided progress. In this light, nonhabitual ('unfossilized') errors indicate that the acquirer is producing output which, through feedback, will enable him or her to learn largely unconsciously the permissible limits of generalizations about the SL. 1 Unless errors become

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established in the SL acquirer's output, they are not a source of practical concern. Learners need not be discouraged from trying to 'stretch' their linguistic competence through trial and error for, *given feedback*, they can learn to self-correct many of their errors. Up to a point, communicative interaction will cause linguistic skills to improve. (The problem, even among many long-time immigrants, is that often proficiency doesn't develop beyond the point needed for survival, i.e. not beyond a terminal 2/2+.)

In SL learning in the classroom, the rich sociolinguistic environment that provides much indirect feedback on the limits of generalizations is absent. Here good results can be obtained only under careful instructional control, that is, by teaching the language systematically, step by step, and discouraging students from trying to use structures they haven't yet learned. Errors, more than indicating what individuals are in the process of acquiring, have at least one of four causes: (1) the teacher or the materials have not presented the point clearly enough; (2) there hasn't yet been enough practice of the point, mechanical or meaningful; (3) the students have not made the effort necessary to master it, even though they have had adequate opportunity to do so; or (4) the students have ventured into linguistically still-to-be-'charted' territory. In the classroom situation, most errors *are* a matter of practical concern, for if they are not corrected effectively they will persist, linguistically helpful communicative interaction being minimal. Linguistic trial and error should not be encouraged except in the presence of a person who can provide structurally focused feedback on whether trials have succeeded or failed.

Certain distinctions between types of errors apply to both situations. One example is the distinction between *intralingual* errors (those within the target language, such as *overgeneralizations*) and *interlingual* errors (those across languages, whether in terms of intrusive or inhibitive interference, as discussed in Chapter 6). Another useful distinction is the one made by Corder (1967) between *errors* and *mistakes*; errors are systematic and mistakes are the result of chance circumstances, mere slips of the tongue or pen that involve (surface) performance but not linguistic competence. Unlike errors, mistakes should be ignored in the language classroom, as they are often made even by native speakers. Still another meaningful distinction was made by Burt and Kiparsky (1974) between *global* and *local* errors, on the basis of their effect on communication. Global errors cause a native speaker to misunderstand or not to understand the message, whereas local errors, given their context, do not interfere with comprehension of the message.

Several studies show that errors are from mildly annoying to strongly offensive to native speakers. Since, as Guntermann (1980) has shown, inaccuracies seem to be more objectionable to native speakers than errors

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affecting comprehension, a hypothesis worth exploring is that native speakers tend to blame incomprehensibility on their own inattention, but fully blame the speaker for obvious inaccuracies. Thus, the more obvious an error is, the more annoying it is to native speakers, for the more it speaks of carelessness, either in learning or in teaching. This points to the importance of avoiding morphological and other overt errors, most of which are *local*.

The monolingual teacher (or researcher) cannot distinguish well between intralingual and interlingual errors. Bilingual teachers who know the language of their students can make such a distinction. But since bilingual teachers understand not only both languages but also very deviant classroom pidgins, they must guard against accepting messages that would be either incomprehensible or offensive, or both, to monolingual native speakers of the target language. (We are led back to the only valid standard, the typical educated native speaker.)

When Corder said that errors are 'systematic', he was referring to the language system that each learner develops naturally, not to transitional systems imparted by teachers. The term can nevertheless be applied broadly to any of the series of transitional systems that result from classroom language instruction. The more specific distinctions Corder (1974) proposes between errors in the *presystematic*, *systematic*, and *postsystematic* stages, however, are clearly based on a learner-centered, natural acquisitionist point of view. (As detailed consideration of these distinctions would take us in greater depth into the characteristics of *natural SL acquisition* and away from *language teaching and its resultant learning*, the focus of the present book, I will limit myself to just mentioning them here.)

The transitional systems that result from classroom SL instruction are (or can be) different in several important respects from the interlanguages that emerge naturally in SL acquisition. First of all, the former should not be allowed to become stable, and it is only for lack of a better term that I call them 'systems'.

Secondly, unlike natural SL acquisition systems, classroom transitional systems result from careful instruction and initially conscious learning. The teacher guides learners *overtly* in the testing of hypotheses by presenting selected language samples that illustrate the use of a structure or rule and helping the students 'discover' it and explain it in their own words, correcting or supplementing their hypotheses as needed. This provides a sounder basis for classroom practice and use of the language than vague, unconscious notions the students might develop inductively, especially since such notions can't be directly determined and corrected by the teacher.

A third difference between these two types of systems is that transitional classroom systems can be developed step by step, focusing on structures one at

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a time rather than globally. This permits a high degree of control. In contrast, natural SL acquisition systems lack control, for at any time the acquirer may be at any stage in the process of acquiring a large variety of rules, whether correct or deficient.

Although classroom transitional systems are very numerous, they are ordered. Whenever something new is taught, learned and integrated in the language classroom and this usually happens at the rate of several items per class hour the transitional system has changed. Of course, student errors reveal that there are always differences between what has been taught and what has been learned, but at any time the teacher can tell how far along the class is in the point being taught and, by observing student output, how well each has learned what they could be expected to learn. The gap between the two systems the one taught and the one learned can then be narrowed or closed through pedagogical actions meant to ensure that error-causing unclear or faulty rules do not become a permanent part of the system learned.

A crucial factor, then, in classifying and dealing with classroom SL errors is the relationship between the program of instruction (what has been taught and how), what the students have or have not learned, and student output. Many languists used to hold this view, but it has been nearly abandoned for so long that it may now seem new. I suspect, in fact, that it will be new for many readers. And in explaining it, I am bringing to it some fresh considerations.

(Note that the intelligibility of messages cannot be the only or even the main criterion for dealing with SL errors with goodwill, native speakers can understand much 'language' that is riddled with errors of the most basic kind. That doesn't mean they like such 'language' or the carelessness in teaching or learning that its use implies. 2 The place to make SL errors is the *classroom*, where students can be directly helped so that they are unlikely to make them 'out there' in the 'real' world.)

I propose that we refer to classroom SL errors as they relate to systematic instruction. Errors that students make with what has been taught are essentially different from, and require a different response than, errors they make with structures they have no reason to know because they have not yet been taught. When students make an error with something that has already been adequately taught (that is, clearly understood and sufficiently practiced), they are distorting a part of the language they should know how to use. Accordingly, we should call this type of error a *distortion*.

Suppose, for instance, that the rules governing the choice between the Spanish verbs *estar* and *ser* two verbs with the single English equivalent 'to be' have been made clear and sufficiently practiced, with focus on both

form and meaning. Beyond that point, errors with this choice constitute distortions.

Distortions refer to errors not only with an overall pattern or structure but with any part thereof that has been adequately taught. Thus, to use the same Spanish example, students would be held accountable for the correct choice between *estar* and *ser* as soon as the rules governing that choice have been adequately taught and sufficiently applied, then they would be responsible for also knowing the forms of *estar* as soon as these have been adequately presented and practiced, and finally they would be expected to know the forms of *ser*. 3

Distortions are not the learner's fault when the teacher has failed to clearly illustrate or explain, or provide sufficient practice with a rule or element of the SL. These are errors students make with what has already been taught because it hasn't been taught adequately, and I call them *mismanagement distortions*.

I propose the term *fault* to refer to those errors students make when they venture beyond what they have learned. Of course, faults may occur whenever the students try to use the SL meaningfully, for they will tend to fill small gaps in their knowledge by generalizing from what they know of the SL or by relying on the NL. But I think that an effort must be made to keep faults to a minimum, or the defective rules underlying them will be internalized.

Some people encourage SL students to be 'creative' and to engage in what I have called *linguistic adventurism*. But if one is 'creative' with a complex tool one doesn't control, and one's misuse of the tool is not promptly corrected, one will develop poor tool-handling habits. The SL classroom does not and cannot offer students the kind and amount of feedback that allows NL or even many SL acquirers in the field to be linguistically creative while becoming linguistically accurate. In the classroom, if linguistic accuracy is not part of all activities from the start, and if linguistic creativity is not restricted to the creative use of what the students know of the language, not much accuracy will develop.

Like distortions, faults too can result from pedagogical mismanagement. *Mismanagement faults* occur when the teacher fails to enforce the classroom guideline that the students should stay within the (growing) structural boundaries of what they have learned so far.

Remote-SL students can observe these structural limitations and still be able to talk about a variety of topics. Students are not lexically limited as long as they are allowed to obtain, from the teacher, the remote-SL contextual equivalents of NL words and phrases not, of course, the rules that haven't been studied yet. Equivalents can be fitted into SL sentences without producing many errors if the students have access to a memory stock of very familiar SL sentences which they fully understand and have manipulated

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structurally and meaningfully. Under these conditions, sentence generation is not based on the structure of NL sentences (which is usually disastrous) but on the structure of the familiar SL sentences.

Learning a second language well in the classroom is a difficult and lengthy process, and students naturally make errors. The classification of errors proposed in this chapter yields a 2×2 chart based on whether or not a structure has already been taught and to whom the error can be attributed. The purpose of the latter, of course, is not to 'blame' anybody but to determine the sources of errors in order to deal effectively with the errors. As you can see in Figure 9, the sources of the errors can be the *learner* or the *teacher*, with errors referring either to what has been taught (i.e. *distortions*) or what hasn't been taught (i.e. *faults*).

	Taught	Not taught
Learner	Distortion	Fault
Teacher	Mismanagement Distortion	Mismanagement Fault

Figure 9

These four types of language-classroom errors are based on two languistic dimensions that have been neglected in previous classifications. In no way do they invalidate SL error types previously identified in the professional literature that are based on other dimensions, such as interlingual interference errors (both intrusive and inhibitive), intralingual overgeneralization errors, errors due to communication strategies, induced errors, avoidance errors, and so forth.

The distinctions between the four types of errors proposed in this chapter are important because each of the four needs to be counteracted differently. With learner distortions, we must determine why a given student is not learning the material he or she has had full opportunity to learn. Is the student unmotivated? If so, the teacher can take various measures, from offering encouraging words to (in the case of pre-adult students) arranging a conference with the student's parents. Is the student a slow learner in general or a slow SL learner? Here the teacher can design and assign suitable additional or remedial work. Is the student linguistically impulsive? Then reminders to 'Think before you speak' (or other words or signals to that effect) are in order. Is the student bored? inattentive? worried? Several solutions are possible. The important thing is for the teacher to try individualized remedies by addressing the causes of each learning difficulty.

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With mismanagement distortions, the teacher must examine or re-examine his or her teaching practices. Has the teacher been rushing from grammar point to grammar point without giving the students a chance to master each? Does the teacher illustrate a new point well and have the students learn appropriate language samples thoroughly? Are the teacher's grammatical explanations correct and, if so, are they predigested wisdom or does he or she help the students 'discover' and describe the rule? Is the teacher providing the students with enough of each type of practice needed (mechanical at first, gradually bridging to communication)? Does the teacher withhold communicative activities as a reward until the students can use the new structure well in more controlled activities? This is the principle of delayed gratification, essential to success in the attainment of any complex task. Are the teacher's standards high or does he or she allow student peer pressure to determine them? Is the teacher's approach to the correction of errors psycholinguistically sound? (Chapter 9 deals with this.) When the teacher notices that the students are making many errors with a structure they are learning or should have learned, does he or she recycle earlier teaching steps or say to himself/herself, 'They'll learn it, in time, as they use the language'? Is the teacher friendly and encouraging but firm? The teacher needs to honestly answer these questions in order to minimize or eliminate mismanagement distortions.

If there is more than a small number of learner faults, the students need to be reminded, 'We still haven't learned X, so don't try to use it yet' or 'To say that, you need X, which comes in Lesson Y'. If it is something that a student simply *must* say, he or she can ask the teacher to supply the SL equivalent to repeat. (Of course, the class introverts need to be encouraged to speak, but they, too, should do so within the limits of what they have learned.)

Learner faults are really mismanagement faults when the teacher fails to impress on the students the necessity to keep their communication close to what they know of the language. To convince them of the necessity of doing this, the teacher will have to explain to them with reminders as needed the negative long-term effects on their SL competence and performance of premature free communication in the classroom language program. The poor linguistic habits that result from an early focus on free communication and that are nearly impossible to change later can be made clearest with examples of the deficient interlanguages used by various foreign-born speakers of the students' NL.

Throughout the SL program, of course, the teacher must observe student output carefully in order to provide each student with the necessary feedback and guidance. At regular intervals teacher observation should take the form of (primarily oral) progress tests to determine the extent to which each student has learned to control specific structures taught. Such tests use 'accurate

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control ratings' (ACRs) and do *not* as proficiency interviews (OPIs) do encourage or force students to try to survive communicative situations for which their limited linguistic competence is inadequate. The result of doing the latter is, naturally, the thorough internalization of faults.

I have been discussing the errors of classroom SL learners. While SL students will occasionally make errors that a native speaker might make or may have made in early childhood, almost all the errors of SL students are markedly different from those of monolingual native speakers of the language. The latter are not affected by another language, so their errors are intralingual and usually involve style, the use of nonstandard dialects, and spelling (where there is an imperfect fit between sound units and letters). SL students make mostly nonnative errors, especially at the beginning of the program and if not corrected effectively at the very advanced level.

The new four-way classification of and approach to SL errors presented in this chapter is neither just 'teacher-centered' nor exclusively 'student-centered' but reflects the viewpoint of teachers who want their students to learn and are conscientious about the teaching/learning process. This view may not be entirely new, but it certainly needs to be rescued from its present neglect if our SL programs remote or local are to be successful.

Notes to Chapter 8

1 I think the phrase 'testing hypotheses', although well established, is inappropriate in this context. To test a hypothesis, one must mentally weigh the evidence pro and con, which can only be a conscious act. Cognitively mature persons can of course test hypotheses consciously, but the burden of proof is on those who claim this can be done unconsciously. To claim that young children can perform unconsciously a sophisticated cognitive activity that they evidently cannot perform consciously seems far-fetched indeed.

2 An interesting question is what typically French, Spanish, etc. structures must come under control before we can say that a learner actually speaks the language. In Spanish this would certainly include regular gender and verb-ending rules, so children who after years of Spanish immersion say things like *la perro*, *el comida*, and *(yo) puedes* cannot be said to speak Spanish.

3 While for best results with SL learning tasks attention to form should precede attention to usage, there are exceptions. With a problem like *estar/ser*, usage needs to be attended to first. Otherwise, the moment the students learn the forms for one of these verbs they will start using them for everything, much of the time incorrectly. As to the order in which the two sets of forms should be taught (everything else being equal), since the uses of *ser* are much more numerous and varied than the uses of *estar*, students make fewer errors when *estar*, with its few uses, is taught first as the base and *ser* is dealt with on an 'elsewhere' basis.

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9

The Surface and Deep Correction of Errors

In this chapter I will discuss how to correct SL errors effectively. 1 But before dealing with the how-to's of error correction, we need to consider how to minimize the number errors, what errors to correct, and when to correct them.

In the preceding chapter I stated that the correction of errors is manageable and potentially effective only when the number of errors is relatively small. This can be achieved only when the teacher (1) systematically illustrates each point to be learned, (2) provides the students with a clear understanding of each, (3) offers them thorough practice in each practice that moves gradually from intelligent mechanical to integrated communicative and, especially, (4) effectively discourages them from frequently trying to go beyond what they know.

With this approach, there isn't much point in correcting *faults*, as there is no reason why the students should be able to correctly use structures they haven't studied. Besides, trying to correct faults would force the teacher to spend (or rather, waste) time trying to explain prematurely and without the context they require structures that will be taught thoroughly later in the program. These premature explanations are more likely to leave the students confused than to help them use the structures accurately. Since faults cannot be corrected effectively, the teacher's efforts should be concentrated instead on preventing their occurrence in the first place. When students *must* say something for which they lack the necessary grammatical or vocabulary knowledge, they should be directed to ask the teacher to provide it by giving him or her an NL equivalent or by paraphrasing it in the SL. They can then repeat the SL word or phrase the teacher gives them and use it meaningfully.

Having discouraged the kind of output that results in frequent faults, we must focus error correction on what is being taught or has been taught, to the extent that the students can be expected to have learned it. In other words, error correction means primarily the correction of *distortions*. This *can* be done effectively if we know how to go about it.

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Many SL specialists have suggested that when faced with many errors the teacher should correct those that affect comprehension but largely ignore those that do not. This recommendation was already being made, indirectly, in the 1940s and 1950s, when teachers were urged to correct phonemic errors, which may reduce comprehension, and to ignore (at least initially) phonetic errors, which were thought not to interfere with communication. More recently, CAN megatheory and SLACC/I/immersion approach proponents have espoused the idea that communicatively redundant grammatical features need not be corrected; some advocate no error correction at all.

The opinion that no error needs to be corrected in the SL classroom is preposterous, and the end result of that practice is sadly obvious. Up to a point there is general improvement with little or no correction. But in the classroom, that point represents minimal (i.e. survival) SL competence.

The position that only errors that affect comprehension should be corrected or that they should be given priority over those that do not must be rejected on several grounds. In the first place, the assumption that we are forced to choose which errors to correct because there are too many to correct is false. If the task of learning a language is broken into reasonably small steps and each of these is mastered, there shouldn't be many errors at any one time. Instead errors should be few enough that virtually all can be corrected. There will of course be some errors; this is inevitable as students try to use new material. Too, students often make more than one error in one utterance; but the solution is to break down the utterance into smaller parts and correct each, not to ignore errors. If there are *many* errors at any time, this indicates that the instructional program has not proceeded gradually and smoothly enough, that it has not broken down what is to be learned into steps sufficiently small for the students to master. If we take care to ensure, through appropriate instruction, that there aren't many errors at any one time, then there is no need to establish priorities that leave many errors uncorrected. The entire, manageable number of errors that do occur can be corrected.

Secondly, errors that are not corrected tend to become habitual, that is, to occur without conscious awareness whenever that SL rule or element is called for. This is especially true of all communicatively redundant features of the language: since they seldom if ever result in failures in communication, learners cannot count on such breakdowns to make them aware of the problems. With communicatively redundant rules, forms, and elements, only careful instruction and the effective correction of errors shows learners that such features are important and need to be mastered. The difficulties of early French immersion graduates with the gender of very common nouns after thirteen years of French demonstrate this point.

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A third consideration is that errors which affect comprehension (global errors, which are usually semantic or deep-syntactic) seem to be less offensive to native speakers than errors which do not (local errors, which are usually surface-syntactic, morphological or phonetic). I think most native speakers, rightly or wrongly, interpret obvious grammatical errors or a heavy accent as habitual carelessness on the part of the speaker, whereas they may blame themselves ('Perhaps I wasn't paying close attention') for errors that are not obvious and affect comprehension. Giving low priority to correcting the errors that are likely to cause the most offense makes very little sense.

As to when to correct errors, the only significant restriction is that a correction should not interrupt the student in mid-utterance. This doesn't mean that the teacher shouldn't intervene when a student goes on and on, speaking rapidly and making numerous errors; students shouldn't even be encouraged to speak rapidly until they can speak accurately at lower speed. While in general all of the relatively few errors that occur should be corrected, there are exceptions; for example, when a quiet student finally ventures to say something unprompted, that is not the time to correct every little error.

There are two points in the teaching and learning of any rule or element when error correction must be particularly conscientious: during the initial presentation and practice of the structure and at the stage where attention shifts primarily to meaning. The former is the point where the rule correct or deficient is formed in the student's mind. The latter involves the danger that, as the focus moves to the messages, accuracy may be abandoned. The shift to realistic and then real communication at the end of each teaching cycle should not be seen as a license to speak ungrammatically. While these two points are crucial, error correction should be consistent and persistent throughout.

Techniques of SL error correction don't seem to have been very carefully thought out, and there has been too little research on them. For a long time, the main technique for correcting errors has been for the teacher to give the student the correct utterance to repeat. But is this technique effective? Or is it largely responsible for the same errors being made again and again, even after many years of SL instruction?

For correction to be effective, it must deal with the causes of errors, not just with their surface manifestations. As in medicine, we must cure the disease, not just deal with its symptoms. Having the student repeat the correct response does not deal with the cause of the error, nor does it help him or her understand the cause or know what to do the next time he or she needs to use the same structure.

Repetition is a nearly mindless activity, one in which students can engage without thinking at all. And if students are not led to think, however briefly,

about the nature of their errors, what they should have said (or written) instead, and why, numerous corrections make no more impression on their minds than a flat stone skipping across the calm surface of a small river makes on its deep currents. Such is *surface* correction.

As noted earlier, correction should concentrate on distortions. A distortion means that some rule or item has been either insufficiently or incorrectly taught or learned, that is, that the picture of the rule or item in the student's mind is absent, incomplete, fuzzy, or incorrect the latter two probably because he or she never understood it or its use clearly. If students are not to make the same error again (or at least if they are to be progressively less likely to make it) correction must reorganize their cognitive structures, filling in gaps or replacing their incorrect mental rules with accurate ones. 2

Reorganizing the student's cognitive structure on a particular SL point should of course be a cognitively active process on the part of the *student*, who is not a passive machine. Student-passive techniques such as asking students to repeat the correct utterance or even reminding them of the correct rule statement are ineffective. With the former, students can repeat the correct utterance without thinking at all; with the latter, they are not making any effort to recall the key statement that governs the use of the structure or vocabulary item in question.

Some incidental, effortless learning apparently occurs, unconsciously, even in the most formal classroom program. But almost all learning especially classroom learning beyond the age of nine or so requires cognitive effort on the part of the learner to be successful. People who propose easy ways to accomplish complex learning tasks deserve as much credence as oldtime snake oil salesmen. Like snake oil, repetition is quite ineffective.

For learning to be complete, points of knowledge must pass from the mind of the teacher to the minds of the students. The occurrence of distortions shows that this transfer has not fully taken place. The correction of distortions should be done in such a way as to aid this cognitive transfer to the minds of the students, not to their ears and tongues, bypassing their brains. (Brain bypass surgery has been attempted very frequently in SL classrooms, rarely successfully.)

To ensure that the students make the teacher's knowledge part of their own working knowledge, the teacher must gradually phase out the amount of information he or she provides the students with, thus forcing them to recall and internalize more and more of it. As long as the teacher continues to provide the students with ready-made utterances (through repetition) or with all the necessary information to produce them, they need not worry about

trying to learn the rules governing their production. They can continue to be linguistic dependents of the teacher. But thoughtful teachers will want their students to learn to function independently, with internalized knowledge, understanding, and knowhow. So in a relatively short time they will provide each student with less and less information on any one point, thus making it necessary for him or her to internalize the linguistic criteria that govern that point.

Phasing out information consists of several steps. First the teacher makes sure that all students understand a point. Then when individual students make errors with it the teacher gives each student increasingly briefer reminders of the rule or distinction he or she has violated or ignored. Later the teacher can also ask the student to express 'telegraphically' the same information. After a while, the teacher only indicates that an error on that point has occurred. A little later (in reference to that point), the teacher notes merely that an error, in general, has occurred, letting the student figure out what the error was and what he or she should say instead. When a student doesn't seem to respond to this phased-out correction procedure, the teacher can resort to the 'shock' treatment of asking other students to provide the missing information. This often solves the problem.

The above outline describes how acts of correction of a particular problem would progress over a period of time by providing gradually *less* information. Within each individual corrective occasion, gradually *more* information would be provided in order to help the student produce the correct utterance with the minimum amount of teacher help. Thus a corrective event would consist of a series of gradually more revealing cues. Normally a series should not involve more than three or four cues. Insisting on further correction on any one occasion makes most students feel frustrated, so that they start making even more errors. Here the thing for the teacher to do is not say 'Good' or 'OK' to incorrect responses but make it clear to the student that he or she needs further practice on that point and that they will deal with it again later.

Situations in which there is a two-way choice require special care. If it is clear to the students that they must use A or B, correcting a distortion by telling a student that it isn't A means that he or she will automatically use B without any further thought to the reason for that 'choice' (a choice that hasn't really been made). Examples of such situations are, for English-speaking students, the two-way choices between the auxiliaries *être* and *avoir* and between the *passé composé* and the *imparfait* past tenses in French; in Spanish, the choices between the two past tenses, between *estar* and *ser* and between *saber* and *conocer* are of this type.

In such situations, how students get to use B rather than A is not as important as the fact that cognitive reorganization must take place. For the students to be able to change their thinking about that choice, they must be fully aware of the criteria that govern it. To be sure that this is the case, the teacher should ask the students themselves to state, telegraphically, the reason(s) why B was called for. If the correct criteria are not internalized, there is no learning and output will continue to be haphazard rather than be based on intelligent choices. Just knowing that they will be asked to refer to the reason for using B rather than A makes the students more conscious of the criteria and thus more careful in their choices. For example, suppose that after the differences between Spanish *estar* and *ser* and their forms have been adequately taught and practiced with appropriate reminders of each use a student says, **El libro es aqui* (using *ser* instead of *estar* for *El libro está aqui*). The teacher could ask, *¿es?* Naturally the student will switch to *El libro está aqui*; but since this 'self-correction' is probably mindless, the teacher should ask, 'Why?' and the student should be able to answer, 'Location'. 3 (Other examples of this kind of situation are discussed in detail later in this chapter.)

What I have discussed in the last few pages is *deep* correction. Certainly it is more challenging to implement than simply asking students to repeat. In any class hour, students will need individualized feedback at the different points of mastery and correction phase-out in which they find themselves on any of several structures. Monitoring individual progress and providing individualized feedback is not the easiest thing for the teacher to do. But then, nothing really worthwhile is easy.

Direct correction is most effective but can be resented and result in a very quiet class if not done right. It helps if the advantages of, and need for, correction are explained with examples (including examples of errors the teacher himself/herself has made) in an orientation at the beginning of the course or program. Correction must not make students feel intimidated. It must be done in such a kind and matter-of-fact manner that the perceived message isn't 'You're wrong!' or 'What a dumb thing to say!' but rather 'Listen to the following (telegraphic) information that will help you do it better'. Of course, when an error is funny it is perfectly all right to be amused, but the teacher must be perceived as chuckling or laughing *with* the students, not *at* the student who made the error.

Let us consider a few examples of typical SL errors, what happens when they are subjected to correction-as-repetition, and what can be done instead to deal with their causes, that is, to provide deep correction. This discussion will focus primarily on oral errors, but the correction of written errors will receive some attention near the end of the chapter.

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Example 1.
Semantics/Syntax

In Spanish, as in several other languages, the past is expressed with two tenses, one perfective (called 'preterite' in English), the other imperfective (the 'imperfect'). Since a formal tense aspect distinction is largely absent from English, English-speaking learners of Spanish (unlike French- or Portuguese- speaking learners of Spanish, for instance) find it very hard to master. Without appropriate instruction and correction, some English-speaking students go through a whole Spanish program without learning this distinction. Like the Spanish *estar/ser*, *indicative/subjunctive*, and other learning problems, this is essentially a two-way choice.

Suppose an English-to-Spanish student says, with himself/herself as the subject, the following:

S: *Esta mañana llegaba a la escuela una hora más temprano.

('This morning I arrived in school an hour earlier'.)

The student has used an imperfect form of the verb *llegar*. But, as the larger context shows that he or she was referring to a completed action in the past, the student should have used the preterite tense, in this case the form *llegué*. The usual correction-as-repetition would have the teacher say:

T: Llegué.

The student would then dutifully and mindlessly repeat:

S: Esta mañana llegué a la escuela una hora más temprano.

What has the student learned by doing this? He or she had to make the minute effort of recognizing *llegué* as a form of the verb *llegar* and of substituting this form for the incorrect one. The student didn't have to tackle the main issue, that is, what past tense should be used in this context and why. He or she didn't even have to call on morphological knowledge, for the teacher provided the correct form.

Some students would probably make such a distortion during the increasingly communicative practice following a clearly understood explanation of the rule. In such *early corrections*, the teacher need not reexplain the rule in full. If during its initial teaching the teacher told the students what telegraphic coded reminder of the rule would be used in class from then on, all the teacher needs to do in such early corrections is cue the students with that telegraphic reminder. In the case under consideration, the teacher could say, for example:

T: Completed event.

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'Completed event' is a telegraphic reminder that stands for: 'The preterite is used when an event is seen as having been completed in the past'. Such a cue doesn't require the student to review the whole rule, it only reminds him or her of it. This is still a rather passive cognitive activity, *if* the student processes the telegraphic cue mentally. But since this is an 'A-or-B' situation, the student has to make no cognitive effort to decide whether to use the preterite. If something is wrong with A, he or she just tries B. About the only effort the student is making is morphological, that is, recalling the appropriate form of the preterite.

The teacher could also start an act of correction of this distortion by saying:

> T: ¿Llegaba? *or* Tense ('Tiempo') *or* Verb ('Verbo'). 4

The first two of these cues, which go from specific to general, would easily lead the student to realize that he or she should have used 'B' (the preterite) rather than 'A' (the imperfect); they don't require the student to deal with the reason why, just to search his or her memory for the appropriate form. The 'Verb' cue requires the student to decide whether the distortion involved tense or form; this still doesn't force him or her to consider the reason for using the preterite. There are then two possibilities. If the student doesn't respond to one of these cues, the teacher should go back to the early grammatical correction technique discussed above. If following one of these three types of cues the student does say the sentence with the correct *llegué*, then the teacher needs to ask him or her for the reason:

> T: Why?5

To which the student, or another student who knows the reason, can respond:

> S: Completed event. (Or other such telegraphic acknowledgement to that effect, in English or Spanish.)6

With this technique, the student (or some student) has been asked to recall the rule, which is a fairly sophisticated cognitive act. This re-establishes or strengthens awareness of the correct rule not only in the mind of the student who made the distortion, but also in the minds of any other students who are paying attention to the exchange (as students should be encouraged to do, with all corrective acts). Re-establishing or strengthening the rule in the students' minds, as many times as needed, will result, together with its use, of course, in the gradual disappearance of its distortions and the full internalization of the rule.

As stated earlier, however, the amount of information provided in correcting problems with any rule should be gradually phased out, so that the transfer of the rule to the minds of the students is completed and they are able to apply

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it independently. At the advanced stage in the correction of errors on any point in the SL, all the teacher should do is:

T: [Nonverbal signal that the student has made a distortion] 7

This forces the student to mentally review the last few words to determine what he or she has done wrong and, again, to make the effort to self-correct it. Once again, in most cases, and certainly in all 'A-or-B' situations, the act of correction should end with the question 'Why?'

Progressing to the internalization of a rule by gradually providing less and less distortion-correction information to the students makes them assume responsibility for their learning. If this type of correction procedure is properly handled (in a friendly, helpful manner), the students will become careful without being discouraged from speaking.

At the beginning of the course or program, the teacher should of course make the purpose and nature of correction procedures clear to the students. When they realize how helpful this will be to them in the long run, students, with rare exceptions, welcome it. The alternative is for students not to be corrected effectively, not to know how and when many rules should be used, and to develop, fairly soon, an error-laden terminal interlanguage.

Basically the same correction procedure can be followed with most SL structures, whether obligatory or optional, part of a two-way choice or involving more than two options, absent from the NL or present with a somewhat different form or distribution. The key to the effective elimination of distortions is to help the students become fully aware of the nature of each rule or subrule. And the only way to make sure that they progressively understand and internalize each structure is to deal with the causes of errors by asking why something else should be said instead.

Example 2.
Vocabulary

In French, as in other languages, two or more words may be used for what English expresses in one word, and vice versa. For example, French uses more than one word for the English word 'window'. The French word for a regular window, as in a room or building, is *fenêtre*, but the word for a store window is *vitrine*. Since the usual practice is not to present this distinction when the word *fenêtre* is taught, the moment English-speaking students learn the word *fenêtre* they (unlike, say, Spanish-speaking students) naturally overgeneralize it under the influence of their NL to store windows and say such incorrect things as:

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S: *Je voudrais acheter la cravatte dans la fenêtre.

('I'd like to buy the necktie in the window'.)

Such an error is not a minor point. At best it would result in a puzzled look on the face of storekeepers; at worst, it sounds quite ridiculous to all monolingual speakers of French.

I am not suggesting that whenever a new word is introduced all the exceptions to the (often deficient) SL=NL equation that will naturally occur in the students' minds should be pointed out. When there are several exceptions, the information would indeed be hard for the students to remember. But when there is only one major or common exception as in this case it can be taught and practiced at the time the main meaning is taught. In any event, if not done earlier, then when the need first arises for someone in the class to speak of store windows, the cognitively oriented thing for the teacher to do is to point out this distinction and give the students practice in making it. (Ignoring that English-speaking students of French will think first of 'store *window*' and from there jump directly, if not properly forewarned and forearmed, to *fenêtre*, is choosing to ignore cognitive reality. Languistic problems should be tackled, not treated as if they didn't exist or could easily be solved unconsciously.)

Once the word *vitrine* has been taught and differentiated from *fenêtre* as a certain type of *window*, errors such as the one we are discussing become distortions and can be corrected as such. The first line of attack would be for the teacher to provide the reason why *vitrine* should be used by saying or asking:

T: Magasin ('Store') *or* Magasin?

Later on, the teacher can elicit the reason from the student once the latter has produced the correct word, as follows:

T: Fenêtre?

S: [Euh, non.] Je voudrais acheter la cravatte dans la vitrine.

T: Why? (*or*, at a more advanced level) Pourquoi 'la vitrine'?

S: It's a store *or* C'est un magasin.

Still later corrections would be handled by simply indicating that the student has made a vocabulary error (and still later, just an error in general) and letting him or her determine, with minimal help from the teacher or classmates as needed, what the error was and what should be said instead. *Then* the teacher would ask the student 'Why?'

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Examples 3a and 3b.
Morphology

3a.
Simple Morphological Distortions

In correcting simple morphological distortions, teachers rarely need to deal with any specific cause the cause almost always is that the student just doesn't remember the form required by the formal context. These errors can be handled by using various types of cues and/or nonverbal signals which are already widely used in language classrooms. For example, suppose that after having studied the present tense (something that necessarily happens very early) a student of German were to say:

    S: *Er gehen ins Kino gern. (Instead of Er geht . . . .)

    (*'He like to go to the movies' or, more 'literally' and unidiomatically, *'He go to the moviehouse more-than-willingly'.)

The teacher can elicit the correct form, *geht*, verbally, with or without using hand signals, by saying:

    T: Wir gehen . . . , Sie gehen . . . , *aber* Er . . . ?

    ('We go . . . , You go . . . , *but* He . . . ?')

Or the teacher can quickly 'review' the conjugation by saying:

    T: Ich gehe . . . , Du gehst . . . , Er . . . ? 8

    ('I go . . . , You go . . . , He . . . ?')

In any event, the teacher must resist the natural temptation to simply provide the correct form for the student to mindlessly repeat. The student should make an effort to produce it.

3b.
Morphological Distortions with Complex Causes

Where a morphological distortion is probably due to incomplete understanding or imperfect recall of a complex rule, it may be necessary to use deep correction in which the reasons for the choices are obtained from the student. For example, students of a language with a complex case system such as German may use incorrect forms because they don't clearly understand what case they should be using. Here the teacher should first make sure that the student knows which case to use (by eliciting the 'reason' for its use). Then the teacher can help the student produce the correct form via techniques similar to those in Example 3a above.

Examples 4a4d.
Pronunciation

As with other aspects of SL learning, teachers can greatly reduce the incidence of pronunciation and intonation distortions by teaching each point thoroughly and by overtly addressing the causes of difficulties at that initial phase. Teachers should do this in a planned, orderly manner by imparting control over sound contrasts, distributions, and articulatory characteristics to their students through noncontinuous phonological instruction during the first 1520 hours of class. While some permanent improvement is possible even after years of mispronouncing an SL, correcting habitual distortions is far harder than helping the students form good pronunciation habits from the start.

As with other aspects of the SL, pronunciation distortions can be handled through surface, mindless (and largely ineffective) correction or through deeper correction that deals with the causes of errors and when relevant the reasons for saying something else. To be able to deal effectively with the causes of pronunciation distortions (or, for that matter, to teach pronunciation at all), the teacher must be familiar with the sound systems and know how the sounds are produced in *both* languages, native and target. This is because, in addition to having to learn some intralingual pronunciation rules and new sounds, the students need to overcome both intrusive and inhibitive audio-oral NL interference, and in most cases graphemic interference as well. Since pronunciation is the most habitual and unconscious of linguistic behaviors, transfer effects are rampant in learning SL pronunciation.

Surface correction simply asks the student to imitate the teacher's rendition of the utterance, often of an entire phrase. This is not very helpful. It doesn't offer the student isolation and differentiation of the distortion. By isolation I mean that the segment mispronouced is highlighted, together with its phonologically conditioning environment (whatever comes before or after it that determines the use of that particular sound or sound variant). By differentiation I mean that the incorrect minimal utterance is juxtaposed with the correct one so that the student has a chance to clearly perceive the difference between the distortion he or she produced and the utterance as it should be pronounced instead. Without knowing where a pronunciation error is and what it consists of, how can a student be expected to learn to control and monitor his or her speech?

Isolation and differentiation and the correction of pronunciation errors in general were discussed in some detail elsewhere (Hammerly, 1982: 36771), so in illustrating those two techniques I will limit myself to one Spanish-to-English example. Let us assume that the teacher taught Spanish-speaking students early in the program that the English sound unit /b/is very rarely if ever pronounced as the [b] in Spanish *abajo* [a'baxo]; 9 let us further assume that the

teacher gave them sufficient, careful practice in the production of [b] where Spanish has [b], and elsewhere. Then the teacher's first step in handling distortions with this should be to provide isolation and differentiation, in one step, as follows:

S: *What's that all a[b]out? (instead of . . . a[b]out?)

T: *Not* [ə'βɑ-], [ə'bɑ-].

S: [ə'bɑ-].

T: [ə'bɑwt'].

S: [ə'bɑwt'].

T: What's that all a[b]out?

S: What's that all a[b]out?

Note that [bɑ-] or [bɑwt'] would not do as the minimal imitation segment, for the problem to be overcome does not occur in utterance-initial position but would crop up, unsolved, the moment the preceding phonic context were added. All of this is still surface correction, for while the teacher may be, to a point, addressing the cause of the distortion, the student isn't being made aware or reminded of exactly what he or she is supposed to do to eliminate it.

When it comes to the deep correction of pronunciation errors, unguided or even somewhat guided imitation is not enough. But what steps are actually taken depends on which of four major types of pronunciation distortions has occurred. These will be discussed mostly in terms of traditional linguistic concepts, as many of their more modern reformulations are too abstract, atomistic, or both, to be applicable to the SL classroom (see Chapter 15).

4a.
Phonetic Pronunciation Distortion

With this type of distortion, the teacher should remind the student of how the SL sound is articulated, at times even of how the unwanted NL sound is articulated, so the student can clearly hear/see/feel the differences. Such reminders can often be nonverbal. For example, if at an early point a Spanish-to-English student distorts a North American English [ɹ] by replacing it with a Spanish [ř] as in *carro*, the corrective act may require the following series of steps:

S: *He gave Lucy a [ř]ose.

T: *Not* [ř]ose, [ɹ]ose. (The two sounds being differentiated are articulated with some exaggeration and accompanied by appropriate hand signals.)

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S: [ř]ose.

T: *Not 'trilled'* [ř], *'retroflex'* [ɹ]. (Same somewhat exaggerated articulation and hand signals. Since the student is a native speaker of Spanish who doesn't speak English, these and the instructions that follow must be in Spanish.)

S: [ř].

T: *Retroflex remember? Move the tip of the tongue back along the roof of the mouth until it touches the palate.* (This is accompanied by a hand signal.)

S: (Follows instructions.)

T: *Now lower the tongue a little, so that there is no contact anymore.* (Again, with a hand signal.)

S: (Follows instructions.)

T: *Now say* [ɹ::]. (A long English 'r'.)

S: [ɹ::].

T: [ɹ]ose.

S: [ɹ]ose.

T: . . . a rose.

S: . . . a rose.

T: He gave Lucy a rose.

S: He gave Lucy a rose.

Later corrections of this distortion can be done by asking '[ř]ed?' or by saying, 'Retroflex'. Still later, the teacher would merely signal to the student that there is a pronunciation error and ask him or her to identify it and self-correct it, if necessary even having the student describe telegraphically how an [ɹ] is articulated. Passing on to the students the responsibility for accurate control of SL sounds and for full awareness of what is involved in producing each of them is the only way to ensure that an accurate SL sound system is formed in their minds.

4b.
Allophonic Rule Pronunciation Distortion

Which phones are articulated in the languages of the world seems to be limited only by what is possible and relatively easy to articulate with the human

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vocal apparatus. More abstract sound units such as the phonemes in a given language tend to follow rules as to their position and ordering of occurrence. But the choice of allophones (variants of phonemes) is fully governed by rules and as such can be taught like any other rule-governed behavior. To become competent with allophones, then, students need instruction and deep correction that makes them fully aware of these rules and gives them ample opportunity to apply them.

English /t/, for example, has several allophones. The aspirated [t'] that occurs at the beginning of stressed syllables is particularly difficult for students whose NLs lack this kind of /t/ there are many such languages, French and Spanish among them. Deep correction in the case of Spanish-to-English students would involve not only making sure that they can articulate this sound but also ensuring that they learn *when* they should produce it.

The teacher must do more than explain the rule to the students once and ask them if they understood the explanation. The teacher needs to help them reach the point where they can reproduce the rule via an agreed-upon telegraphic summary or in their own words and apply it correctly in their communicative acts.

4c.
Phonemic Pronunciation Distortion

When a student uses the wrong phoneme in a word, deep correction of the distortion, in addition to the phonetic techniques illustrated under 4a above, needs to emphasize the importance of the violated phonemic contrast. The teacher can do this by recalling one or more of the minimal word or phrase pairs used in the initial phonological instruction preferably pairs where the substitution has a dramatic effect on meaning. If there are no minimal pairs, the teacher still can make the point with near-minimal pairs.

Not all distortions that are perceived as phonemic are due to inability to contrast two phonemes. The use in the SL of certain NL allophones that do not exist or are differently distributed in the SL may be perceived as a phonemic error. For example, an unaspirated [p] where an English speaker expects an aspirated [p'], as in *[pæt'] in lieu of [p'æ'], *pat*, may be perceived as [bæt'], *bat*. This illustrates the importance of not just controlling a certain number of contrasts but being able to do it *according to the phonetic and allophonic characteristics that underlie each contrast in the SL*.

Many phonemic substitutions are not pronunciation errors at all. They indicate that the learner is insufficiently familiar with the shape of a word. For example, a Spanish-to-English learner who said *ar*[tʃ]*ives* instead of *ar*[k]*ives*

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seems to be making a competence-based pronunciation error, but he or she in fact controls the basic phonemic /č/¹/k/ contrast quite well, as it exists in Spanish. What happens is that the learner has not (sufficiently) heard the word spoken but applies to the oral interpretation of its written form the spelling/sound correlations of Spanish. In Spanish, the digraph 'ch' always stands for the phones [tʃ] (the phoneme /č/).

4d.
Phonological Rule Pronunciation Distortion

Generative phonologists have shown that there are many phonological rules above the surface level of pronunciation. In English, for instance, the position of stress in the utterance has a major effect on vowel sounds, so that, for example, a vowel in related words is a schwa [ə] when unstressed (e.g. *telegraphy* and *telegram*).

Some phonological rules should be taught early in the SL program, for they apply broadly. Others, which apply to a smaller number of cases, can be taught on an *ad hoc* basis when those words are first encountered in the program. Still others probably most do not belong in the SL classroom, for they are of very limited application. In any event, generative rules that are taught should be presented in as simple and concrete a way as possible, never in the mathematical-looking formulas and abstract jargon of generative phonology. And the more complex the rule, the more it needs to be broken down into sub-components and practiced intensively with concrete examples.

Some students will not quite understand, will forget, or will misuse generative rules. This will result in distortions. As with other rules, deep correction of generative rule pronunciation distortions involves recalling the rule, referring to it as needed in telegraphic form, and reviewing it so that the student can apply it independently.

The above Examples 1 to 4d show that the surface correction of oral errors plain repetition, with or without guidance differs markedly from deep correction, where the teacher ensures that the students are fully aware of the 'whys' that should govern their linguistic behavior. The same basic principles apply to the correction of written errors, which we will now consider briefly.

The Deep Correction of Written Errors

In this discussion I am going to assume an SL program in which students have to write compositions. Elsewhere (Hammerly, 1982: 506507) I have

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questioned the value of SL compositions. They are neither necessary nor useful. As students often end up writing them with dictionaries and grammar books in hand they evidently make linguistic demands that the students cannot meet, so they can be harmful. But since most SL programs insist on requiring compositions, until they are eliminated from the curriculum we should at least know how to deal a little more effectively with the errors they invite our students to make.

Written errors are typically corrected by the teacher writing the correct forms in and the students copying the compositions into final corrected versions. Students learn little or nothing through this passive procedure. Proof of this is that, no matter how many compositions full of red-inked corrections they get back, they keep on making the same written errors, month after month and course after course.

Again, the solution is to deal with the causes of errors, phasing out the amount of feedback provided and thus forcing the students to internalize the criteria for correct production. In doing this, the teacher can direct the students to readily available reference materials where the criteria are explained.

For ease of correction since the teacher must be able to compare details in 'before' and 'after' versions I recommend the following procedure: compositions should first be submitted double spaced on the left vertical half of the page. Following the directions of the teacher, the students would rewrite what they have to rewrite on the right half of the page, side by side with the original incorrect material. To make sure that the students work carefully the first time around, half of the grade is assigned to the original version, the other half to the corrected segments.

Only what was initially written incorrectly needs to be rewritten with its essential context, of course. There is no point in asking a student to rewrite an entire paragraph if only one phrase or sentence in it is incorrect, or to rewrite a whole sentence just because a word in it was misspelled. The teacher must indicate in some manner the extent of what needs to be rewritten in each case. Symbols for this, and to refer to specific corrections, can be written by the teacher in the margin or between the double-spaced lines of the text.

Deep correction involves providing students with just the information they *must* have to correct their own errors, using reference material as needed. As the course or program progresses, less and less information is provided until, for most structures, all the teacher does is inform the student that there is an error on a given line or other segment of the text. The idea is that learning can only take place when students experience the cognitive modifications that will enable them to use each structure and element correctly. And for mental changes to take

place, the students must be required to make the effort needed to recall and apply the rules that govern linguistic output.

The feedback on each structure should be individualized. Consider, for example, an error with tense: while one student may be at the early stage where he or she still needs a reference in the margin to, e.g. '19.6' (the reference section and subsection where that tense usage is discussed), another one may only need to be given 'tse', another may be able to self-correct with 'vb', and still another may have reached the point where a checkmark in the margin merely indicating that there is an error on that line or sentence will suffice to cue self-correction of the tense error. For each structure, students may be at different places in this learning progression. (Of course, for full individualization of correction to be possible, most teachers will need to keep a record of where the students stand in learning each major rule. One-page charts could be designed for this purpose.)

As with oral errors, self-correction is not enough, especially in the many A-or-B situations in SL learning. For this reason, the students should be told that at any time they may be asked *why* something they had initially written incorrectly should be expressed the way they have it in the corrected version. (And, of course, the teacher should often ask them.) *I am not talking about students reciting rules but about their showing that they understand them.*

To the extent that spelling is rule-governed this is largely the case even in English, with all its exceptions the deep correction of orthographic errors is also possible. (The use of accent marks is usually rule-governed too, so reference to rules is also necessary.) Even those spelling errors that are not violations of any specific rule should be handled so as to require the students to produce the correctly spelled words themselves, not copy them from the teacher. (To phase out such corrections, the teacher can first use 'sp' above the word, then move this cue to the margin, and finally just indicate that there is an error.)

Of course, some segments misspelled words, for example should be rewritten more than once. And any error made by several students should be discussed in class and the rule involved should be the object of systematic practice.

The ideas on error correction discussed in this chapter are based on many years of informal and semiformal observation, plus some research. I propose that our profession conduct extensive experimental research on the relative effectiveness of surface and deep error correction techniques. This would shed light on an issue of great importance to languistics.

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Notes to Chapter 9

1 Two significant publications that have dealt with this topic are an article by Hendrickson (1978) and a monograph by Walz (1982).

2 Of course, many distortions are due to impulsiveness or carelessness. Such errors can be counteracted by stressing the need to think before, during, and after speaking. Much can be gained by the teacher stressing the SL equivalent of a motto like the one used by Thomas J. Watson, Sr. of IBM: 'Think'.

3 If the subject is *la fiesta* or *la clase*, students should be able to choose *ser* in this context and refer to it telegraphically as 'Location of event'.

4 Hand signals rather than verbal cues may be used for 'Verb', or more specifically for 'Tense', and even for the preterite and the imperfect tenses or for their various uses. It seems, however, that only a small number of hand signals can be used effectively; when the teacher introduces more than six or eight, both the students and the teacher may experience delays and confusion. Since one cannot use many hand signals, it is important to choose them carefully on the basis of their usefulness, so they can't be very specific except perhaps temporarily while a new rule is being taught. The most useful signal is a general one that simply indicates that the student has made an error, but this should only be used after the students have had ample opportunity to learn a given structure. Of course, the only other cognitive activity hand signals provide is that they require the students to recall the verbal prompts they stand for they don't force them to deal with the causes of errors or what they need to know in order to avoid them in the future.

5 Strictly speaking, the question 'Why?' about almost any aspect of a language is unanswerable and nearly nonsensical, for languages are social conventions. In this case, one would have to trace the Spanish past tense aspect distinction back to Latin, and look further for its roots in earlier languages. And what would the answer be? Just *because* because at some point the ancestors of the ancestors of the ancestors decided that such a distinction was important for communication. All of which may be interesting but is irrelevant to SL learning. Strictly speaking, one can only ask *what* a rule or subrule is like (that is, its description) and *when* it applies. But in virtually all language classrooms 'Why?' is easily understood shorthand for 'What + When', so I am following that custom.

6 While cues and telegraphic explanations can be given in the target language *if taught in advance*, there doesn't seem to be much point in insisting on the use of the SL for this purpose. Should the students be unable to recall the exact words of telegraphic explanations, they would have to explain difficult matters in their own words. Thus the teacher has created situations where numerous faults will occur if the students can put the messages across at all. Beginning or intermediate students can hardly have the SL proficiency needed to explain rather abstract concepts in their own words without making numerous errors.

7 This nonverbal signal can be any signal that will immediately draw the attention of the student to the fact that he or she has just made a distortion. As it is nonverbal, there is no need to wait until the student has completed the sentence such a signal doesn't (at least directly) interrupt speech. Any easily recognized hand signal will do. With some students, I wish one could do something more dramatic, like turn on an individual light signal or a little electric shock in the seat of the pants (!); but the former might be distracting to other students and the latter sounds as though it just might be illegal.

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8 Actually, it is not very desirable that students should first have to conjugate verbs in their minds, as if they were reciting little poems, to finally arrive at the right form. It is much more desirable since it will eliminate this roundabout route for them to get used from the start to connecting each form directly to the specific linguistic context (in this case, subject) that calls for it. With appropriate instruction this can be done.

9 The traditional name of this Spanish sound 'intervocalic *b*' is misleading because it describes only one of its various phonic contexts. English /b/ may be pronounced this way before /f/ when words like *tubful* are produced at rapid speed, as well as in any phonic context by a sufficienty inebriated person.

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10
Language Teaching and the Students' Native Language

When the school principal in an American town started to make an announcement over the public address system, the French teacher looked confused, as though he didn't understand a word the principal was saying. Later that school day, when the teacher answered a knock on the door and found the vice-principal there to talk to the class, he left the classroom without exchanging a single word with the administrator and did not come back until she was gone.

Strange behavior? Indeed, but with the best motivation. This teacher believes that if his students knew that he can speak English, their learning of French would suffer. So he plays this 'game' which doesn't fool a single student in his class.

In most communities around the world, teachers of English as a Foreign (remote) Language (EFL) strive to create classroom linguistic islands where the national language is never used. This is done in the same belief that it would be harmful to do so.

In English-speaking countries, many teachers of English as a Second (local) Language (ESL) assume that their total lack of knowledge of their students' NL or languages is not a significant drawback but an advantage, as it makes monolingual instruction unavoidable. One is reminded of the third slogan of Big Brother's Party: 'IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH'.

In some language programs, the faculty sound *proud* of the fact that they forbid the use of the NL. For example, the 198990 Middlebury College catalogue of French programs has a paragraph on the pledge all students are required to sign agreeing to use French as the only medium of communication, both in and out of the classroom. The last two sentences in that paragraph are revealing, so I quote them:

> Because English is not allowed, it [a summer at the Middlebury Language Schools] can also be strenuous and even stressful, particularly for students attending for the first time. All students should come rested and in good physical and mental shape.

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My questions are: Why should SL learning be a harrowing experience? Why not *ease* students into the SL?

If teachers realized that leading students step by step, with full understanding, produces better results in classroom SL learning than dumping them sink-or-swim into the target language, they would abandon the belief that the NL should never be used in language teaching. If we treated students as intelligent persons whose knowledge, experience, and honed awareness can contribute to the learning process, then we would enlist all their relevant knowledge to help that process. And whether we like it or not, the most relevant knowledge students bring to the SL program is their knowledge of their NL and, through it, their knowledge of language in general.

Of course certain rules and elements of the NL will interfere with, rather than facilitate, language learning. Of course students should base their generation of SL sentences on the SL, not the NL. Of course constant reference to or use of the NL in the classroom is detrimental to SL learning, for it reduces the amount of SL practice. But we can't afford to go on ignoring the greatest source of both facilitation and learning difficulty in the SL classroom, the NL. Certain limited, judicious uses of the NL can be quite effective and can greatly increase the efficiency of the SL program.

Let's take, for example, the idea of explaining things. While some in our field maintain there is no need to explain anything in the SL classroom, it is clear that correct linguistic behavior is facilitated by understanding, including an understanding of cross-linguistic facts. True, some things are so obvious or demonstrable that they don't need to be explained. But many require some exposition or clarification.

To *explain*, Webster's Third International tells us, is to make manifest, plain, understandable, clear of complexities or obscurity; to interpret or clarify; to give the meaning or significance of something so as to provide an understanding of it; to give the reason for or cause of something so as to account for it; and to clarify or make acceptable to the understanding something that it finds mysterious, causeless, or inconsistent. Moreover and especially relevant to the SL classroom this dictionary quotes J.H. Woodger (no reference) as saying that an *explanation* 'consists in successfully comparing new phenomena with older and familiar ones'.

Monolingual demonstration, with visuals, acting things out, etc, can put some very simple points across; but it is not sufficient to do so with any efficiency when it comes to the many things that are 'mysterious, causeless, or inconsistent' for language learners. Teachers can't clarify things (or do any of the sophisticated cognitive activities listed in the previous paragraph) to students who don't understand

the language in which the clarification is being made. Trying to give the students full understanding of something rather abstract, like a second language rule, in a language they barely know is usually a hopeless endeavor.

Perhaps the reason many teachers think that monolingual explanations are adequate is that they have never found themselves in such a situation or don't remember clearly how they felt, many years ago, when such unintelligible explanations were given to them as students. When SL students are expected to solve an articulatory, grammatical, or semantic 'mystery' by using clues they don't understand, they feel frustrated and end up ignoring most explanations. In practice, then, monolingual explanations to students who can't understand them are no explanation at all.

If a monolingual SL explanation would not be perfectly clear to everyone in the class, the teacher should present it briefly in the NL. The converse is also true, of course: if an SL explanation would be clearly understood by all students, it should be given in the SL. The basic principle is:

> Use the NL as little as possible but as much as necessary to make sure everything is quite clear at all times and to make instruction more efficient.

Clarity will help students learn and perform. The time saved through increased efficiency resulting from brief uses of the NL can be devoted to more practice in the use of the SL, something our classes can always benefit from.

This principle, like many other classroom principles, can be misapplied. One can go too far, either in ignoring or overusing the NL. What I am suggesting is that we use the NL in a limited and judicious way. Except for the first few hours of the program, we should use the NL only for *brief interventions within classes conducted in the SL*. This can be done successfully only if the teacher carefully controls his or her own and the students' use of the NL. The teacher must guard against spending much time dispensing elaborate NL explanations; even the most complex explanation can be broken into manageable parts preceded by SL examples and followed by SL practice. The teacher must insist that the students use the SL to say anything they should know how to say. A little firmness in this regard is essential. There is no need to go to the extreme of prohibiting the use of the NL; what has to be done is control it.

In the first few hours of a program, the students would greatly benefit from a general orientation to language study and learning, the SL culture, the course and its methods and its criteria for testing and grading, and so on. They also need, in those first few hours, specific directions on how to produce the sounds of the language. So the first 15 hours or so of the SL program and the first hour or two of each subsequent course within the program call for

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proportionately more use of the NL than the rest of the program. Clear directions (articulatory, allophonic, etc), phonetic differentiation cues, shaping, and other effective pronunciation instruction can be given to beginners only in the NL. The deep correction of pronunciation errors, so important at this early stage, often requires, too, some use of the NL.

I have discussed the various possible ways of conveying meaning in considerable detail elsewhere (Hammerly, 1982: 305312), so I will sketch this topic only briefly here. The three monolingual ways of conveying the meanings of words and phrases demonstration, definition or paraphrase, and illustration are often roundabout, slow techniques that keep the students guessing, frequently without success; the students end up asking each other, after class, what certain words or phrases meant if they can remember them. (Incidentally, an ongoing series of little guessing games is not a good way to provide listening comprehension practice; there are other, far more effective ways of providing such practice.) In contrast, the use of the NL is a quick, precise way of conveying the meanings of SL words in phrases and sentences within larger contexts.

The time thus saved is enormous. Replacing fuzziness with clarity enables the students to produce more accurate SL output. Judicious use of the NL does not harm the students; on the contrary, it helps them *avoid* certain errors provided the natural oral translation of *ideas* is used rather than one-to-one, word-by-word, traditional translation, which really is no translation at all. Brief use of the NL also permits the teacher to delimit the extent of equivalences and point out any major exceptions, after which, of course, the choices need to be practiced.

Whenever it is likely that the students could figure out the meaning of a new SL utterance in its context, it is more interesting and challenging for them to provide the natural oral translation themselves than to have it supplied by the teacher. There is no law that says that only the teacher can engage in the limited and judicious use of the NL. If the teacher is in control, the students can be allowed or encouraged to make constructive, though restricted, use of the NL.

Students who often want to say things for which the necessary vocabulary or structures haven't been taught yet should be actively discouraged as noted in Chapter 8 from such unrestrained 'creativity', for it leads to numerous faults that can't be corrected effectively. But when students feel they *must* say something like that, they should be able to ask the teacher for contextualized equivalents. That is, the student would briefly say in the NL the word or phrase needed in that particular context and the teacher would then provide him or her with the SL equivalent to repeat as part of a SL sentence, of course. Students soon realize that doing this is not very interesting and learn to avoid it.

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The brief use of the NL to make sure that all explanations or clarifications are clearly understood applies to grammatical structures as well. This is true whether the teacher has had to give a deductive explanation or has guided the students into discovering the rule or subrule themselves, expressing it in their own words. For many structures, the key factor is the difference(s) across languages, since language students *do* think in terms of NL structures for a long time, only gradually learning to rely on them less and less. To teach such structures effectively and efficiently, teachers should use contrastive bilingual examples to make the difference(s) evident to the students; a brief discussion; and practice, some of which also needs to be contrastive.

Bilingual exercises are effective in deconditioning students to their internal NL stimuli by forcing them to choose the *SL* way of saying things in the overt presence of NL stimuli. This needs to be done especially with those SL structures with which students are known to suffer from strong NL interference. I have found that even extensive practice with such structures in the SL is not enough; for good results, the NL must be used.

For example, with Spanish constructions using verbs like *gustar* (e.g. *Me gusta X* = 'I like X'), English-speaking students will have a strong tendency to use the English construction and say **(Yo) gusto X*, which is not done in Spanish. No amount of explanation, drilling, or meaningful practice helps very much, certainly not efficiently. In this case, the most effective way of showing the students that they must not do (or must stop doing) that is to give them several quick series of very simple sentences in English, containing the verb 'to like', to translate orally into Spanish with immediate feedback, of course, on what they should or should not say. This 'cuts them off at the pass' every time they reach out for the NL structure, until they stop reaching for it and learn to follow the SL trail for that structure.

This bilingual procedure works effectively with all structures subject to strong NL interference. Bilingual exercises can also be used near the end of systematic practice with most structures to determine whether any NL interference on that point has indeed been overcome. Since (as their interlingual errors prove) SL students think mostly in the NL, the most direct and efficient way the teacher can be sure they have overcome NL interference on a given point is if they can readily produce the correct SL structure in response to its NL equivalent.

Announcements and directions for any new type of activity, for tests, and for homework assignments are things that every student in the class must clearly understand. If that can be accomplished in the SL, fine; if there are any doubts about it, it should be done in the NL. Insisting on monolingualism in such matters can result in confusion, time being wasted, and the class and

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teacher getting frustrated. Certain types of test items must be cued in the NL if the test is to elicit specific linguistic output without giving the answer (or much of the answer) away. Announcements or directions that are not unique but will be repeated often should of course be taught as new SL utterances as each is first needed, then practiced a little, and then always given in the SL.

In early listening comprehension activities, when the students still can hardly say anything in the SL, the teacher can ask them to reveal in the NL how much they have understood. Students can also learn dialogues and other presentation materials much faster when they are provided with NL sentence equivalents. The study of readings would be far more efficient if texts included *gradually phased-out footnote glosses*. Less efficient (as finding equivalences is often time-consuming) but still effective is having the text in the two languages laid out as side-by-side columns.

To provide individual practice in generating spoken SL sentences, situations can be simulated on tape and collections of such cassettes can be made available to students. Each situation can start with a brief explanation of the setting, an indication of the role to be played by the student, and the beginning of a conversation or part of an ongoing dialogue between native speakers of the SL. Then the student is supposed to 'interact' with the speakers on tape by following directions for what to say at various points in the recording, often having to adapt what he or she says to what one or more of the speakers said.

Notice that this is a bilingual activity, unlike the older-type 'directed dialogues', which are monolingual and rather mechanical and boring. In monolingual directed dialogues, most words and structures are given away to the student, who gets practice only in repeating words and phrases, changing a subject pronoun here or a verb form there, and occasionally reorganizing the sentence a little. In bilingual (NL-directed) simulated situations, the teacher doesn't give any SL words or constructions away but conveys in the NL the *idea* of what the student should say to Pepe, Madame Bracot, or Herr Müller at a particular point in that particular SL situation. Since the NL directions are in indirect language and the student does not have enough time to break them down, figure out 1:1 word 'equivalents', and reconstruct the whole thing in the SL based on the NL, such so-called 'translation' is not possible the student merely uses the idea suggested in the NL to participate in a 'dialogue' with his or her own SL sentences. For each sentence, after the student listens to what one or more native speakers say, he or she has an adequate pause to produce his or her own sentence, and then the student hears the correct version (or its most likely rendition or renditions) in that context. Considering that the classroom offers very limited opportunity for each student to generate SL sentences, this type of recorded material would fill an important need.

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Such *NL-directed simulated dialogues* can also be used as a laboratory testing technique. 1

The NL also helps the teacher in classroom management. Is student attention flagging? Do some or all students have blank faces of incomprehension? The teacher can ask a student for a quick oral NL equivalent of the latest SL sentence, then unpredictably call on another student to render it again in the SL. Should the entire class look 'lost', the teacher can encourage a student question or make a brief remark in the NL that will set the class on course again. (In monolingual classes there can be long periods where everyone is at a loss. Why should teachers want to allow such situations? Why should intelligent students have to put up with them?)

I must emphasize that students should not develop the impression that whenever anything important has to be said they may say it in the NL. The SL should increasingly become the language in which communication takes place in the classroom. Only when the use of the SL would result in a loss of clarity or efficiency should the NL take preference. As the students learn more and more of the SL, the NL interludes will become both shorter and less frequent, until at the advanced level the teacher can limit the use of the NL to one of his or her functions that of a live, contextualized oral bilingual 'dictionary'. Thus, the degree to which the NL needs to be used depends on the classroom activity and on the class's sophistication in the SL.

I must also emphasize that the NL should not be used as the basis for sentence generation. Conveying an *idea* whether in the form of a contextualized equivalent, cue or direction in the NL is not harmful, but 'cranking out' SL sentences based word by word and structure by structure on the NL is very harmful. It leads to linguistic monstrosities, which can quickly result in terminal Spanglish, Frenglish, and so on. Students should be forbidden from using this process of 'translation', told with clear examples *why* it doesn't work, and reminded insistently and effectively of this injunction if they start doing it. It is best to make this clear during the program orientation. Beyond that, when beginning students produce sentences which seem based on the NL, the teacher should ask, as often as necessary, 'What *SL* sentence or sentences are you basing that sentence on?'

Of course, to be able to base their SL sentences on other SL sentences, beginning students must learn thoroughly a basic set of oral SL samples together with their *evidently different* NL equivalents. (It's important that early samples highlight differences rather than similarities so as to show clearly the falseness of the 1:1 hypothesis or general expectation of linguistic similarity with which most students come to the SL program.) Beginning students need to manipulate the set of samples sufficiently that it becomes a tool capable of generating an

indefinitely large number of sentences. Otherwise, they will fall back on the NL when they try to generate sentences, and that is the worst thing to do.

Even in a classroom where not a single word in the NL is allowed, the NL is very much present in the students' minds, who figure out and establish their own, often incorrect 'equivalent' for each SL word or phrase. Thus they quietly file each SL utterance under a native language category. Wouldn't it be better to deal with this problem overtly? As Ernst Otto put it in 1921, in what came to be known as 'Otto's paradox', *through translation the native language is eliminated*. In other words, by providing our students with the correct contextualized equivalent and making clear to them the limits of the equivalence, we dissuade them from focusing most of their attention on searching for and finding their own 'equivalents' in their minds. Thus we can greatly reduce the mental NL interference and generalizations that lead students to say *fenêtre* for *vitrine*, to use the preterite where they should use the imperfect, or to equate sounds that are different in subtle but noticeable ways. Ignoring the NL means perpetuating many problems like these.

There is also the question of efficiency. In most programs, our students are with us for only a few hundred hours, so the efficient use of time is crucial. It simply doesn't make sense to spend ten or fifteen minutes trying to express the meaning of a word or phrase monolingually when it can be done bilingually clearly and precisely in seconds. Even if our students were with us for thousands of hours, they would naturally progress much farther if instruction were efficient. I estimate that what can be done monolingually can be accomplished bilingually in about half the time without any loss in the quality of output but rather with better-quality output as a result of full student awareness.

The use of the NL in classroom language teaching has a long, respectable history, going back to the turn of the century, when it was espoused by Henry Sweet, whom many consider the father of applied linguistics. Harold Palmer, an outstanding SL specialist of the early decades of this century, started out as a 'Direct Methodist' but soon became disappointed; he too favored the use of the NL in SL programs designed to develop audio-oral competence. In more recent times, methodologists have been about evenly divided on this issue, although monolingualists seem to have had the upper hand lately.

There has been some research on this issue, although in the current SLACC/I/immersion fever it seems to have been largely ignored. All the relevant research I am familiar with 2 shows that monolingualism offers no advantages or that bilingual instruction produces better results.

It seems obvious that to produce *bilinguals* we should teach *bilingually*. The NL should be referred to and used whenever this facilitates SL learning.

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The NLs of the students can be taken into account and could be used even in local-SL situations such as ESL (see Chapter 13).

In light of all the above, can we continue to treat our students as if the NL knowledge and habits with which they come to us which are inextricable parts of their linguistic thinking and behavior are irrelevant to their progress in the SL? Is it advisable that we continue to treat them as if they were young children who don't know anything at all and must learn everything 'from scratch', monolingually and unconsciously? Shouldn't we, as a profession, do some serious rethinking about the practical advantages of the limited and judicious use of the NL in SL programs?

Notes to Chapter 10

1 For an example, see Appendix C in Hammerly (1985).

2 For example, Mishima (1967), Dodson (1967/1974), Lim (1968, 1970), Sastri (1970), Preibusch and Zander (1971), Butzkamm (1973).

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11
How to Teach Languages with the Two-Cone Model:
Assumptions Behind the Cumulative Mastery Method

It has been observed that some students can succeed in learning languages well through a variety of methods even methods with clearly opposite procedures, and even procedures that go against known facts about language, teaching, and learning. But maybe we shouldn't be surprized: good learners manage to find successful study strategies that circumvent counterproductive methods and procedures. Thus, the best learners succeed in learning languages *despite* some of the methods that are used to teach them. The measure of the success of a language teaching method is whether *average* students emerge from the program able to communicate accurately and with reasonable fluency.

The ideal method would be the one that helps the greatest number of students achieve transitional bilingualism in the shortest time. This method would be based on sound information and ideas, take all important factors into account, and be adaptable enough to meet the needs of different individual learners, groups of learners, and circumstances of teaching. It should be principled yet flexible.

To produce graduates who can communicate accurately and with reasonable fluency transitional bilinguals an SL method must take into account the characteristics of (1) *language* in general as well as the specific characteristics of the NL and the SL; (2) *communication* in general as well as the specific communicative needs of SL students and SL program graduates; (3) *cultural knowledge and behavior* in general and that of native speakers of the SL in particular; (4) *teaching* in general, effective and efficient SL teaching in particular, and the language teacher; and (5) *learning* in general, learning that results

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specifically from classroom teaching, successful classroom SL learning in particular, and the SL learner.

No method thus far has taken all of these factors into account. Most (or maybe even all) SL methods have been largely one-sided, emphasizing some factors and neglecting others. The same can be said of linguistic, pedagogical, and learning theories. Amid the claims and counterclaims made by proponents of the various methods, the SL teacher quickly becomes confused. How easy it is to be seduced by the 'new' (which is seldom really new) and the 'fashionable' (which the teacher will be pressured to accept regardless of its merits).

What are the language teacher and the language teaching profession to do? We can either follow fashion *or* make informed decisions in light of logical arguments, careful observations, and unbiased research. Those of us who prefer the latter may agree that no one has a monopoly on professional wisdom and that truth is truth whoever or whatever its source. Most theories and methods, most languists and SL teachers have some valid insights, procedures or techniques to offer. If we could synthesize the theories and practical wisdom of many methods together with some new ideas in a principled way, we could come close to developing that elusive ideal method.

Of course, synthesis has had a bad reputation. Many academics think that synthesis is not a creative process. This is a misunderstanding of synthesis, which involves *creating* a *new* whole or system out of a wide range of knowledge and ideas, both established and new. Synthesis means building a sound, integrated theory that can guide effective and efficient practice. Eclecticism is considered an 'intellectual obscenity' by some proponents of particular theories. But if practiced in a principled way, eclecticism is *desirable*, for it takes into account all valid knowledge, not just that part of knowledge in which a given theorist or methodologist happens to be interested. Of course, haphazard combinations in which 'a little bit of this and a little bit of that' are put together (or even clash) in a mishmash of mindless compromises deserve the poor reputation they have had.

For the last few years I have been trying to describe and find a suitable name for the SL method that will yield best results in our classrooms. A good name is important, for people communicate by using labels, and an inadequate label can distort ideas (e.g. for many years some people thought that audiolingual methods did not teach students how to read and write!). I now think as stated earlier that the name 'Cumulative Mastery Method' (CMM) expresses the most important feature of this method, although, of course, it has many other important features. The rest of this chapter explains the theoretical assumptions behind the CMM, often from perspectives not used in my previous publications. (The next chapter discusses CMM procedures.

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Chapter 14 outlines the characteristics of the 'ideal' *total SL instructional system*.)

The CMM is an application of the Two-Cone Model discussed in Chapter 3. The reader is reminded that this is not a model of natural SL acquisition but one of classroom learning that results primarily from systematic instruction.

CMM Assumptions About Language

When it comes to helping solve practical problems, some linguistic theories or at least certain aspects of those theories are more applicable than others. Their *applicability* varies, in fact, with the nature of the problem to be solved. Even the *implications* of various linguistic theories vary greatly in how desirable their effects are on such practical pursuits as classroom teaching. (As more theoretical perspectives on language will be discussed in Chapter 15, here I will concentrate on more practical matters.)

An important question for languists and SL teachers is the way the distinction between deep and surface linguistic structure relates to the directions of sentence generation and language learning. The person *who already knows* a language *might* generate sentences by unconsciously following a model such as Chomsky's phrase structure trees and transformations, that is, by going from abstract syntactic/semantic deep structure to surface structure, morphology, and phonetic output. Young children acquiring their NL unconsciously through communicative interaction may also proceed globally, in a similar semantically focused word- and sentence-generation order. Their attention is almost exclusively on meaning and they can develop lower-level distinctions at leisure. Because there is no linguistic interference from a previously learned language, and because their environment provides rich feedback, there is no danger that they will permanently internalize non-native rules and elements.

Older children and adults *who don't know* an SL and are trying to learn it in the classroom will naturally tend to approach the task in a largely conscious manner. Because they don't know the language, they must necessarily proceed in the opposite direction, with step-by-step guidance, if they are not to internalize faulty rules and elements. Unlike young NL acquirers, classroom SL learners are subject to strong cross-linguistic influences and have to learn the target language in a feedback-poor linguistic environment. In classroom SL learning, for good results the focus cannot at first be primarily on meaning. Through the intermediate level it must be primarily on form, for otherwise students do not master lower-level distinctions (involving sounds, morphemes, and certain syntactic rules) and develop deficient linguistic habits.

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The surface manifestations of the two languages are essentially all that classroom learners can observe or be helped to observe. Unless the class is composed of transformational-generative grammarians, any deeper understanding must be accessed through surface structure. Examples and explanations have to be given in terms of concrete surface forms real words and sentences not abstract deep structure formulations. As they learn the SL, they may become adept at *generating* sentences globally in the top-down, syntax/semantics-to-phonetics, abstract-to-concrete direction; but for good results they need to *learn* the language one thing at a time in the bottom-up, concrete-to-abstract, phonetics-to-syntax/semantics direction. In other words, *the desirable order of classroom SL learning is roughly the opposite of the assumed order of sentence generation by NL acquirers or by those who already know a language*.

The purpose of language is a matter of little concern to linguistic theorists but of great interest to languists, SL teachers, and sociolinguists. Although understanding language provides insights on such matters as the nature and development of the mind and the history and possible future of humankind, it is clear that *the primary purpose of language is communication*. The great majority of SL students are particularly interested in learning to communicate in the target language and most of them want to learn to do so accurately as well as reasonably fluently.

Communication is a worthy goal; but accurate and fluent SL communication is best attained in classroom programs when it is recognized that *accuracy must be insisted upon from the beginning but fluency is a long-term goal*. Reaching complex long-term goals is not a matter of starting with the desirable terminal behavior but of attaining a series of short-term goals that gradually build up to the desired final outcome. Activities geared to early and intermediate short-term goals are often quite different from the eventual terminal behavior to which they contribute.

As noted earlier, there are several strong reasons for saying that *language is a primarily audio-oral form of behavior: reading and writing are fundamentally derived from it*. Evidence from English literacy instruction supports this assumption: children with decoding problems benefit most from being taught to relate letters and digraphs to sounds in a very concrete way. In SL teaching, too, relating letters to sounds seems to be the most successful way of introducing students to reading with an alphabetic writing system (of course in the case of an identical or similar alphabet the facilitating and interfering effect of NL spelling-sound correlations on the learning of SL spelling-sound correlations has to be taken into account, but seldom is).

Several studies conducted over almost four decades have been in remarkable agreement regarding the fact that about 80% of American SL students are

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primarily interested in mastering the spoken language. 1 This enhances the desirability of emphasizing audio-oral language throughout the SL program.

Our final assumption about language in this chapter is: *Knowledge of the what and how of a language ('linguistic knowledge') underlies the ability to use the language correctly ('linguistic control')*. In young children, the knowledge and almost all of the control develop unconsciously. The knowledge remains largely unconscious in native-speaking adults. But cognitively mature SL students develop the knowledge of the what and how of a target language best when they learn it consciously and explicitly. This is because they (1) must contend with the subtle effects of the NL, (2) suffer from a dearth of linguistically useful input from, interaction with, and communicative feedback from native speakers of the SL, and (3) are more efficient and effective *conscious* learners than young children, as a result of their mental development and school experience.

By consciously developed 'linguistic knowledge' I don't mean the 'ideal' speaker's knowledge of everything about the language. There are aspects of grammar and the lexicon even in a language as thoroughly studied as English that cannot be taught because they haven't even been described yet, or because linguists disagree on what would constitute an appropriate description. For those aspects, SL learners must rely on inductive, unconscious acquisition as a byproduct of classroom communicative activities *not* because it is the best thing to do but because there is nothing else to do. (That knowledge, conscious or unconscious, underlies the control of production is something that should be obvious: How can people do something well unless they know what they have to do and how?)

'Linguistic control' is thus based on linguistic knowledge but is quite different from what Chomsky has called 'linguistic performance'. The latter is *surface* performance interlarded with various forms of channel 'noise' and is therefore of little interest to linguists, languists and SL teachers. We are interested in *systematic linguistic performance* surface performance minus linguistic and nonlinguistic 'junk'. Systematic linguistic performance in an SL can of course be distorted by systematic errors and frequently is, especially when instruction has been deficient or practice has been inadequate. *Linguistic control* is *accurate* systematic linguistic performance and results in the SL classroom from good instruction and sufficient practice with both medium and message focus.

Most cognitively mature SL students and almost all voluntary college students at least start the SL program with the motivation needed to attain linguistic control. It is therefore essential that we provide them with the means to do so, by making explicitly clear to them what they are supposed to do

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linguistically, and how. We must prevent linguistically faulty classroom communication from becoming the norm, and we can accomplish this by actively discouraging communication that goes beyond what the students know and by correcting errors effectively. Through intelligent practice first mechanical practice with meaningful material, then gradually more communicatively meaningful practice conscious linguistic knowledge of each SL rule and element will be internalized and guide performance without conscious thought.

But linguistic and communicative competence are not enough: SL students must learn to communicate in socioculturally appropriate and informed ways, which involves more than knowledge of the rules of discourse. They must know and understand both the daily behavior of native speakers of the language (*behavioral culture* in the sociological/anthropological sense); the salient facts about their culture (*informational culture*, which includes native-like knowledge of history, geography, etc); and the literary, artistic, etc knowledge of the average educated native speaker (*achievement culture*). This *SL cultural competence*, the outer layer or component of SL competence, is neglected in much language teaching.

To sum up this concept, *SL competence consists of SL linguistic competence that is used to communicate in culturally appropriate and informed ways*.

Of course we must take into account the characteristics of the NL and the SL, with special attention to the relationship between the two languages. We need to consider this relationship in general (comparative and contrastive linguistics), in reference to classroom, laboratory and homework activities (teaching), and in terms of what goes on in the SL learners' minds (learning).

In Chapter 6 I pointed out that in cases where the NL and the SL are *related,* the NL plays a major facilitative role through its numerous cognate words and similar structures, which help learners understand speech and writing. But in many (especially lower-level) respects the NL interferes intrusively and inhibitively with accurate production. With *unrelated* languages, there is no lexical and little structural facilitation; interference is rarely intrusive but frequently inhibitive. Languists, language teachers, and authors of SL teaching materials who are aware of the differences and similarities between learning a SL related or unrelated to the NL will be able, at each stage of the SL program, to fully exploit NL facilitation, counteract intrusive interference, and appropriately emphasize those rules and elements subject to inhibitive interference.

Certain widely used teaching procedures go against the nature of language or of the cross-linguistic SL-learning situation. Among such procedures are the following:

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(1) Not engaging in any communicative activities negates the main purpose of language, communication, and causes many students to lose their motivation to learn. *SL programs should encourage some communicative use of what is learned as it is learned*, however simple, limited and guided that communication may have to be early in the program. Yet many programs especially those using the grammar-translation method still neglect communication. Of course, *the communicative/interactive/immersion approach is not the answer either*, for it neglects structure.

(2) Teaching a language on the basis of reading, or reading and writing, goes counter to the fundamentally audio-oral nature of language. Students who later try to go from reading skill to speaking skill face persistent difficulties that are avoided when instruction emphasizes the audio-oral skills from the start. Again, the grammar-translation method is the main culprit here.

(3) Teaching SL speech (especially pronunciation) as based on the written language goes against the normal some might call it 'natural' relationship between speaking and reading/writing. All writing systems have been designed for people who can already speak the language. Most methods, beginning with grammar-translation, go against the nature of language in this regard.

(4) Teaching a target language as if explicit knowledge of what to do and how to do it were not important contradicts the fact that, in any language, performance (output) is based on competence. And competence, which is largely unconscious in native speakers, must initially be overt and conscious for best results in the SL classroom. All methods that rely on inductive, unconscious learning, beginning with the natural and direct methods, fail to take advantage of the most powerful tool cognitively mature SL students have their conscious minds.

(5) Teaching words in isolation, such as in the bilingual lists many methods use, is also contrary to the nature of language, for the meanings of words depend on contextual semantic networks.

(6) Denying students overt reference to the NL, as all monolingual methods do, thwarts the NL's facilitative effect on learning meanings explicitly, clearly, and precisely. The meaning of a contextualized SL word or phrase can quickly be accessed through a contextualized NL equivalent. At the same time, teachers must point out important limitations on the 'equation', and must give the students sufficient choice-making practice that they will internalize those limitations. Such efficient bilingual access to meanings is of course just the first step in forming the corresponding SL semantic networks we can call it the door to the ground floor of meaning.

(7) Ignoring a subcomponent of SL competence, such as pronunciation or cultural competence, also goes against the nature of language and language use. Several methods do just that.

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(8) Eliminating any reference to the structure of the NL means treating what is fundamentally and pervasively a cross-linguistic situation as if it weren't. All monolingual methods do this.

CMM Assumptions About Communication

Most aspects of communication in an SL have been discussed in great detail in the last 15 years or so. Several were discussed in the preceding section. Communication is, of course, *the* purpose of a language and the main reason for learning it. But one must know the *language* not just words but primarily language structure in order to communicate in psycholinguistically and socially acceptable ways. This means largely accurate ways that native speakers can readily understand and appreciate.

Great harm has been done to SL learners by emphasizing communicative survival at the expense of language control: millions of students have mislearned languages. Communicative models have attempted to remove linguistic competence from a central role in SL learning and use. The CMM and its related Two-Cone Model restore language structure to the core of SL competence, where it belongs, to be learned step by step and be used in increasingly freer communication in culturally appropriate ways.

In a remote SL situation students don't have any immediate outside communication needs, so there is no reason to encourage them to survive communicatively as soon as possible. Freed from that pressure, they can go on to develop a high level of SL competence *systematically*. In fact, it is best that the relationship between SL students and native speakers of the SL should be indirect until the students develop a good foundation in the language.

When the ability to communicate freely is given primacy in the SL program from the start, students don't normally develop their linguistic competence beyond the minimum required to communicate with their classroom peers. In NL acquisition, older peer and adult pressure is strong enough to ensure conformity to a native language norm. In the SL classroom, unless stronger pressures control communication so as to override peer pressure, a defective classroom pidgin is the result.

Something that particularly suffers as a result of communicative instruction is the communicatively redundant features of the SL. As they are not necessary to convey messages, they are never mastered. Unfortunately such features are primarily what makes, e.g. English English and French French. Students who don't master these 'redundant' features may be able to put most of their messages across but they *don't* speak English or French.

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CMM Assumptions About Cultural Knowledge and Behavior

Our response to the failure of communicationism should be, for once, *balance* in SL teaching. 'Postcommunicationism' is not going to do us or our students much good if it simply shifts emphasis to, for example, culture at the expense, again, of everything else.

It is true, of course, that SL cultural competence has been largely neglected and that we need to further develop ways to impart it. 2 Suffice it to say here that we must be careful not to overemphasize cultural competence either.

CMM Assumptions About Teaching

Now let's consider what the language teacher can *do* to teach effectively and efficiently. Teaching is a *systematic effort to induce learning*, not just a matter of exposing students to data by trying to make the classroom a 'natural' linguistic environment.

Given the limited time available to SL programs, *teaching should not only be effective but also efficient*. In many programs, a great deal of time is unnecessarily sacrificed for the sake of doubtful 'principles' like monolingual instruction and inductive learning. Is trying to convey information monolingually and inductively *so* important that much precious time should be devoted to it (without even the assurance that all students will understand)? I don't think so.

For best results, *a standard of excellence in student output* should be established and maintained. This means that SL teachers need to be skillful motivators and that they must correct errors effectively and conscientiously.

But *for a teacher to maintain a standard of excellence without the students becoming utterly frustrated and terminally discouraged, he or she must provide them at all times with the conditions and the tools needed to produce accurate output*. A discussion of these conditions and tools follows.

For students to have any chance to be accurate, *the output they are expected to produce must be manageable*. They should not be required or encouraged to use SL rules and elements that they only half-know or don't know at all. That would be a prescription for linguistic disaster.

To be manageable and have a reasonable chance to be accurate, output must be managed. Managing output simply means teaching one thing at a time, cumulatively, based on such fundamental principles as *selection*, *gradation*, careful *guidance*, *mastery*, and *integration*. Applying these principles to the SL

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cross-linguistic situation differs of course from applying them to other subjects in the curriculum, for which no reference to two languages is necessary.

Accurate output depends not only on *familiarity with data* (e.g. through the presentation of selected examples of a point) but also on *overt understanding* of the basic rules that govern the production of such data and of any similar future output. Of course, I am not arguing for extended, detailed linguistic analysis through grammatical lectures. Overt understanding can be attained through pointers and brief explanations, and very often the teacher can elicit these from the students themselves by giving appropriate examples and asking the right questions. Only by internalizing a clear understanding of what is involved can students learn to speak and write accurately. Extensive analysis ('the paralysis of analysis') will not help them achieve that, but brief analysis combined with analogy (*and* appropriate practice) will. The teacher should ask, as often as needed, 'Do you understand this?' without ever yielding to the temptation of delivering a grammatical lecture when the answer is negative.

Once understanding has been attained, linguistic control of a particular rule results from *sufficient systematic practice* with *deep correction as needed*, until *mastery* is achieved; then the new rule must be *integrated* with everything else learned up to that point. Much classroom SL practice is neither systematic nor sufficient. To be systematic, *practice must be graded*, that is, it should move only one instructional step beyond what has been learned so far. To result in full internalization of a rule, *practice must shift gradually from mechanical (focusing on form) to communicative (focusing on meaning)*. Furthermore, *practice must be sufficient at each stage* in the learning of the rule. Teachers know that there has been sufficient practice when the students are making very few errors; then, and not before, is the time to move on to a more communicative stage. Whatever constitutes a final stage in learning should not be done until the prerequisite stages have been successfully completed. *Students should not be encouraged to do anything they have no chance of doing well.* This applies both to the SL program in general and to the teaching of specific rules.

A rule has been mastered when it can be used accurately while attention is on the message. This means that it must be used communicatively in conjunction with everything else learned up to that point. Only when such *structural-communicative integration* has been attained has a rule been fully mastered. Thus we see that communication is not only important as a terminal SL program goal but also as a way to help internalize each of the rules and elements taught throughout the program. Of course, to prevent the internalization of incorrect rules, *communication must also be graded*, that is, the students must be discouraged from engaging in communication beyond what they know of the SL.

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What is taught in the SL program should not only be integrated but also recycled. We must make sure that any words or structures our students learn will be reintroduced and used meaningfully at fairly frequent intervals. Otherwise the effort made in learning them will be largely wasted.

Gradation also applies to the question of when the various language skills should be introduced and which should be emphasized at different points in the SL program. A full-fledged program has to emphasize the most useful communicative skills throughout and these are listening comprehension and speaking ability (that is, the graded procedures leading to their development). After an audio-oral foundation has been established, the reading skill can receive more attention. Later some emphasis can be given to writing.

The best qualified SL teachers are not only highly proficient in the target language but they know quite well the NL of their students, well enough to be able to do natural translation and give simple explanations. If they don't, they will make an effort to learn at least the essentials of the NL. They are well informed about, and can transmit to their students, the linguistic facts about both languages. They have a good knowledge of psychology, teaching, SL methodology, testing, and the use of various nontechnological and technological aids. They know how people behave in the two cultures as well as the salient facts about their respective history, geography, politics, literature, arts, etc, and can exemplify and explain such knowledge. 3

If the long-range goal of the program is to make true bilingualism possible, then all language teaching materials should emphasize the systematic, step-by-step development and communicative use of the audio-oral skills, without neglecting reading and writing at their proper time. Students can't learn to speak a language well by reading and writing it. Experienced teachers shouldn't have to 'follow' the teaching materials, and they certainly need to deviate from them (better yet, use other materials) when they include counterproductive procedures.

These comments apply equally well to technology, whether audio or audiovisual recordings or computers. Audiovisual technology can provide the *indirect* link to native speakers that SL students require through much of the program.

The role of computers has been misunderstood. While computers can provide helpful comprehension and writing practice, students can't learn to speak a language well without producing speech and getting intelligent feedback on it. *Computers are limited to what has been preprogrammed into their software.* They cannot handle well at all the aspects of conversation and SL learning activities that are not foreseeable, but a good teacher can.

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We should be careful neither to reject nor to become enamored with new technology and fail to see its limitations. (Nor should we abandon older technology, such as the audio cassette, which can perform very useful functions in the SL program; we haven't come anywhere near to fully exploiting it.) The computer, as pointed out by Clark (1988), should be part of a total instructional system. Within such a system (like the one proposed in Chapter 14 of this book), the computer should function as an *aid* to teaching and to outside-of-class learning. *At all times, people, not machines, should be directly or indirectly in charge of teaching and learning.*

CMM Assumptions About Learning

There have been several major theories of learning, including Ivan Pavlov's *classical conditioning* of reflex responses, B.F. Skinner's *operant conditioning*, and *cognitive learning theory*. I think we should not rely on a single theory but should use different theories or combinations of theories for different aspects of language learning, as Brown (1987: 74) has noted.

We need to make two important distinctions between learning theories. One is the distinction between *animal and human learning*, which has not been sufficiently stressed in the past. The other is the distinction between *natural and induced ('caused-to-happen') learning*, which lately has been largely ignored.

On the animal/human learning distinction, Pavlov's experiments conditioning reflex responses in dogs to associated stimuli such as bells were interesting but they seem to have very little relevance to human learning: we can hardly be interested in conditioning involuntary physiological responses in people. Skinner, who arrived at his conclusions (about rewarded behavior being learned) through experiments with rats, pigeons, and other animals, extended his theory to humans by adopting the illusory convention that the mind does not exist. For those of us who believe that the mind does exist and that thought can facilitate human learning, this is a fundamental inadequacy in Skinner's theory. At least cognitive learning theory deals specifically with human learning.

On the natural/induced learning distinction, Pavlov induced learning by controlling stimuli, while Skinner (who wasn't very interested in stimuli) did so by controlling reinforcements, that is, by rewarding desired behavior and leaving undesired behavior unrewarded. Cognitive learning theorists seem to have ignored the natural/induced learning distinction and have concentrated on meaningful learning, not seeing much value in rote learning. But *the rote learning of non-arbitrary, meaningful material is an efficient and effective first step in induced learning leading toward meaningful use*.

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The idea that languages can be acquired naturally in the classroom is wrong precisely because it fails to distinguish between natural acquisition and induced learning. The classroom lends itself best to conscious induced learning, not unconscious natural acquisition. This is true of classroom learning in general, not just SL learning.

Jean Piaget observed (and many others have confirmed) that children do not develop cognitive maturity the ability to deal with most abstractions until the age of 1012. Younger children cannot therefore learn a target language well in a conscious, systematic manner, with focus on linguistic structure in presentations, explanations, and deep corrections. Yet if they are exposed to communicatively oriented instruction from the start, younger children (*and anyone else*) soon develop and internalize an error-laden classroom pidgin, as we saw in Chapter 1. Many adolescents are much too influenced by their peers to even want to speak the target language like their teacher/model, so secondary school is not the ideal place to begin SL instruction either. It follows, then, that if SL instruction is to start in childhood, it should start at the age of 10 or 11. Alternately, systematic SL instruction should start in young adulthood, preferably at the age of 18 or 19 and if possible no later than the early 20s. Third-best would be SL instruction starting in secondary school. Less desirable is a start with adults past their mid- to late 30s. The least desirable option is SL programs starting in Kindergarten or the early grades these children 'soak up' language unconsciously, true, but they also soak up and permanently internalize, just as readily, 'nonlanguage', that is, incorrect rules and so on. Furthermore, not very much can be done about it, for younger children do not respond well to linguistically focused correction.

Curiously, no major learning theorist seems to have proposed that human learning can be induced, especially in the classroom, by overtly providing mentally mature learners with the cognitive criteria for making discriminative responses to carefully selected discriminative stimuli, and then reinforcing responses discriminatively while using their minds throughout. I have long found this procedure, which I call '*cognitively based conditioning*' or '*intelligent conditioning*', highly successful in teaching SL rules and elements. It results in *initially cognitively based linguistic behavior that becomes unconscious through practice*. This procedure is a synthesis of the best of behaviorism and cognitivism, and I strongly recommend it. It is very effective with almost everything that needs to be taught in an SL program.

Intelligent conditioning follows understanding of the linguistic behavior being taught. It is cognitively directed practice that continues, if necessary intermittently, until the new rule has been internalized and can be used rapidly, almost unconsciously. In this practice, the teacher presents the students with a

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series of cognitive-behavioral 'miniproblems' to solve. Such miniproblems can be almost anything for example, oral drill frames in which the students consciously choose among various responses to stimuli instead of just responding in a mindless mechanical way. Following each attempted solution, the learner needs to know immediately whether his or her solution was correct or not. The teacher provides this discriminative feedback through gradually phased out praise when the solution is correct and deep correction ('redirection') when it isn't. Practice gradually shifts from the intelligent mechanical manipulation of meaningful phrases to the use of the new rule in both realistic and real (though graded) communication.

Other ideas about learning serve certain pedagogical functions well. One of these ideas is 'deconditioning', a form of behavior modification that involves the learning of new responses in the presence of familiar stimuli. As well, various procedures derived from findings about perception, imitation, transfer, and memory especially David Ausubel's (1968) concept of subsuming in meaningful learning should be part of classroom teaching/learning.

Combining these and other ideas in a principled manner would yield a '*synthetic theory of induced human learning*'. Developing and testing such a theory with its numerous instructional applications and implications could keep many psychologists and educators happily occupied for years.

Regardless of what learning theory or combination of theories we adopt, some observations about classroom learning in general and classroom SL learning in particular seem valid. Among them are the following:

(1) Emphasizing components of SL competence in the wrong sequence can be very harmful to its development. As already noted, putting communicative competence ahead of linguistic competence produces very poor results.

(2) Placing language subcomponents in the wrong sequence or overemphasizing any contradicts the nature of SL learning. For example, beginning SL learners must deal immediately with the sounds of the new language, yet nearly all methods ignore this. Developing a large vocabulary is a long-term process (and, furthermore, one that SL learners can carry out largely on their own), yet many methods put much emphasis on the vocabulary subcomponent from the start. A serious consequence of this is that the students' vocabulary grows far ahead of their control of structure and, since they will want to use their vocabulary, they soon develop a classroom pidgin.

(3) Expecting anything complex to develop by itself as a byproduct of some other activity is, to be kind about it, naive. I don't see any good reason why mastery of, e.g. German should develop in the classroom from simply doing other things in German rather than from focusing on German itself,

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how it differs from the NL, and so forth. Even major details of a complex learning task cannot be mastered if attention is not focused on them.

(4) *Classroom learning need not be an ambiguous process.* When students are helped to understand clearly what is going on and what they should do and how, most ambiguities disappear. But monolingual inductive instruction turns many SL programs into ongoing guessing games in which the students can never be completely sure of anything. Thus SL learning becomes an inefficient psychological ordeal one that some students can't survive. As already noted, bilingual instruction makes meanings clear and guided discovery makes structures understandable through the judicious use of both induction and deduction.

(5) *Learners see the new in terms of the familiar*, and no determined avoidance of the familiar in the classroom is going to change this. Faced with a new language, monolingual SL students naturally rely initially on their NL, which is all they know about language. Only gradually, as they learn more and more of the SL, do they come to rely more on it, so that SL generalization becomes more important than cross-linguistic influence. Any gap in knowledge, any uncertainty in the face of the unfamiliar leads students back to the familiar, the NL.

As each new rule and element is introduced in the SL classroom, students mentally search for a NL 'equivalent' (whether there is one or not) and refer to that 'equivalent' for some time. There seems to be, in fact, a '*SL-student inner language*' that is very active as the students try to make sense of the unfamiliar. This inner language seems to include such messages as 'This sounds like X (usually in the NL)', 'This seems to work just like Y (in the NL)', and 'This is different from anything I know and have ever needed (in the NL), so maybe I can manage without it'. This is why it is so important, whenever something new is first presented, or whenever an error with it is corrected, to openly guide students' thoughts about the rule or element and to make clear the inappropriateness of the familiar (NL) responses. It is the only way we can ensure that their linguistic thoughts and consequently, their linguistic behavior will have a good chance to be accurate.

(6) In the great majority of cases, *learning*, *to be successful*, *requires individual effort*. Some effortless incidental learning does occur in the classroom, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Trying to base an entire classroom SL learning program on incidental learning is as we have seen, especially in communicative/immersion programs a serious error. Learning is an individual process going on in each brain. (Thus, while there are many helpful group activities, techniques like choral repetition should be used sparingly; choral responses where more than one response is possible shouldn't be used at all, for the teacher cannot

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reinforce discriminatively a jumble of noise.) As learning requires individual effort, an atmosphere of friendly competition should be combined with collaborative activities.

(7) Students won't gain control of lower-level skills unless they attend to them first. When only higher-level skills are emphasized, students do not fully master lower-level skills. In the classroom, once a faulty lower-level element, rule, or skill is subsumed under a higher-level skill, it tends to remain faulty, for attention shifts to the higher-level skill. This is why stressing meaningful communication from the start has a marked negative effect on structure, soon yielding a terminal classroom pidgin.

(8) In the natural acquisition of a complex skill, some gradual improvement does occur as a result of practice even if the latter is not very systematic. In classroom learning, however, far better results can be obtained through instruction that develops a complex skill step by step, ensuring mastery at each step and integrating each newly learned element with everything that has been learned up to that point in the program. In the SL classroom it is preferable, in the long run, to *rely for the development of SL competence on cumulative mastery rather than gradual global improvement*. (Improvement in fluency and expansion of communicative repertoire are of course gradual.) The reason that elements and structures need to be mastered *as* they are introduced is that in the classroom the amount of linguistically useful communicative feedback available is very limited. Without sufficient useful feedback, and under the pressure to communicate with peers who misuse the language as badly as they do, students fail to develop linguistic control of many structures.

Whoever first thought that in order to learn to do something well one should go ahead and first do it poorly many times was mistaken. Unfortunately this idea is widely held. But to attain excellence in any complex skill one must master, cumulatively, each subskill.

(9) Most classroom SL learners need considerable, and in many cases detailed, guidance, especially at the beginning and intermediate levels of the program. Most SL students even adults do not benefit and may actually suffer linguistically from being put in charge of their own learning. 4

In this chapter we have seen that it is necessary to combine various established and new ideas about language, communication, culture, teaching, and learning in a new, integrated way if we wish to obtain excellent results in SL teaching. Haphazard eclecticism and mindless synthesis are of course undesirable; but careful, creative synthesis yields a better theory that accounts more fully for the facts. This theory points to cumulative mastery as the SL method of choice. The next chapter discusses some of the procedures of the Cumulative Mastery Method.

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Notes to Chapter 11

1 The first one I know of was the one conducted by Robert L. Politzer (1953) at Harvard University.

2 See Hammerly (1982: 51337) for a more detailed discussion and specific suggestions.

3 Language teaching organizations are moving toward the specification of professional standards. An example of this is the report prepared for the American Association of Teachers of French by Joseph A. Murphy *et al.* (1989).

4 For a discussion of other aspects of learning, classroom learning, classroom SL learning, and the learner, see Chapters 3, 5 and 6 of Hammerly (1982) and Chapter 6 of Hammerly (1985).

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12
How to Teach Languages with the Two-Cone Model:
Procedures of the Cumulative Mastery Method

Pre-Program Instruction

Before students embark on the systematic learning of a specific SL, they would benefit from taking one or more *exploratory courses* about the languages and cultures of the world and what is involved in learning languages well. In these courses, specific language content would consist of little samples (greetings, numbers, etc) in a variety of languages; this would have to be done primarily through the use of recordings and other technological aids, as few language teachers can reliably model more than one or two languages. The courses would also teach the customs, attitudes, etc. of various peoples around the world, as well as the most salient facts about their history, geography, form of government, literature, arts, and so forth. Through exploratory courses, students would also gain understanding of the challenge, guidelines, possible pitfalls, and satisfactions involved in learning languages and the lifetime advantages in knowing them. As well, they would develop a positive attitude toward other languages and peoples and be in a good position to decide whether or not to study a language, and which language to study. Since learning a language well requires persistent, long-term effort, maybe only highly motivated students should be encouraged to undertake this challenging task. Indeed, perhaps exploratory courses should be the only language' courses required.

In elementary school, exploratory courses could be offered from Kindergarten through Grade 4 or so. In secondary school, an exploratory course could take one school year; in college, one semester. Interested students

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would then move directly from the exploratory course to the systematic study of specific languages.

The Program

1.
Goals

The basic goal of the CMM is to impart transitional bilingualism, that is, proficiency ratings of 3 (or even 3+) on the FSI/ILR 5-point scale without poor linguistic habits. This overall SL competence goal involves a series of specific subgoals in linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence.

2.
Introductory Minicourse

The main purpose of the minicourse that would take up the first 15 or so hours of class at the beginning of the SL program is to ensure that beginning students are carefully trained to perceive and produce the sounds and basic stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns of the language. Dealing with sounds systematically in the first few hours of the program can produce much better results than trying to correct long-standing, habitual pronunciation and intonation problems weeks, months, or even years later. In classroom learning, ensuring that each thing is learned well the first time around is much more effective and efficient, in the long run, than trying to remedy deficiencies in performance later.

Phonological instruction produces best results when the teacher deals with SL sounds and their NL counterparts one or two at a time. A strictly phonetic, monolingual approach to SL pronunciation is not as effective as one that considers both the functions and distributions of SL sounds and the influence of likely NL substitutes. Sounds that are perceptually the same in the two languages can be used from the start; as positive transfer applies to such sounds, no learning is required.

For the sounds that differ across languages or have no NL counterpart, instruction should start with guided perception practice (practice in sound discrimination or differentiation), focusing on the differences or contrasts in minimal as well as sentence contexts. Then the teacher can describe and demonstrate the articulation of each sound or pair of sounds and explain any rules governing their use. Then comes guided practice in production, from minimal utterances (words that include the sound in question plus any phonic environment that may be required for its production) to short, meaningful phrases or sentences. These include some occurrences of the new sound(s)

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together with the sounds in common between the two languages and those SL sounds that have been mastered so far.

A good part of this pronunciation and intonation practice can consist of drills based on some of the words and phrases found in pronunciation drillbooks published in the 1960s and 1970s e.g. Bowen and Stockwell's (1960) for Spanish, 1 Valdman *et al.* (1964) for French, and Nilsen and Nilsen (1971) or Bowen (1975) for English. While drills cannot be used very effectively exactly as presented in these drillbooks and require considerable adaptation for cognitively oriented instruction, nevertheless they provide more than enough adaptable 'raw material'.

After sufficient mechanical and mechanical/meaningful practice with a particular sound or sounds, beginning students should memorize and use meaningfully one or two key examples illustrating the phonological problem in question. This will enable the teacher to refer back to these thoroughly learned examples during error correction.2

Other purposes of the introductory minicourse which serve, incidentally, to provide some relief and variety from pronunciation and intonation instruction are obtaining information about the background and motivation of the students through a questionnaire and discussion; offering them an orientation to the program or the course, including basic terminology, guidelines on how to study and how not to study, a description of the types of tests and test items to be used, and an explanation of the grading policy; introducing the class to the second culture and illustrating the importance of appropriate behavior and adequate information to successful communication; exposing students briefly to excerpts of ungraded SL speech, to give them some idea of how the language sounds when fully contextualized; teaching them a few basic, phonologically graded language samples, which should be *very* short; teaching them a few basic structures; giving them the opportunity to engage in some simple, guided communicative activities limited to what they have learned so far; and perhaps (but see below) introducing them to the sound-spelling correlations of the SL, in reference to those of the NL if the SL uses a similar alphabetic system.

The sequence listed above is not necessarily the most desirable one; the activities could alternate in a variety of ways. Although I have never had the opportunity to experiment with a whole introductory minicourse 'package' such integrated materials do not yet exist, as far as I know I am convinced that it would work very well because I have used many of its elements in various combinations, with excellent results. Introductory minicourses should help prevent many of the persistent problems that SL students usually develop. This does not mean, of course, that having offered an introductory minicourse the teacher can forget about potential problems and just relax; if the teacher is not

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vigilant, the students are likely to drift toward NL sounds, inappropriate learning strategies or study habits, and so on.

3.
CMM Procedures Common to All Program Levels

The audio-oral skills needed for about 8090% of all communication are emphasized throughout the program. At the appropriate times, activities designed to develop the reading and writing skills are introduced and gradually increased.

The CMM does not define a good SL student as one who can read all kinds of literature and write compositions. Educated native speakers can read literature intelligently because they come across an unknown word only once in a while and because they know the culture well. But when SL students read literature, they usually have to check the meaning of one word in three and do not understand the cultural context. This is not reading, it is laborious decoding in which constant interruptions make the decoder lose track of the ideas.

Writing freely and creatively is again something many (but far from all) educated native speakers can do with relative ease; but it is completely beyond the limited linguistic competence of SL students. Rushing students into reading unedited literature and writing freely in the SL does them great linguistic harm. It may make them feel that they are sophisticated and creative, and some may enjoy it, but it puts a virtual end to their gradual, systematic development of linguistic knowledge and control. Instead of knowing what they are doing and mastering it step by step, they are forced to guess the meanings of numerous words they read and to guess how to put on paper thoughts and shades of meaning that even well-educated native speakers would find difficult to express in writing. So what do SL students do when they are pushed prematurely into unedited literature and free composition? They fall back on NL 'equivalents' and rules. It is only *after* a solid language program that students are ready for most types of literature, free writing, and other advanced uses of the language. With semi-intensive instruction (see below), most students can reach this point of SL competence in four semesters of college study or their equivalent.

Facilitating positive transfer of grammatical structures is just a matter of explicitly giving 'green lights' at the right times, so structures that are identical in the two languages need not be taught systematically. Teaching should concentrate on two types of grammatical structures or distinctions: (1) those that are partially different across languages and require 'red lights' at certain points as well as intensive practice to overcome intrusive interference, and (2) those without NL counterparts, which require (a) dealing with inhibitive interference by

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making students aware that these structures are important and (b) sufficient practice to make sure students don't avoid or ignore them.

Guided discovery and intelligent conditioning as described in Chapter 11 are used at all levels to teach rules and elements. This ensures that linguistic behavior will initially be based on cognition and gradually become unconscious through increasingly freer and more meaningful practice. Any grammatical explanations, whether given to or elicited from the students, should be brief and in nontechnical language. At the same time, the use of a few grammatical terms (and, in the introductory minicourse, some phonetic terms) saves a great deal of time, so they should be taught and used as needed. And, of course, the teacher should make sure that the students have clearly understood the point being taught the most direct way of doing this is by asking questions and eliciting the corresponding SL performance. 3

At all levels, instruction of each rule and element should gradually shift from a structural focus to a meaningful focus, that is, *all structures should be used for (controlled) communication as they are learned*. At the same time, the teacher should discourage the communicative use of what has not yet been learned.

At all levels of the CMM, vocabulary, examples of structures, and idioms are taught in linguistic and nonlinguistic contexts, not in isolation, for it is their contexts that give them much of their lexical or structural meanings. If every student might not understand meanings and explanations that are presented in the SL, the teacher should elicit them (when they can be easily guessed correctly) or give them concisely and clearly in the NL. Visuals can serve many functions, but they are not reliable for the initial conveyance of meaning (Hammerly, 1974b; 1984).

4.
CMM Procedures Specific to the Beginning Level

The *beginning level* is defined, for the purposes of this discussion, as the first year of college (or 180 class hours at the rate of five hours per week, plus study) or its equivalent. The beginning level has three parts: the *introductory minicourse* (about 15 hours), the *early beginning level* (about 75 hours), and the *late beginning level* (about 90 hours). (Of course, some of this time is taken up by testing.) In elementary or secondary school, at least twice the number of class hours given here would be required to attain the same level of SL knowledge and control, for in school the students constitute a less select group, classes tend to be larger, and homework has unfortunately become minimal.

(The levels as defined in this chapter refer to target languages with the degree of difficulty that, e.g. French or Spanish present to an English speaker.

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Other NL/SL learning situations may take much longer to attain the same levels of SL competence.)

In the CMM, students are guided into speaking from the start first mostly by imitating speech, then gradually by producing more and more messages of their own. A period devoted to just listening is not recommended because there is some evidence that during such a period students engage in incorrect silent or subvocal speech. As they hear the strange sounds, words and phrases of the new language during an initial comprehension period, the students repeat what they hear to themselves, and reach their own conclusions about how they would say things in the SL. The teacher cannot correct this subvocal activity. In the absence of feedback, the students silently reinforce *their* (mostly incorrect) ideas about the SL. When they finally start speaking after the initial 'silent' period (which is silent only from the mouth out), they do so with largely internalized inaccuracies which are difficult to correct. To avoid having to deal with the speaking skill remedially, then, the SL teacher should help students speak from the start.

Throughout the beginning level, students thoroughly learn and then manipulate short SL samples which, in various recombinations and with various additions, can serve as the basis for the generation of an indefinitely large number of sentences. These samples can be little dialogues or a large variety of other short oral materials. Dialogues should be very short and students should not waste time memorizing sentence sequences other than salutations and the like, any two sentences in oral samples very rarely turn up in the same form or sequence in the real world (to put it another way, native speakers never know their part of the dialogue). Oral samples are not being used as much today as in the heyday of audiolingual teaching, and even then, teachers did not fully exploit their rich potential contribution to learning and sentence generation. SL students need thoroughly learned oral samples so they have something concrete to build upon linguistically and fall back on rather than their NL when their attempts at free communication falter. 4

At the early beginning level, teachers should teach only very basic and widely used grammatical structures and should ensure that the students gain complete control of them. The samples should include all basic sentence types, but their manipulation should be limited to correlation, replacement, and very simple transformations, contrasting them as needed with NL structures. At the late beginning level, students can learn somewhat more difficult and less frequent structures.

There is no reason to teach all the important structures of the language in the beginning level. Nothing is gained by rushing through SL grammar in, e.g. one year of college; the result is that the students never learn anything really well, teachers have to review everything in the second year and still have to do

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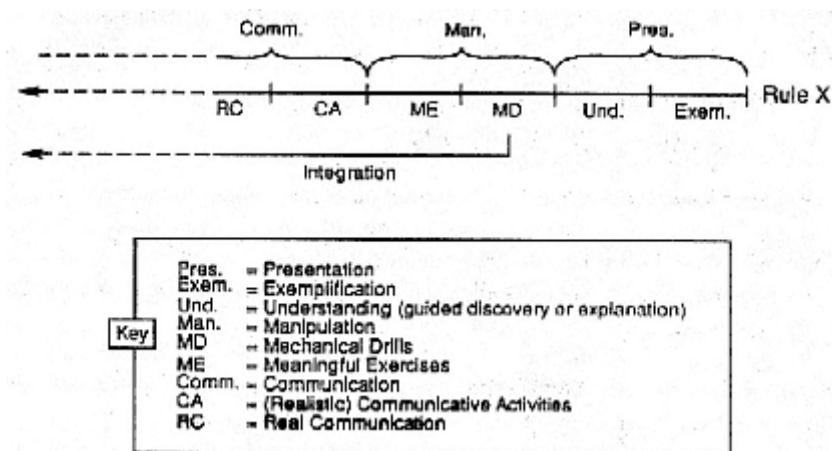
Figure 10

remedial teaching in the third and the fourth years. It is far more efficient and effective, in the long run, to make sure that the students learn each rule and element thoroughly the first time they study it, building up and integrating SL knowledge *and* control the way one would move up an inverted cone. Better for students to learn to control SL grammar well over a period of four semesters (or their equivalent) than to learn it poorly in two and then waste much precious time recycling linguistic incompetence.

For best results, a cycle such as the one shown in Figure 10 should be followed with each rule and element taught. It starts with the *presentation* of examples and a clear understanding of what they involve, moves on to *manipulation* in the form of mechanical drills (for no longer than a few minutes in each cycle) and meaningful exercises, and then on to *communication*, first in communicative activities ('realistic' communication) and then in real communication. In the few cases where a deductive approach is necessary for the sake of efficiency, the two substeps of the presentation phase (examples and understanding) are reversed.

Four semesters can easily be compressed into two by making beginning and intermediate language courses semi-intensive, that is, by doubling the number of class hours per week from five to ten. Several people, including myself, have tried this, and it works very well. Even intensive courses meeting four hours a day can work quite well, although naturally they require well-motivated, committed students (see Benseler and Schulz, 1979).

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At the early beginning level, vocabulary would consist of the most useful 400450 words, avoiding true idioms. At the late beginning level, students would learn an additional 550600 words, plus some idioms. All in context, of course.

Most of the beginning level should be audio-oral, although this requires appropriately used visuals plus a sound pedagogical transcription, especially in the first 15 hours or so. 5 With related languages using a similar alphabet, the teacher should introduce the writing system not only in terms of SL sound-spelling correlations but also of NL spelling interpretations and sound-spelling correlations that need to be avoided. While with such languages students could do a few simple reading activities by the end of the early beginning level and through the late beginning level, reading as a major activity should be delayed until the intermediate level. And when going from a language that uses an alphabet to one with an ideographic writing system e.g. going from English to Chinese or Japanese reading should be delayed until there is a firm general control of the spoken language. In other words, in such situations the development of audio-oral knowledge and control should proceed with the help of an alphabetic transcription until the advanced level, unhindered by the separate and largely unrelated task of learning to read and write ideographs.

With any language, the idea is to establish first a good degree of audiooral linguistic control, with some fluency. Emphasizing reading early would detract from that goal. For the same reason, there should be very little writing at the beginning level, and certainly *no* unguided, creative writing, which beginning or intermediate students cannot do without falling back on the NL and thereby applying and internalizing faulty rules that result in linguistic monstrosities (cf. Hammerly, 1982: 506512).

During the beginning level, communicative activities would be very simple. Students would gradually shift from imitating models to varying them under guidance. The earliest cultural activity, maintained throughout the program, would have the teacher briefly refer to the connotations of words and phrases and make behavioral and informational remarks. Somewhat later, the class could engage in such activities as culture assimilators (Fiedler *et al.*, 1971), first in the NL, then in the SL.

I have devoted considerable space to the introductory minicourse and the beginning level because it is here that the foundation is established for eventual success or failure in learning the SL. Later levels expand on that foundation, but no sound, lasting structure can be built on a weak, wobbly foundation.

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5.
CMM Procedures Specific to the Intermediate Level

For the purposes of this discussion, the *intermediate level* is defined as the third- and fourth-semester courses of college language classes, at the rate of four hours per week of class, plus study, or their equivalent. Therefore, the *early intermediate level* and the *late intermediate level* each consist of about 70 hours of college classes, plus study.

Reading activities are expanded at the intermediate level, but students still are not reading literature, since all literature has been written for native speakers with a full command of the structure of the language and a vocabulary of tens of thousands of words. So intermediate readings whether specially written or 'authentic' should be short and carefully geared to what the students know. Simple writing activities like dictation and self-corrective workbook exercises, always with models, also are part of the intermediate level. Students should not engage in free writing, which cannot be done well without a very good command of the SL.

In many respects, the intermediate level continues the work of the beginning level. Students learn the remaining basic grammatical structures, from some that are fairly common to others that are less frequent. Vocabulary expands at a somewhat faster rate: during the early intermediate level, about 650 new words and idioms would be learned; during the late intermediate level, vocabulary expansion would begin to be emphasized, and another 800 or so lexical items would be added. The total by the end of the intermediate level would then be about 2,400–2,500 words and idioms. This may not sound like very much, but it would be carefully selected vocabulary under active control and thus preferable to a much larger vocabulary that is mostly passive and unusable.

Much audio-oral and communicative work remains to be done. The emphasis of the program must not shift from that to something else, like reading, writing, or culture as important as these are. Communication can gradually move from directed to semifree, that is, free within certain linguistic limits. By the end of the intermediate level, cultural instruction can be more extensive, not just an *ad-hoc* adjunct to language learning.

6.
CMM Procedures Specific to the Advanced Level

This level, like the intermediate level above and the very advanced level below, consists of two one-semester college courses of 70 class hours each, plus study, or their equivalent.

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Emphasis continues to be on listening and speaking and active control, but now all four intralingual skills are used, sometimes in the same activity. For languages with ideographic writing systems, the reading of simple ideographic texts can begin. For languages with alphabetic writing systems, students can begin to read linguistically simple literature and other types of simple reading materials designed for native speakers, but most texts will still require special editing, glosses, etc, to adapt them to the limited vocabulary of SL students. Writing gradually shifts from closely directed to semifree. Vocabulary expansion continues to be emphasized, with particular attention to idioms: at the early advanced level, students gain active control over about 950 additional lexical items, at the late advanced level about 1,100 more. Teachers should not need to attend to grammar except for occasional remediation that is, if the first two levels were properly taught. Communicative activities are both realistic and real. The systematic study of all aspects of the second culture continues.

7.
CMM Procedures Specific to the Very Advanced Level

This is the equivalent of the seventh and eighth semesters of college study, by then of *language plus*. Few institutions offer very advanced language study. On a semi-intensive basis, this would be the fourth and last semester course of the language program *per se*. After the very advanced level, college students will have completed a total of 600 hours of classroom SL instruction (15 + [75+ 901 + 140 + 140 + 140), plus study. 6 This should be enough for well-motivated students to reach the FSI/ILR rating of 3 in related languages. Students of unrelated languages require as many as twice that number of contact hours to attain an S-3/R-3 rating.7

At the very advanced level, students can move on to individual reading programs and limited-credit (maybe one-hour) '*customized* "*minicourses*"', in which they discuss in class what they have listened to and/or read on their own. These minicourses can cover the whole gamut of topics of interest to students, including most types of literary works. About 2,500 additional lexical items words and idioms are learned in this final level. Writing is free but still requires some guidance. Students study culture in its broadest sense by making a systematic comparison of the two cultures and by doing individual cultural research projects, which can also take the form of limited-credit minicourses.

If the CMM program is semi-intensive, after two years college students will have mastered the basic grammar of the SL and will actively control about 7,000 words and idioms. They will be able to use their audio-oral linguistic knowledge and control to communicate accurately and reasonably fluently at the 3 (or even 3+) FSI/ILR proficiency rating. Since they will have,

moreover, a larger receptive vocabulary, they will be able to understand almost anything they hear or read. And they will also be able to express many thoughts in writing with accuracy and ease though not, of course, to produce publishable stories, poems or novels, which requires an FSI/ILR proficiency rating of 4+ or 5 (native). CMM program graduates will have a very good understanding of the second culture and will be able to adapt to and function in it. Thus they will have a solid foundation in SL competence and be ready to keep on growing linguistically, communicatively, and culturally.

Post-Program SL-Related Study

At this point language program graduates can take advanced courses *taught in the second language* without major adaptation. These courses can be on anything of interest to the students, although of course they would first need to learn the SL jargon in the case of technical or specialized subjects. Given their sound and broad SL base, they could learn the special vocabulary in a short time.

(Courses taught in the SL in lexically simplified form would be linguistically helpful as early as the advanced level. Before the end of the intermediate level, however, they can do more harm than good, for they require students to process and use structures they have not yet studied.)

SL program completion time is the ideal time for SL learners to go live and study and/or work for a few months or a year in the SL environment. Such submersion in the SL environment will enable them to progress from an accurate, reasonably fluent, but lexically limited S-3 rating to a still-accurate, quite fluent, and lexically rich S-4 (or even 4+) proficiency rating. (Going to a country where another language is spoken without having first studied it systematically and thoroughly at home does not yield good results: in the absence of basic linguistic competence and under much pressure to communicate, Frenglish, Chinglish, Japglish, and Russglish soon develop and habituate.)

For SL program graduates who stay at home, full-fledged courses taught in the SL are not the only option. '*SL-maintenance-and-expansion minicourses*' should also be available. These minicourses should involve small groups of students rather than just individuals (since audio-oral communicative practice is essential). Following an intensive or semi-intensive SL program, they could be offered on a great variety of topics throughout the last two years of college or their equivalent. 8

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Conclusion

The CMM procedures and curriculum discussed in this chapter can be used with cognitively mature SL learners from age 10 up (that is, 'psycholinguistic adults'). Although the CMM as a whole has never been put into practice there are no integrated materials with this orientation available at this time I have tried most of its components and am confident that the 'package' will work very well. The need for certain adjustments may of course be revealed by further practical experience and by experimental research.

Notes to Chapter 12

1 Unfortunately this book is out of print. Other Spanish pronunciation drillbooks with a similar orientation were Hadlich *et al.* (1968) and Dalbor (1969). That there are no recent pronunciation drillbooks of this type shows the neglect the teaching of pronunciation and intonation has been allowed to fall into.

2 For a more detailed discussion of how to teach SL pronunciation and intonation, see Hammerly (1982: 32575).

3 For further ideas and some of the types of drills, exercises, and other activities that can be used to practice new grammatical rules, see Hammerly (1982:399447).

4 Cf, Hammerly (1982: 37698) on how to present and exploit dialogues and other SL samples. Exploitation includes going from verbatim repetition and prompted production to minor and then major variations, cued in the NL or the SL, to self-generated guided dialogue, including role-playing, and on to real communication.

5 For a discussion of pedagogical transcriptions and specific proposals for Spanish, French, and German for speakers of English, and English for speakers of the first three languages, see Hammerly (1974a). This monograph is out of print but may be obtained from university libraries.

6 Or, as noted, at least twice as many hours in elementary and/or secondary schools.

7 And yet, when forced to fit the Procrustean bed of academic regulations and university catalogue/calendar entries, all language programs regardless of how long is realistically needed to learn each language end up with about the same number of courses, credit hours, and so on. For an English speaker, attaining an S-3 in Russian requires at least twice as long and in Chinese about four times as long as in languages like French or Spanish.

8 Of course, traditional academics frown at the very idea of one-hour 'minicourses', thinking them academically unrespectable. But how else can students study a large number of worthy but limited-scope topics?

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13

Some Suggestions for English as a Remote Language and English as a Local Language

The suggestions in this chapter derive from my nearly lifelong interest in the English language, my experience in learning it (and mislearning it), and considerable thought about how I would like my English program to be if I had a second chance to learn the language.

ERL Differs From ELL

We must distinguish between English as a Remote Language (ERL), where English is not the language of the community, and English as a Local Language (ELL), where it is. These two situations are very different, and their differences have important instructional implications.

The distinction between ERL and ELL has been obscured by the traditional labels 'ESL' and 'EFL', which unfortunately refer to the language's sociopolitical status rather than its linguistic or languistic circumstances. Furthermore, even the sociopolitical distinction is obscured by the use a single label for all English-teaching situations ESL in North America and EEL in Britain. But 'ESL' in China, for example, is ERL, while 'EEL' in England is ELL.

The most important difference between ERL and ELL is the linguistic background of the learners. ELL students usually (but not always) speak a variety of NLs. ERL students almost always have one NL in common, not only among themselves but often also with the teacher.

This difference between ERL and ELL is crucial, for the NL is the most relevant and significant knowledge a student brings to the SL classroom. The

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difference is especially relevant in terms of the teacher-student relationship and of the way both teacher and students relate to the teaching materials.

The other important difference between ERL and ELL involves the linguistic environment. As already stated, ELL programs are offered in a setting where the target language is the dominant language of the community. Frequent exposure to the SL outside the classroom is bound to have a major effect on the learning process. In the ERL situation, on the other hand, there may rarely be any interaction with native speakers of English outside the classroom.

These two differences should be taken into account when designing and implementing programs. The great technological progress of the last decade makes this possible in languistics. Whether in a remote or a local situation, the appropriate use of audiovisual and computer technology can enable English programs to address the particular linguistic background and environmental exposure of the students.

Of course, other factors affect the learning of English in specific situations. Each society where English may be taught has its own values and attitudes, which have significant effects on learning. For example, whether a culture stresses SL learning and whether the learning of English is looked up to or down on are important considerations. So are the accepted classroom role and the learning and communicative strategies of students, which can differ markedly in various parts of the world. But while these differences are important, they call more for cultural *adaptation* by the teacher and in the materials rather than for the creation of a new classroom language teaching approach.

The two main differences between ERL and ELL mentioned above linguistic background and environment are so important that it is hard to understand why most language educators mention 'ESL' and 'EFL' in the same breath or place them side by side in lectures, book titles, and so on. Except for the fact that the target language is the same in both cases, these are at the present time very different SL-learning situations. And until the sophisticated use of technology makes a more unified approach possible, these markedly different situations call for different language teaching approaches, methods, procedures, and techniques.

ELL and the Students' Native Language(s)

I presented evidence of the strong influence of the NL in learning a second language including a few examples from English earlier. 1 As you will recall, Spanish-speaking children find learning English as a local language easier than Chinese-speaking children do (adults. if anything, show greater

differences according to NL background). Swedish speakers find learning English as a remote language easier than Finnish speakers do; however, specific structures that differ in Swedish and English but not in Finnish and English cause Swedish speakers greater difficulty (Ringbom, 1987).

Further evidence of NL influence comes from the observations 24 English-teaching specialists have made on the interlanguages used by native speakers of many languages. I am referring to Swan and Smith's *Learner English: A Teacher's Guide to Interference and Other Problems* (1987). These specialists did not, as the editors acknowledge,

> set out to distinguish systematically between 'interference' mistakes and others; nor do they concern themselves with the relative frequency of different types of error. However, they are all clearly convinced that the interlanguages of the learners they are discussing are specific and distinct (so that it makes sense to talk about Thai English, Japanese English, Greek English and so on); and they all obviously see mother-tongue influence as accounting for many of the characteristic problems they describe. (Swan and Smith, 1987: xi)

As far as pronunciation is concerned, their case is strengthened by an audio cassette that contains recordings in English by native speakers of many different languages.

No doubt rules and elements that are peculiar to English pose problems to native speakers of all other languages there are several structures all learners of English must learn. No doubt, too, when speakers of other languages try to acquire English without the benefit of systematic instruction, they follow a similar route through English structure a route dictated by general communication needs. But there can be no question that the NLs of learners of English, especially in the classroom, are too important a factor for competent, well-informed teachers to ignore.

As we saw in Chapter 6, cross-linguistic influence both facilitates and interferes with SL learning. The general facilitative effect of the NL can be seen in the fact that, to reach the same level of proficiency in English, e.g. Japanese speakers need far more time than, say, speakers of French or German. The distinct English interlanguages of speakers of various other languages show structural differences both in terms of specific NL intrusions (intrusive interference) and of the English rules and elements each NL group finds difficult to master because they are absent from their NL (inhibitive interference). These cross-linguistic influences, as noted, can be most easily attested among beginning and very advanced students.

When a language teacher knows enough about the NL of his or her students, he or she can use this knowledge to increase the efficiency and

effectiveness of SL instruction. 2 A bilingual teacher can easily take advantage of cross-linguistic pedagogical shortcuts in ERL. I would estimate that remote-SL instruction that fully takes into account and judiciously uses the NL of the students can be twice as efficient (i.e. reach the same level of SL proficiency in half the time), without any loss in effectiveness, as instruction that ignores the students' NL.

Why *ELL* teachers would wish to ignore what may be the most important factor in their classrooms the NL(s) of their students is not hard to imagine: the great majority of ELL teachers are monolingual speakers of English who have never had the experience of learning an SL. Furthermore, even if the ELL teacher were proficient in several other languages, the students may speak many other languages the teacher doesn't know. Tools like Swan and Smith's *Learner English* should help. Such tools allow the ELL teacher to develop, in a few hours, some knowledge *about* the main differences between certain NLs and English. While this is not knowledge *of* the NLs it does not involve active control of them it makes ELL teachers aware of the needs of many of their students and thereby enables teachers to focus on particular problems individual learners or groups of learners are bound to have. There is of course a limit to the amount of specific cross-linguistic information an ELL teacher can attend to, in or out of class.

Perhaps a deeper reason that most ELL teachers ignore the students' NLs is that many ELL leaders not only are monolingual anglophones but also are strong advocates of the CAN (communicationist/acquisitionist/naturalistic) theory and of its corresponding approach, SLACC/I (SL acquisition through classroom communication/interaction). Whether their monolingualism led them to favor that theory is an intriguing question. Much of the ELL leadership is committed to the monolingual teaching of English, and for many years research in SL acquisition has had a monolingual orientation. Thus it is not surprizing that 'teaching English through English' has become the standard practice. Nor is it surprizing that for many years a creative solution that takes students' NLs into account has not even been sought. On the contrary, materials designed for, native speakers of English who are hardly in the same linguistic position as ELL or ERL students are being used in both ELL and ERL instruction.

This wasn't always the case. In the 1940s and 1950s, when Charles Fries, Robert Lado, and other applied linguists at the University of Michigan developed comprehensive English materials, they designed them with Spanish-speaking students specifically in mind. Then they partially developed Chinese-to-English materials, and had plans to develop further materials for speakers of other specific languages.

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At the time this seemed the best way to proceed; but considering that nowadays people from all over the world come to English-speaking countries, the concept of separate ELL materials for each NL background does not seem practical. Still, some NL-specific English materials are being produced today, especially for listening or reading comprehension. And in the area of pronunciation, some materials that take into account the particular learning problems of students of different NL backgrounds are available see, for example, Nilsen and Nilsen's *Pronunciation Contrasts in English* (1971), which refers to 50 other languages.

If we put our minds to it, we can develop sophisticated, technology-supported, integrated English materials that take into account various NL backgrounds. When we do, the efficiency and effectiveness of ELL (and, as we shall see, ERL) programs are likely to increase greatly.

Research in ELL or ERL and Its Applicability

For over 20 years, research in ELL has concentrated on a monolingual approach that does not take into account the students' NLs. This position, probably born out of practical necessity rather than theory, has been strengthened by research on natural SL acquisition in the field, leading to the CAN theory, and from the mid-1970s by the growing popularity of the SLACC/I/immersion approach.

These influences have strongly favored the monolingual communicative/interactive SL classroom, from which linguistic competence is supposed to 'emerge' naturally, given adequate time. But as we saw in Chapter 1, research in remote-language situations (such as the learning of French or Spanish through immersion in English-speaking environments) shows this just doesn't happen. Instead of linguistic competence emerging naturally, a defective classroom pidgin is quickly established, and after some time it becomes thoroughly habitual.

Has the SLA/ESL research of the last two decades been faulty in some way? A serious problem is that no research can yield reliable results when researchers start out with the assumption that an important factor isn't important at all. That assumption about the NL has underlain almost all SLA/ESL research since the late 1960s.

Another problem with recent SLA/ESL research, as with research in any other local-language learning situation, is that a high degree of control is not possible. To what an extent does student interaction with the surrounding English-speaking community affect the results of research? No one can tell. All

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data can be affected, in largely unmeasurable ways, by uncontrolled and uncontrollable out-of-class linguistic interaction. This makes the claimed results of much SLA/ESL research quite unreliable.

Remote-language research in the *ERL* situation, on the other hand, *can* be highly controlled because in ERL neither of the above difficulties is problematic: it is easy to have detailed awareness of the NL, of which there is usually only one, and extracurricular interaction is either absent or so limited that it is possible to keep some languistic control of it.

These factors make careful research in ERL far more reliable than SLA/ESL research. Yet research results from the uncontrollable ELL situation have been extrapolated not only to a controllable situation like ERL but to all other controllable remote-language teaching situations. We can and must eliminate this paradox. Clearly, *remote-language research, not local-language research, should point the way in language teaching*. Note that this would be true even if CAN/SLACC/I ideas were not instructionally naive, that is, if communicationists took the NL factor and all other factors into account.

One of the most curious conclusions reached by certain SLA researchers and CAN theorists is that maybe ESL instruction doesn't make any difference. This is, of course, the only possible conclusion when SLA assumptions are pursued to their (il)logical end: if SL acquirers need only exposure to 'comprehensible input' or even interactive communication to be successful, what need is there for ESL instruction? Why not just arrange for non-English-speaking people to have plenty of communication with English speakers? Why not, indeed, just help non-English-speaking foreign students, immigrants, and others financially so they could either live for some time, or at least spend a few hours a day, with suitable English-speaking families? This would cost far less than supporting a whole ESL profession, wouldn't it?

As can be seen, the faulty thinking of SLA/ESL researchers, if followed through logically, paints ELL into a corner of irrelevance.

That the question of whether instruction makes any difference should have arisen at all simply shows what great inroads, and how much damage, the CAN theory based on SLA research has done in the field of language teaching. It is perhaps no surprize to learn that certain leading SLA researchers have had little or no classroom SL teaching experience remote *or* local.

Of course, common sense tells us that when teachers carefully guide the learning process and take into account the important factors involved in it, teaching is bound to make a difference, especially if it involves an adequate amount of time per week. This is true not only of SL instruction but of all subjects in the curriculum.

The remote-language teaching field (to which ERL belongs) has never questioned the value of language instruction, especially since the classroom often provides the only access to the SL in conversational form. Moreover, until recently remote-language teaching had not been strongly influenced by nativism, SLA research, or the CAN theory. To its detriment, however, remote-language teaching has come to be increasingly influenced by these theories. I say 'to its detriment' because what works best in the SL classroom remote or local is the systematic, step-by-step teaching, learning and use of the language, not the expectation that the target language will somehow 'emerge' from communicative interaction among learners who don't know it.

In summary, much SLA/ESL research has followed incorrect assumptions and is unreliable; it has led to unreasonable conclusions about ELL. The results of SLA/ESL research aren't applicable to ELL, much less to remote-language teaching/learning situations such as ERL.

Toward Cross-Linguistic Models for ERL and ELL

A model for ERL must attend to two languages English and the NL of the students. The Two-Cone Model discussed in Chapter 3 does just that. This model represents both the step-by-step process of SL instruction and the corresponding developments in the SL student's mind. Of course, these rarely match completely at any point, for a student may lack the understanding or fail to practice enough to master and integrate a given rule or rules. But the teacher can (and must) provide the students with the opportunity to understand and practice.

The Two-Cone Model can be said to be structural, communicative, and cultural. For many years I used procedures associated with it to teach a remote language and I know that it can result in *both* linguistic and communicative competence, that is fluency *and* accuracy unlike SLACC/I.

A model for the typical monolingual *ELL* program in place today would represent the learning of 'English through English', that is, 'homogenized' monolingual SLA in which all learners are treated the same *regardless* of the facilitation or interference effects of their NLs. But to fail to take into account the particular linguistic strengths and weaknesses that speakers of various NLs bring into the ELL classroom is misguided. *Less* important SL learner characteristics have long been stressed.

I think what is needed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of ELL is a *multilingual model of local-language teaching and learning*. This cannot be represented two-dimensionally, but it can be described. Imagine each NL in the

classroom (and in each ELL student's mind) as a cone from within which English emerges, step by step, as in the Two-Cone Model.

Speakers of certain specific languages need to concentrate on certain English structures. Some of the English structures students need special practice mastering are common to two or more Nls. Others are things all students need to focus on, as they are peculiar to English. But as they progress in learning ELL, students of different NL backgrounds need to overcome correspondingly different problems in sound discrimination and production, morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse. It follows that, in addition to providing general practice and actitivies, the teacher and the materials must provide different linguistic 'diets' to learners of various NL backgrounds.

For example, Spanish speakers need to learn to reduce unstressed vowels to schwa, while German speakers don't find that a problem. Speakers of various languages have different kinds of predictable problems with English /ð/ as in *that*. The use of *to be* is very difficult for speakers of Slavic languages but not for the student whose NL is Romance or Germanic. English articles are a serious problem for speakers of Japanese or Chinese, but only a minor one for speakers of, e.g. French or Spanish. The latter have some difficulty in placing adjectives before nouns which speakers of several other languages find to be no problem at all. On the other hand, possibly all learners will need intensive practice with the complex English system of tag questions (e.g. 'Won't he?' 'Should they?' 'Isn't she?').

Indiscriminate teaching rarely produces excellent results.

The important difference in sociolinguistic environments for ERL and ELL must also be considered. In ELL, the English-speaking environment will, if allowed, force the learner to use (and before long, internalize) an error-laden 'survival English' which he or she may never be able to unlearn. The environmental situation is inimical to the ideal of using the SL only *as* it is learned. But while we normally cannot isolate students within an ELL program until they have developed a good foundation in English I am not sure we would even want to do that if we could there are certain things we can do to tip the balance in favor of long-term success and against the fossilization of 'survival English'.

For one thing, we can offer ELL on an *intensive* basis to foreign students, immigrants, and others and do so *immediately* after they arrive in the English-speaking environment, not after they have floundered linguistically for months or even years. For another, we can offer *systematic* ELL instruction, and we can repeatedly stress to the students that when they use English outside the classroom they should *stay close to what they have learned*.

ELL teachers can also help beginning students survive temporarily (read: immediately!) without habituating a defective interlanguage by teaching them a little *formulaic speech*. A large number of communicative SL situations can be survived reasonably well if one knows how to make the 'noises' the situations demand. This formulaic knowledge reduces pressure to use English globally.

The Ideal Solution:
Multilingual ELL

We can help ELL students individually via multilingual programs. Technology has made them possible. With the help of audio, visual, and computerized materials, the ELL teacher or program can guide students of different NL backgrounds through the specific learning experiences they require.

A multilingual program would have a common core plus linguistically individualized (though not necessarily individual) work. Students would still come together for small and large group activities at whatever point they are in the program. In these group activities, communication would be based on what the students have learned plus reference (coded by number, etc) on scripts or cards to various NL equivalencies or explanations they may need for new material.

The ELL teacher need not be a polyglot or even bilingual to be in charge of a multilingual classroom. The more multilingually informed the teacher is, the better, of course. But rather than set out to learn languages other than English, competent multilingual ELL teachers would have a good knowledge of phonetics and would know how to use certain reference tools. By the latter I mean books, tapes, software, etc, that make the teacher aware of the likely difficulties of students of various NL backgrounds and how he or she and they can deal with these difficulties.

One can't, of course, expect ELL teachers to have detailed knowledge of all the learning problems of all their students. But even if the teacher is only aware of salient difficulties, this would enable him or her to direct questions, activities, and so on to those students who need them most. A sophisticated, technology-supported multilingual program would offer the detailed guidance and practice each student needs.

The assistance of bilingual speakers of English as an SL in the community should be enlisted, especially during the first few hours of the program, when learners most need explanations, an orientation to classroom procedures, and so on. Native speakers of English can help throughout the ELL program as leaders of small conversation groups (see Chapter 14).

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Developing multilingual materials would be a major team effort. As a starting point, the common core plus the specific associated materials for two or three Nls should be developed, keeping other languages in mind so as to decide what to include in and what to exclude from the core. Then specific materials can be added for other Nls, always in reference to the core.

From Multilingual ELL to Bilingual ERL

Once sophisticated, bilingual (as part of multilingual) ELL materials have been developed for a particular NL, they can be exported for the corresponding ERL situation. For example, ELL materials for the learning of English by German speakers in England can be used, with some adaptation, to teach English in Germany.

This seems to contradict my earlier statement that ELL and ERL are very different situations. *They are now.* But multilingual materials would eliminate the linguistic and languistic differences (though not, of course, the difference in the sociolinguistic environments). And the sophisticated use of technology and of human resources (see the next chapter) would greatly enhance input and output, respectively, in the ERL situation.

Multilingual Programs for Lingua Franca Situations

In situations where a language needs to be learned as *lingua franca* so that speakers of various languages can communicate with each other, multilingual programs such as the one described in this chapter would be the most efficient way to teach the target language. The program would have a common core as well as materials dealing with the specific linguistic needs of the speakers of each of the Nls involved.

The European Community, for example, would benefit from having a *lingua franca*. It is premature to say whether that language will be English, French, or maybe German. But whichever language is chosen, it will be possible to teach it more efficiently and more effectively via a multilingual program that fully takes the learners' Nls into account.

Notes to Chapter 13

1 See Chapter 6, with further examples in Chapter 9 and additional discussion in Chapter 10.

2 Ways of doing this were suggested in Chapter 10.

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14
A Total Language Teaching Program (TLTP)

SL programs consist of many human and material factors. On the human side, there are students, teachers, researchers, and so forth; on the material side, we have facilities, materials, etc. Rarely have all these factors been integrated in an SL program. Instead, we tend to consciously or unwittingly emphasize one or more factors at the expense of others that may be just as, if not more, important.

Yet we must integrate all of these factors into a total language teaching program (TLTP) in order to consistently produce excellent results. We need therefore to answer several important questions about each factor, such as: what *can* this person or thing reasonably be expected to do for the SL program? What is it that he/she/it *cannot* do? If this person or thing *can* do something, is it something that *should* be done?

This chapter attempts to answer such questions about the major factors affecting SL teaching.

Learners

I mention learners first not because they are an *instructional* factor, but because no SL program can hope to succeed if it doesn't take into account the cognitive and affective characteristics of the learners and what they want to accomplish. (In recent years, there has been considerable research on the learner, but it has been mostly in terms of natural SL acquisition. Research on how the characteristics of the learner can best interact with teaching procedures to yield success in carefully guided SL programs is very much needed.)

Curriculum

The curriculum must be adapted, of course, to the characteristics and goals of the learners, the availability of instructional resources, and so on. An 'ideal'

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curriculum would be based on two general assumptions: that most students want an opportunity to learn the SL well rather than just survive in it, and that most types of resources are available for use as thought best.

As stated earlier, the ideal program is systematic, is initially semi-intensive or intensive, stresses linguistic control and supervised, graded communication through the intermediate level, and allows students to progress continuously at their own rate of learning. It emphasizes behavioral culture throughout but also presents the most important aspects of informational and achievement culture.

A recent curricular trend, *content-based instruction* (CBI), deserves some attention. The idea is that an SL can be learned well through content courses in other subjects, taught in the SL, without focusing on the language itself. The 'great success' of immersion programs, which do just that, is cited in support of CBI.

But, as we have seen, immersion programs are, linguistically, a failure after many years in immersion, students graduate without much control of many of the structures characteristic of the SL. Evidently, premature focus on content detracts from necessary attention to basic language structure. Grammaticality does not simply 'emerge' from content instruction and meaningful classroom interaction.

While the SL must of course be used meaningfully from the beginning of the program, content instruction belongs at the advanced level and beyond. At that point, it will expand the students' vocabulary and enhance their fluency. When offered at the beginning or intermediate levels, before a sound linguistic foundation has been established, CBI puts pressure on students to survive communicatively and thus ensures the internalization of a faulty classroom pidgin.

Content instruction beyond the language program itself may include any subject that interests the students, that is relevant to their general education and career goals or that involves knowledge that all educated speakers in the second culture are expected to have. For many students, this will no doubt mean area studies and at least some literature.

Human Resources

Persons who may serve (or may be trained to serve) as major instructional resources are (1) teachers, (2) languists, (3) materials authors, (4) learning laboratory personnel, (5) native SL speakers in the community, and (6) students. Those in the first three categories should, in addition to being highly proficient in the SL, be conversant with the concepts in linguistics, psychology, and social sciences that apply to their tasks.

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(1)
Teachers

Highly qualified teachers and their aides or assistants if highly qualified can do almost everything that needs to be done in the SL program. But there are some things they obviously cannot do. They can't provide individualized interaction or feedback to more than one student at a time claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor can they, without assistance, bring a remote second culture to the classroom in a rich and appealing manner.

There are some things that teachers can do but shouldn't. These include turning themselves into 1:1 word equivalence dictionaries, becoming just drill machines, and restricting their role to that of native-speaking conversationalists.

In integrating teachers into the TLTP, we must take care not to have teachers do what machines can do nor try to have machines do what only human beings can do. Furthermore, SL teachers must be allowed to teach, that is, to systematically intervene in and affect the outcome of the SL learning process. Most SL teachers have received considerable training and know how to guide students, step by step, in learning an SL. This means they can present and explain things to their students, provide them with correction as needed, help them overcome individual difficulties, and so forth. To reduce teachers to the role of SL output producers whether it is mechanical or conversational output is a waste of human resources.

(2)
Languists

Languists are highly trained professionals who specialize in how to impart, develop, maintain, and use SL competence in all three of its aspects linguistic, communicative, and cultural. Other labels for these ill-defined professionals 'applied linguists' two or three decades ago, 'foreign language educators' more recently and still today have been self-limiting and misleading. A redefinition of this discipline is essential.

The idea of armchair languistics is unacceptable, although, under other labels, some have tried it, with unfavorable results. To be able to make sense pedagogically, the languist-to-be must have considerable classroom SL teaching experience, if possible with students of different ages and interests and under a variety of conditions. The business of languists is not just to theorize but also to provide the crucial link between theory and practice.

Languists should provide overall direction to SL programs, train and supervise SL teachers, lead in the production of teaching materials, and so forth. They must be careful not to let untested or even untestable theories determine

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practice. As leaders in SL programs, languists are largely responsible for whether well-motivated students succeed or fail in learning SLs well. 1

(3)
Materials Authors

The development of SL teaching materials, whether printed or as software, should be under the direction of languists. Only experienced specialists can be expected to produce SL materials that are linguistically sound and that are in harmony with established, applicable knowledge (not just theorizing) in linguistics, psychology, and the other feeder disciplines.

Materials authors and publishers need feedback. (Unfortunately, sometimes those who don't particularly want it need it most.) Publishers should conduct, for the authors' and their own benefit, random sample evaluations by users of SL materials, both teachers and students. It shouldn't be difficult for publishers to design appropriate forms that could be distributed with the materials for that purpose. What will always be difficult for publishers is to publish what will facilitate learning most rather than just what will sell best.

(4)
Learning Laboratory Personnel

All SL programs should have learning laboratories so that teachers need not do what machines can do. In the smaller programs, one teacher can coordinate work in these laboratories, with several teachers taking turns being available for student consulation. Larger programs should have a learning laboratory director and maybe assistants.

Learning laboratory directors should be experienced SL teachers, although this is not essential. They must of course have expertise in hardware, but this is not enough. As part of their professional training, they should study the pedagogically sound uses of technology. Ideally, they would be full-fledged languists with doctorates, capable of conducting careful research on SL learning in the learning laboratory.

(5)
Native SL Speakers in the Community

It is curious that SL programs import materials from halfway around the globe and encourage their students to sojourn to remote locations, when there are often untapped linguistic resources right there in the local community. Under the direction of a confident and well-qualified teacher or languist and after brief

training, native SL speakers in the community can perform very useful roles in the SL program.

Small group conversation should be an integral part of any SL program, and native speakers can serve as group leaders. These groups would meet at frequent intervals to practice what their members have learned in *graded* conversation at the beginning and intermediate levels. But whether the groups result from dividing regular classes in a lockstep program 2 or are flexible groups in a continuous progress program, SL students shouldn't be left to their own devices in this activity. They need guidance and feedback, which native speakers can be trained to provide. Since this activity would take place in school premises under overall teacher supervision, it can be done with children.

At the advanced level, *after* a solid linguistic foundation has been established, students can have further interaction with native speakers by spending a few hours per week with selected native-speaking individuals or groups such as families. At the very advanced level, students could board with native-speaking families. The only essential requirement is that communication be in the SL. Each student would report on these quasi-social activities to the members of his or her small group or to the class. Of course, some financial compensation would be involved, and in that sense these would not be true social activities, even though they may result in much true social interaction. For obvious reasons, this kind of outside-of-school activity is suitable only for students of college age or older.

Students can also spend a certain amount of time per week in scheduled telephone conversations with native speakers. This would not only enhance proficiency within the program but could help students maintain proficiency beyond the program, especially when they cannot otherwise use the language for extended periods of time. Having real telephone conversations and social interaction would maintain proficiency far better than would reading.

A TLTP would engage native speakers in the roles just discussed. Of course, there would have to be a selection process. Not all native speakers use a standard dialect of the SL. Not all have personalities or characters suitable to these roles. But I think many would be suitable and would welcome the opportunity to do this kind of work.

Native speakers especially those who are to help beginning and intermediate students need some training. They need guidance on how to direct small conversation groups and how to apply the principle of 'incremental gradation'. For the latter, they need lists of the major structures and lexical situations that should be used or avoided at each important point in the progression. They also need to know how to provide useful rather than mindless or counterproductive

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feedback. And they need to understand very clearly that there are some things they must *not* do for instance, try to explain anything about the structure of the SL, which is a function of the teacher or the materials.

This training of native speakers can be brief and, with appropriate materials, could be largely self-instructional. It isn't necessary, furthermore, to be constantly training people nor to have a complicated schedule. After a while the program would have reliable regulars, with occasional changes of personnel.

As mentioned earlier, compensation has to be provided. But although these would not be high-paying jobs, I am sure that in many localities suitable native speakers would be interested in doing this work, whether part-time or full-time. If there were not enough native speakers in a community, school boards, educational institutions and community groups could offer incentives to native speakers in other parts of the country, to foreign students or to newly-arrived immigrants or refugees to come there.

Of course, the usual people will object to this idea in the usual ways. The education establishment will clamor that no one without some sort of certification (which only they can offer) can step into a school classroom. Many academics will ask about degrees (or at least credit hours) and will deride the 'lack of academic content or value' of conversation.

But one way or another, interaction with native speakers must be arranged, for talking with them should not be just what a student may do upon graduation it is a crucial part of the SL learning process itself. SL programs that don't offer it are incomplete. They are not TLTPs. 3

Many communities have ethnic centers, publications, radio or television programs, etc. These can be very valuable as sources of information and social contacts, especially for SL students at the very advanced level.

(6)
Students

In programs where native speakers are not yet being used, it is necessary to provide meaningful practice in other ways. The usual 'solution' to have the students in the class converse among themselves has undesirable linguistic consequences, because they end up reinforcing each other's errors.

If students *must* be responsible for conversation activities, teachers should carefully select and orient suitable students as leaders of small groups. The first choice would be students outside the program who are native speakers of the SL. In English-speaking countries, for example, they would include ELL and other foreign students. They can be offered part-time positions in the SL

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program. (Many schools and colleges are not making use of this readily available human resource.) The second choice is to give selected very advanced or advanced students in the program the opportunity to absolve part of their course requirements by serving as leaders of small groups of beginning or intermediate students. The least desirable of the alternatives is to have this function performed by the best students in the class itself. Excellent linguistic performance and a suitable personality are the main selection criteria. Those who like to talk and encourage others to talk without regard for grammaticality should not be group leaders.

(Curiously, the same people who would object to the presence in the SL classroom of native speakers without certification or degrees have no objection to the far less desirable practice of having students who do not speak the SL well lead small group activities.)

The purpose of conversation groups is not of course to learn new material in the SL but to internalize what has been studied by practicing it meaningfully, in a graded and systematic manner at the beginning and intermediate levels.

Conversation group leaders don't need advanced academic qualifications but just a basic level of education. Of course, the greater their practical linguistic knowledge the better. They should control a standard dialect. If they are bilingual, they can be trained to be of greater help than if they speak the SL only.

Other human factors affect the SL program less directly but are very important. The support of parents, administrators, government officials, and society as a whole should be enlisted. In some cultures people must be persuaded of the importance, usefulness and satisfaction of learning SLs. Sometimes we project unencouraging images; for example, the image of SL programs as dealing with the 'foreign' is hardly desirable in societies that are somewhat xenophobic. In the case of school students, the support of parents is crucial, for they have great influence on the attitudes of their children, and their general supervision is decisive when it comes to attendance and homework.

Facilities

The ideal SL classroom would of course offer relative (not too much) comfort, freedom from distraction, and access to any combination of low and high-tech teaching aids. For a lockstep program which is not ideal the classroom should also offer flexible seating arrangements. In SL classrooms, fixed chairs facing forward impede student-to-student communication. A solution would be to have chairs that lock into several positions, allowing the teacher to split the class into groups of various sizes, including small

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conversation circles. (This doesn't apply, of course, to the few programs that can afford to have small classes.)

Continuous progress programs require small conversation group facilities. These can be small rooms, as well-equipped as possible. At the least, they can be conversation areas with small round tables, preferably not far from the learning laboratory. Continuous progress programs also require record-keeping space for the teachers and easy student access to the materials and aids the students will use. There must also be one or more larger rooms for cultural and social activities that bring entire groups together.

No serious SL program can be without a learning laboratory for individual practice. (Certain aspects of hardware and software are discussed below under 'Technological Aids'.)

A SL house or residence is helpful if at least about one fourth of the residents are native speakers of the SL. Otherwise, the student residents end up mostly practicing their Frenglish, Chinglish, or Spanglish on each other, which is hardly conducive to SL competence.

Textbooks and Other Written Materials

In a TLTP whose terminal goal is the ability to communicate accurately and fluently in the spoken language, books and other written materials should clearly play a secondary, not a central, role. Of course SL students must learn to read well too, and to write correctly what they may need to write beyond the program. But for best results these two skills should not be stressed until the intermediate and advanced levels, respectively.

Beginners have to be 'weaned' for some time from the written language, for they strongly tend to interpret it according to NL rules. Once they have developed a good initial control over the SL sounds and basic sound rules which can be done in 1015 hours with the help of an appropriate *pedagogical* transcription they can be introduced carefully and gradually to the standard written language.

For SL program beginners to have most of their activities center on a textbook and/or workbook is linguistically harmful. It would be far better for their basic audio-oral development to rely on audio-oral materials such as recordings and appropriate software. (Of course, they may need the visual 'crutch' of certain pedagogical transcription symbols/signs until they are strong enough in the spoken SL to be able to deal with the additional complexities of the written SL *without* their speech being distorted in the process.)

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I realize that what I say in this section will not be favorably received by textbook publishers. But my experience shows this to be true.

In case computer software developers assume this doesn't include them: it does. The criteria for what is languistically desirable apply regardless of means of delivery. Software for the first 1015 hours of the program should not use the standard written SL. After introducing the written language step by step, software should make it available but not too readily so. Instead, we should require SL students to try to rely on (and thereby enhance) their listening and speaking skills.

By the late intermediate level, reading can become an important though not the most important part of the SL program. At this point, graded readers become useful. By the advanced level, books and workbooks helpful to the development of the writing (though *not* creative writing) skill can be used. These comments apply equally well to software.

Throughout, students will benefit if we *eliminate* traditional textbooks from the SL program and replace them with detailed guides to audio and audio-oral-visual materials and computer software, plus reference books as needed. 4 SL materials that should be studied audio-orally should not, of course, be also available in written form. If they are, students will read the latter and ignore the former.

A TLTP should not be a smorgasbord from which the SL student chooses freely. A TLTP guides the students carefully, leads them into doing what will help them in the ways that will help them most, and even prevents them from doing what would harm them linguistically at any point in the program.

Visual Aids

Visual aids have several important roles to play in a TLTP. As part of presentations, other classroom activities and various kinds of individual study software, they can, for example, remind students of words and meanings they have learned, provide second culture authenticity, maybe even motivate.

But visual aids cannot convey *efficiently and clearly* the meanings of new SL words and phrases. When the teacher uses visual aids to demonstrate new SL words and phrases monolingually, the students are faced with an ongoing guessing game. This is hardly efficient. Nor can the teacher be completely sure that a student has clearly understood a given meaning. With beginners, clarity and efficiency in conveying meanings can only be attained through reference to the NL; as the students learn more of the SL, new word and phrase meanings can

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increasingly be made clear through the new language. (And, of course, communicative practice with what the students have already learned should be in the SL and can be supported by visual aids.)

In a balanced TLTP, visual aids remain *aids* not the center of attention nor the 'key' to the SL.

Technological Aids

There are many things machines can do very well and, as already stated, no teacher should have to do what a machine can do just as well. We can use fairly inexpensive, low-tech machines for several purposes, but we don't use them enough. A recent trend is to use high-tech machines as much as possible, forgetting that there are some essential languistic functions that even the most sophisticated and expensive machine cannot perform.

Machines have rarely been *designed* with the needs of SL teaching and learning in mind. Our profession has had to make do with whatever is generally available, relying on ingenuity to adapt it to the limited extent possible.

In this section, I will discuss briefly the subtopics of (1) audio, (2) video, (3) computers, and (4) the 'ideal' learning laboratory student station.

(1)
Audio

Since sound discrimination and the development of listening comprehension are fundamental to SL competence, a TLTP would have students engage in much audio work. Today this means, essentially, cassettes although recordable compact discs may replace them in the not-too-distant future.

Many SL students have access to cassette machines, so cassettes can be a major part of an audio program. We need to make enough cassettes available to the students that they can always check out the current one. Perhaps the only practical way of doing this is to rotate the necessary number of bulk-copied cassettes without taking valuable time in labelling them. Students would buy one cassette (of a specified type) at the beginning of the course and could get a copy of the current one by turning in the last one they have used.

To be really useful, audio should include, or be accompanied by, checks on listening comprehension, control of structures, etc, preferably through the cassette itself or maybe via a workbook. Audio machines can offer a great variety of practice in listening, monolingually and bilingually (the SL on one channel,

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the NL on the other, with or without pauses and so forth). Recording machines can also give practice in speaking, and not only in drill format. Collections of graded simulated conversation situations that elicit NL-directed but semifree student speech should be available on cassette, provided that after each response the most likely utterance is given. Any student output should be followed by feedback.

Students should be able to record each response and *immediately* replay it and compare it with the correct or best response. This has been possible in language laboratories for some time; regrettably, portable student cassette machines with a recording function are almost nonexistent.

(2)
Video

Video can perform the same languistic functions as audio, but again, to be really useful it should include record-compare and immediate replay of responses.

In the SL program, video involves two often-ignored dangers, as does the use of visuals in general. The first is that things may seem crystal clear to the makers of the video and to SL teachers and yet be quite unclear to students. The second is that, unlike audio, video has a built-in difficulty: *To the extent that students understand something because of a visual image, they do not understand it because of the language.*

(3)
Computers

Computers can provide a great variety of individual practice, but they have often been used in SL programs in undesirable ways. On the positive side, no other machine can offer random but systematic access to a wealth of data and information, provide numerous alternative routes to many goals, reveal information to the student as he or she needs it or requests it, and evaluate and keep track of foreseeable responses. Perhaps the most useful function of computers in a TLTP is that they can flexibly control many kinds of audio-oral-visual devices. This makes possible sophisticated listening comprehension activities such as interactive video, some controlled speaking activities, and so forth.

But because computers do not function like, and are much less sophisticated than, the human brain, there are several things they cannot do and will probably never be able to do. The fact that they can deal only with what has been preprogrammed into them imposes severe limitations. For example, they cannot

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evaluate free student output, whether oral or written (much less produce free output grammatically themselves), nor treat each student as a unique thinking and feeling individual. Only another human being can do these things.

Just because a computer *can* do something doesn't mean that it should do it. For example, software for beginners should not rely heavily on reading and writing; new words should not be presented in isolation, even if visually 'supported'; and noncontextualized 1:1 SL/NL 'equivalences' should not be used. With vocabulary, just providing some sort of audiovisual setting for new words is hardly placing them in context; each new word or idiom must be anchored in its referential and usage network. Another example is crossword puzzles; the fact that they can be done on a computer and that they may be entertaining does not compensate for their languistic inefficiency.

The philosophy of putting students in charge of their own learning has dominated computer-assisted language instruction; but most students are not very good at being in charge of the learning process. Given sophisticated software full of built-in help, for example, many students seem to rush through the program without using the available resources.

Writing with a computer (keyboarding) is much slower than speaking and is not, of course, the main way SL learners should be producing language their output, given the audiooral emphasis of the TLTP, should be primarily oral.

Computers can make a major contribution to a TLTP when the focus of the language program shifts to the expansion of vocabulary with the support of reading. As we have seen, an early emphasis on vocabulary is bound to be linguistically disastrous, so the major effort on expanding vocabulary should be delayed until the late intermediate level and beyond. Before that point, computers could provide programmatic guidance and access to reference information, but for best results nearly all the work should be done with audiooralvisual devices which can, of course, be controlled by computers.

Since good teachers and other human resources can do almost all the things that computers can do and some things that computers cannot do, the question of cost-effectiveness is a valid one to raise. Someday computers and other technological aids may be so inexpensive that they can economically replace humans *in all tasks that computers can do well*. That day clearly hasn't arrived yet.

As we have seen, *there are certain things computers cannot do well*. For these, teacher delivery and interaction will produce better results than technological delivery and 'interaction'. Technology must remain an aid, even in SL programs where students spend most of their contact hours in learning laboratories. However it is called, computer-assisted or -aided language instruction (CALI) or

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learning (CALL) should not be turned into 'TACI' ('teacher-assisted computer instruction'), because human communication and understanding are essential to the goal of SL competence. (Very short 'survival' courses are another matter and, as stated earlier, not one of the concerns of this book.)

(4)
The 'Ideal' Learning Laboratory Student Station

The US Central Intelligence Agency recently developed a two-week Spanish survival program for adults at its Language School in Washington, D.C. (Hughes, 1989). While its survival nature and its technological delivery make that program unsuitable as a model for a TLTP, the configuration of hardware it uses seems ideal.

A minicomputer that can operate up to 40 student stations coordinates work. In each workstation there is a personal computer, an audiodisc player with student recording function and immediate playback, and a videodisc player plus a microphone and earphones, of course. This combines the flexibility of the computer with all the audiooralvisual technological functions SL students need.

Testing

In a TLTP, the contents and formats of tests should have an audiooral emphasis and should recognize that fluent, free communication is the aim at the *end* of the program or beyond, not something expected at the beginning or intermediate levels. Furthermore, nothing should be tested that the students have not had ample opportunity to learn through systematic instruction.

These considerations rule out reading and writing tests at the beginning level. They also rule out proficiency interviews within the SL program. As discussed in Chapter 4, proficiency interviews, by definition, force SL students to try to communicate beyond their competence, making numerous errors in the process. Proficiency interviews shift the focus for the SL student from the desirable aim of accuracy to the undesirable aim of glibness.

Many types of listening test techniques can be used in the classroom, in conjunction with oral laboratory tests and *progress* interviews. Testing via reading should be delayed until the intermediate level. Written tests though not of the unguided, free composition or translation type can start at the advanced level. 5

Proficiency interviews should occasionally be given to graduating students for research purposes, that is, to compare the proficiency of classes

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completing various types of SL programs. If proficiency interviews are used primarily to measure linguistic competence not just communicative competence they can be used as part of job placement in general and of SL teacher hiring in particular.

Language Maintenance and/or Improvement

The linguistic resources of individuals and nations should not be ignored and allowed to deteriorate. Our profession should do what it can in that respect.

A TLTP would make available materials and facilities, and offer minicourses to enable students and graduates to maintain or even improve the SL competence they have developed. Within the program, these would also be offered during the summer or other long breaks. Beyond the program, these extracurricular offerings would permit lifetime maintenance or improvement of SL competence by anyone in the community.

In all cases there should be specific feedback, whether in conversation groups or through self-tests. Within the program, materials and activities should be graded to match what the students have learned. For program graduates, most materials for native speakers are appropriate.

An individualized reading program would be of help for SL maintenance in program graduates, but by itself it is inadequate. Reading is a receptive graphic activity; what they most need is opportunities to listen and speak. So there should be a variety of listening activities available. (The least that language programs can do for language maintenance and/or improvement by their students and others is serve as an efficient clearing-house for information about radio and television programs and community activities in the SLs the programs offer.)

Most important, for it is rarely available elsewhere, is for SL programs to offer anyone interested in doing so the opportunity to speak SLs. Conversation-oriented minicourses should start at various times year-round. Regrettably, these maintenance programs are rarely available even to non-native SL *teachers* except as complete summer workshops or courses.

Study Abroad

At the very advanced level or after completing the SL program, students would greatly benefit from spending several months to a year in an area or

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country where the SL is spoken natively. For future SL teachers and, periodically, for practicing non-native teachers this experience is essential, so regional and local educational jurisdictions, institutions, and professional organizations should encourage and finance it to the extent possible.

Study abroad is beneficial after a very solid foundation in the SL has been established. Before that, it seems to always result in fluent ungrammaticality. Of course, when the prospective SL student can't find a good-quality SL program in which to enroll at home (in some places, there aren't any), the only viable option left is to go abroad and hope that educators there will know how to teach their language as a local SL (they often don't).

Integration

The TLTP is integrated by taking into account all the factors discussed in this chapter and elsewhere in this book, carefully coordinating the effort of imparting SL competence, and making sure that all people involved can communicate as and when they need to.

Students in the learning laboratory and elsewhere can be linked electronically via, e.g. closed circuit television with teachers or languists on call to help them with the more difficult, unforeseeable learning problems. (Of course, answers to any questions considered likely to occur should be built right into the teaching materials.) Obviously this electronic link would require screening out ordinary questions by training the students to check other sources of information first.

All factors and outcomes should be evaluated regularly, not only by the TLTP staff but in particular by students and even by the employers of program graduates. Whenever use of respondents' real names would be a hindrance to frankness in evaluation, anonymous questionnaires should be used. (Of course, decisions affecting the careers of SL teachers and others should not be based on one or even several such questionnaires.)

Conclusion

The TLTP described in this chapter (and parts of previous chapters) amounts to a blueprint for sound SL programs. But a blueprint has never built anything. It is up to our profession to take action and make such programs a reality.

Notes to Chapter 14

1 For suggestions on graduate studies in languistics see Hammerly (1982: 65354).

2 In lockstep programs entire classes move together through the curriculum, all students 'covering' the same materials at the same time. In continuous progress programs, students in small groups with flexible membership master the structures and elements of the SL at the pace their abilities (and motivation) allow.

3 One example of a program that makes considerable use of native speakers in the community is the Russian language program at the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, D.C., which establishes regular contacts between advanced students and émigrés.

4 Textbook publishers have been less than helpful to our profession in several ways. An egregious example is the omission, in many textbooks, of answers to drills and exercises reportedly to reduce paper costs.

5 At a deep level, free composition has much in common with traditional translation: when writing freely beyond their competence, SL students largely rely on their NL, whether consciously or unconsciously. No SL student should have to write beyond his or her competence.

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15
Linguistics and 'The Real World':
Toward More Applicable Theories of Language

Most persons with an average education when asked what they think of linguistics will probably say that it is a specialized, esoteric field of study that has no direct impact on their lives. But trainers of teachers in the fields of literacy, composition, and languages seldom fail to make the *de rigueur* comment that 'a basic understanding of modern linguistics is beneficial' though they are rarely able to specify how this is so.

One result of the high esteem in which linguistics is held is that many SL teachers try to include advanced courses or even complete a degree in linguistics or applied linguistics as part of their education. In the minds of many, entries labelled 'linguistics' seem to add a certain *cachet* to an academic record.

An outsider to linguistics is no doubt impressed by its scientific-looking formulas and by its computer-like rules. But our brains don't work at all like digital computers they are far more flexible and sophisticated. Two differences stand out. First, connections in the brain are multiple, not binary: each neuron is connected not to two but to hundreds or even thousands of other neurons. Second, the flow of energy (and ergo information) in the brain is not unidirectional but multidirectional.

Therefore, 'modern linguistics' (read: transformational-generative (T-G) grammar) with its largely binary rules and unidirectionality resembles the structure of digital computers but does not resemble the organization and functioning of the brain. Thus a T-G model of language is fundamentally inadequate *as a theory of language* quite apart from the matter of its applicability to practical pursuits. Naturally, a model that is different from the way the brain is organized and functions can hardly tell us much about how a language (or part thereof) is learned or should be taught.

T-G grammar tries to describe and explain the linguistic competence (to T-G grammarians, the largely unconscious knowledge *about* the language) of an ideal native speaker who knows everything. Since he or she knows everything, this ideal native speaker does not need to learn or be taught anything, so the design of T-G grammars does not take learning or teaching into account at all. In many respects, the organization of a T-G grammar and many of its rules can be shown to be precisely the *opposite* of what is needed for successful teaching, learning, and even natural language acquisition.

The T-G order from abstract syntax/semantics to phones has already been pointed out to be the opposite of the order that an SL learner needs to follow. Many specific T-G rules can also be shown to be upside down as far as language learning is concerned.

Two examples of generative phonological rules illustrate this point. According to the 'vowel reduction' rule, the schwa [ə] in the second syllable of *telegram* is derived through reduction from the stressed [e] in the second syllable of words like *telegraphy*. However, while many children know the word *telegram*, it isn't until years later (if ever) that they learn the much-less-common word *telegraphy*. So, as far as language development is concerned, this generative phonological rule puts the cart before the horse. Since in almost all cases of vowel reduction the 'unreduced' vowel occurs in infrequent words, clearly what language learners need is the opposite of a reduction rule, that is, 'vowel expansion' rules that go from the schwas in familiar words to the fuller, stressed vowels in less frequent words a process that would of course be facilitated by an awareness of stress and spelling.

The other phonological example involves words like *bomb*, which generative phonologists describe as containing a final |b| in the base form, realized phonetically as [b] in words like *bombard* and *bombardier* but 'deleted' when saying *bomb*. In terms of language acquisition, teaching, and learning, the problem is the same as for vowel 'reduction': Three-year-olds know the word *bomb* (without any final [b] or |b| of any kind), and the very few who learn a word like *bombardier*, many years later, are in effect adding a [b] to the word root although, of course, by then they have seen the 'silent' letter *b* in the written word *bomb* many times.

Pedagogically, one shouldn't even attempt to describe the known in terms of the unknown; exactly the opposite is called for. Cart-before-horse rules are what makes generative phonology almost totally inapplicable in teaching. Presumably they are also what led Chomsky and Halle (1968: 49) to make the developmentally and pedagogically absurd claim that conventional orthography is 'a near optimal system for the lexical representation of English words'. As real learners of real English know, English spelling is in fact a 'near pessimal' system.

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Phonology, phonetics and spelling are not the only things T-G grammar handles in such an abstract or atomistic way that it can't be applied to teaching and learning. The way a T-G grammar handles morphology, syntax and semantics makes it equally inapplicable, for various reasons. It is far easier for learners to deal with morphemes and their variants in terms of distribution than of ordered rules. Learners need to manipulate *real sentences* syntactically, not apply rules to abstract deep-structure strings. 1 Learners are advised to rely for word meanings on a good dictionary and teachers should not even try to deal with meaning via the atomistic semantic features T-G grammarians prefer.

T-G grammar is almost completely unrelated to 'the real world' of teaching. It can inform teachers but not direct them. It is curious that modern linguistics should have distanced itself so much from the concrete world, for a good theory is the best explanation of some *reality*. One wonders how valid a theory can be other than as an intellectual exercise if it has little connection with the real world where people, warts and all, talk, listen, write and read. Regrettably, many nonlinguists who are awed by linguistics have unquestioningly allowed certain unwarranted assumptions, models, and implications to affect their language practices and even cloud their judgment.

This chapter is written in the hope that some linguists may be interested in considering suggestions about how linguistic theories could be adapted or new theories developed so that they may be applicable to everyday concerns such as instruction, usage, and so on. As a linguist turned languist, I have a few such suggestions to make. Here I will concentrate on instructional applications.

An applicable theory of language would have to be multidimensional, not only in the sense of facilitating language teaching, learning and use, but also in the productive/receptive dimension. A grammar is very narrow if all it allows is the generation of sentences through rigid binary choices. It must also explain the processes of decoding and understanding involved in listening and reading. And I think it's unworkable to use the same framework for both the production and reception of language, as encoding proceeds primarily from meaning to form and decoding goes mostly from form to meaning. (Different procedures are needed to tie and to untie a knot.)

A T-G grammar can't be a model of the linguistic competence of the ideal native speaker because *no* native speaker's brain processes language the way a T-G grammar does. Besides, T-G linguists do not describe linguistic competence but arrive introspectively at their own *systematic performance* (see next paragraph) by asking themselves, 'Do I say this? Can I say that?' (The tendency of modern linguists to be their own informants doesn't make much more sense than the idea of lawyers being their own defenders or physicians their own surgeons.)

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We must distinguish among several meanings of the words 'competence', 'performance', and 'proficiency'. As Chomsky described performance, it is linguistically quite irrelevant, for it includes all kinds of dysfluencies such as 'uhs', false starts, and so forth. I call this 'noise'-ridden speech *surface performance*, in contrast to *systematic performance*, which I define as surface performance minus dysfluencies. The linguistic competence T-G linguists describe is in effect a set of rules based on systematic performance theirs or that of a dialect or language.

Second language competence, as defined in Chapter 3, involves, at its core, knowledge about the language (SL linguistic competence), about how it is used (SL communicative competence), and about the second culture (SL cultural competence) and, of course, the ability to put all this knowledge to use (it isn't just knowledge in the abstract). SL competence cannot be divorced from NL competence, for both languages influence each other throughout life. *Systematic second language performance* is observable SL behavior minus unsystematic mistakes and (except for native-like speakers) it shows influence from the NL and usually to a lesser extent other languages the speaker may know. *Second language proficiency* is an estimate of SL competence usually based on the systematic performance of an interviewee being pushed beyond his or her linguistic limitations.

Bilingual competence enables a speaker to communicate accurately, fluently, and in culturally appropriate and informed ways in two languages. To be meaningful, the word 'bilingual' should be defined both quantitatively and qualitatively. Phrases like 'functional bilinguals' to refer to people who can use more than one language are vague and reveal a lack of standards. The degree to which the linguistic behavior of a learner resembles that of educated native speakers of a given SL is quantifiable for SL components, skills, and even specific rules, elements and usage. For example, a person can be 90% native-like in syntax, 60% native-like in pronunciation, and so forth.

In this book I claim that systematic performance not only can but must be taught. I further claim that the most effective way to do this is to start, *for each structure*, with brief intelligent/meaningful mechanical performance based on clearly understood examples, and then move on in steps to the use of that and previously mastered structures in integrated, graded, but personally meaningful communication. Instructionally guided performance in a narrow area can contribute to, and become part of, integrated systematic performance, that is, growing SL competence, which is in turn the basis for freer output.

Sound, applicable linguistic theories would have to incorporate valid ideas and findings from varied sources, whatever their orientation. This includes good ideas and findings from any school of linguistics as well as

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from *language practitioners* such as languists, language teachers, teachers of literacy, diction, composition and creative writing, speech therapists, translators and interpreters, and so on. If linguists listened to what all those seriously concerned with language have to say, they could reduce their isolation. They just might then develop more applicable theories.

The distinction between language structure and communication has been called an 'artificial split' that should be eliminated. Even I called it that, not long ago (Hammerly, 1987b). But I now realize that while the gap might be narrowed somewhat, it can't be closed. Language involves at least four questions which, while related, must by their nature remain distinct and must therefore be addressed by distinct disciplines. The first one refers to *the what of language* (the domains of, among others, linguists, phoneticians, lexicographers, and grammarians). The second one deals with *how languages are learned* which itself requires at least a three-way split into NL acquisition, SL acquisition in the field, and SL learning that results from systematic instruction (primary concerns of psycholinguists, languists, and so forth). The third one refers to *how languages or aspects thereof should be taught* this involves a major division into NL and SL and many subdivisions into components, skills, etc (the domains of, among others, languists and educators). The fourth question has to do with *how languages are (or should be) used*, either as they are being learned or after they have been learned (a matter of special interest to sociolinguists, educators, grammarians, languists, and others). I don't think anyone is helped by collapsing these questions into one megaquestion under any one discipline. Furthermore, it is clear that linguistics *per se* may apply to the first of these questions only. (Moreover, linguistic theories must deal with that question in certain ways, and not in others, if they are going to be a useful point of reference in the debate of the other three questions by other language professionals.)

To be applicable to the unbiased discussion of questions 24 above and to facilitate research on them, linguistic theories should describe the language code (question 1) neutrally and in a clear way that is accessible to other language professionals. But matters such as how control of language is or should be developed whether through 'creativity' or some other means are outside the domain of linguistics. In other words, specialists in other language-related fields would do well not to seek from linguists anything more than a neutral metalanguage (based on a valid model) and readily intelligible descriptions of languages. From T-G linguistics they seem to be getting neither.

Instead, the effects of T-G linguistics on practical concerns have been largely negative. Let us consider first the general implications of T-G grammar. Its holism misleads people into thinking that complex codes can be acquired globally, with good results, in the classroom; but as we have seen, this is not the

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case. Its lack of interest in cross-linguistic studies misleads many in languistics into thinking that there is no need to refer to the NL in teaching an SL; thus a major instructional tool (contrastive analysis) has fallen into disuse. Its creativism works against the idea of using structures *as* they are learned, that is, of control of X before creativity with X; the poor linguistic results of communicative approaches are the consequence. Its nativism and naturalism are inimical to the need to teach SLs systematically. What T-G linguistics implies, then, is almost diametrically the opposite of the needs and goals of instruction.

Modern linguistics is also instructionally inadequate, inappropriate and counterproductive in many specific ways. Particularly harmful, from a practical standpoint, are its theoretical objections to concepts that are instructionally useful. These include the use of contrasts and distributions (e.g. the structuralist phonemic principle and the like); the primacy of speech; and the description of syntactic structures in horizontal formulas (virtually the only access to sentence structure understanding by students who are not linguists).

The effects of T-G linguistics on SL teaching and learning have been detrimental. The misleading CAN megatheory and its concomitant and linguistically ineffective communicative/interactive/'immersion' approaches are one result. The problem is that many language practitioners are too ready to accept the notion that T-G linguistics has many important and relevant things to tell them. It doesn't. Linguists are highly specialized *theorists of language*. They lack the background necessary to be able to say much that makes sense in languistics. Linguists will have useful things to tell language practitioners when their theories are close to the 'real world'. Through the early 1960s this was the case to a considerable extent; but it is not the case now and may never again be the case.

Modern linguistics is largely unconcerned with making information about language clear to the nonlinguist. Few linguists even try to put that information in terms that the language practitioner may understand. To be applicable a theory must, first of all, be intelligible to its 'end-users'. Intelligibility increases with the use of redundancy, concreteness, verbal (as opposed to symbolic) language, and, yes, taxonomies classifications are easier to 'get a handle on', manipulate, and refer to than holistic systems of ordered rules.

Those who would like to use linguistic information should be given that information intelligibly so that they can judge the validity of its specifics for themselves. The information should not be couched in such esoteric, abstract language that language practitioners have to either ignore it or accept it blindly. Especially they shouldn't be pressured into accepting either unproven (and often 'disproof-proof') assumptions that linguistic theorists may take for granted or general implications (often unjustified extrapolations) that they may promote.

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Applicable linguistic theories would stress the primarily audio-oral nature of language and facilitate the practitioner's task of helping learners derive reading and writing skills from it. Applicable theories would also facilitate discussion of cross-linguistic matters such as contrastive analysis (e.g. as restated in Chapter 6) and SL errors. But the detrimental effect of T-G linguistics has been so strong in this area that the few linguists who now compare languages do so to try to find linguistic universals, not for instructional purposes.

Linguists who wish to make their theories applicable should also remember that language teachers need to make decisions about matters such as the step-by-step instructional ordering or sequencing of elements, rules, components, and skills. Language teachers also need to be able to deal with any point in temporary isolation from other points. Linguistic theories that deal with language structure as a nearly indivisible whole or in a particular sequence that must be accepted for all purposes are not helpful. Applicable linguistic theories would allow both the integrated and the separate treatment of all rules and elements. They would do this in more than one direction ideally in any direction from any point in the language, the way the brain seems to work. Often practitioners find it advantageous to use partial, selective descriptions without reference to a global, comprehensive grammar; but in this they have not had much help from linguistics in a long time.

Applicable theories of language would facilitate the *how* of instruction by reinstating the useful concept of contrasts and distributions, by providing languists and language teachers with enough information to develop 'rules of thumb', and by stating rules in such a way that they become suitable for teaching purposes. Learners need to be aware of contrasts and distributions. To learn anything successfully, they must know what is the same, what is different, the nature and extent of the differences if any, and the distributional rules that govern choices at any particular point. Generative rules do not help with these aspects of learning.

While a complete, precise sequence of ordered rules that leaves no exception unexplained is desirable in a 'scientific' grammar, language practitioners find that a rule that applies 95 or even only 80% of the time is useful. (Of course, they must tell learners that there are exceptions and they must account for them.) Applicable linguistic theories would also offer such generalizations and systematic subrules for the exceptions.

The practical necessity to forgo 100% descriptive precision applies also to basic linguistic concepts: an exception or two especially if it can be explained satisfactorily is not enough to destroy a theory or discredit and discard a concept. An example of this is the structuralist, contrastive concept of the phoneme, which is instructionally very useful even if it isn't 100% accurate. For instance,

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ERL and ELL students can benefit greatly from an autonomous phonemic approach even if North American English /t/ and /d/ are wicked enough to neutralize into a flap in certain contexts. If something is useful, it is useful regardless of theoretical considerations. (The abstract rules and atomistic distinctive features of generative phonology, on the other hand, are virtually useless to SL learners.)

Linguistic theories cannot apply well to instruction as long as linguists reject the idea that rules can be taught and learned, that once rules come to control linguistic behavior unconsciously they are in effect 'linguistic habits'. The reality of the latter has been greatly distorted or completely denied by T-G grammarians. By *linguistic habits* I mean structured linguistic behaviors which through meaningful practice have become unconsciously governed. This practice may consist, as in NL acquisition, in the largely unconscious, message-conveying use of the rules or, as in effective SL programs, in the graded, meaningful presentation of samples, manipulation, and *then* communicative use of each rule. To be useful to language teachers, linguistic rules must be amenable to instruction particularly to intelligent (or cognitively based) conditioning.

In conclusion, languists and language teachers need grammars that can serve as tools of instruction, grammars that can be applied to the step-by-step, bottom-up mastery of language learning tasks not grammars that deal with a language as something that is acquired and used globally, top-down, and unconsciously. Since modern linguists are not interested in language instruction, it is not surprising that they haven't produced pedagogically useful grammars.

As language practitioners we need therefore to develop languistic grammars that meet our specific needs. In developing such grammars, we should not feel constrained in any way by linguistic theorists and their grammars, which have been designed with very different purposes from our own. In the meantime (until languistic grammars or applicable linguistic grammars are developed), language teachers must go on teaching. I suggest they pick and choose whatever *they* consider valid and applicable from any linguistic theory and from nonlinguistic sources and forget the rest, taking into account such factors as what their students know or think they know.

In linguistics the best we can hope to manage at this time is a significantly modified traditional grammar. While the generally established terminology would be retained, it would be adapted and supplemented to describe spoken language and to define most terms on the basis of form and function rather than just meaning. Too, some phonetic/phonemic concepts and terms would definitely have to be introduced. Other desirable elements of a languistic grammar are: a limited number of basic sentence type descriptions;

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the incorporation of instructional principles (selection, gradation, etc); and a descriptive rather than prescriptive approach.

Ever since it started as novel and creative brain waves in the mind of Noam Chomsky, 'modern linguistics' has gone higher and higher into the rarefied atmosphere until it is now out of this world. The fact that linguistics has become largely irrelevant to practical pursuits is regrettable; however, glossing it over or worse yet, continuing to be in awe of linguistics won't change the situation.

To be fair, Chomsky acknowledged in 1966 that modern linguistic theory did not have much to say to foreign language teachers (Chomsky, 1966). In the two and a half decades since then, linguistic theory has become, if anything, more esoteric and less applicable.

Until someone develops an *applicable* theory of language, we language practitioners and other language professionals are better off doing our work free from the assumptions and 'implications' modern linguistics has to offer.

Note to Chapter 15

1 The use of 'transformation drills or exercises' in language teaching syntactic exercises in which real sentences are manipulated preceded Chomsky and his 'transformation rules' by decades if not centuries.

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16
The Broader Meaning of the CAN/SLACC/I/'I' Experience:
Conclusions

The CAN megatheory dominant in our field and its SLACCommunicative/Interactive/'Immersion' approach which, as we have seen, is politically a success but linguistically a failure have a much broader meaning than a languistic one. They are part of larger trends affecting all of education and, consequently, society as a whole.

Fads and trends have always strongly affected education, probably more so than any other field of study, research and action. Instead of steadily building up knowledge in theory and practice, instead of establishing effective, principled eclectic instructional programs, educators follow one trend after another. But where would our health be, for example, if physicians followed trends as mindlessly as educators? Of course, disciplines other than education have their own trends too, but they are far less pronounced.

We can say that there are two major theories of instruction. One deals with learning *holistically* (globally), top-down (from general to specific) or even nondirectionally, and largely unconsciously, the other *systematically*, in a bottom-up, step-by-step interactive sequence, and as consciously as the cognitive development of the learner may allow. The former theory relies on meaningful exposure and excludes mechanical practice; the latter makes mechanical (and usually meaningful) practice the first step toward nonmechanical, meaningful but accurate use.

These two theories have existed in one form or another for a long time, but holism has become increasingly dominant since the late 1960s. Ironically, now that technology has finally made it possible to guide individual learners step by step in as much detail as they may need, educators are promoting approaches based on the holistic, largely unguided, unconscious acquisition of knowledge.

Holism emphasizes, and encourages learners to use from the start, the terminal behavior hoped for. This ignores the fact that students can perform

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complex terminal behaviors much better if they first master the simpler, cumulative learnings that underlie those behaviors. From 'acquiring' French while largely ignoring its structure to learning to read (or trying to) the 'whole language' way while largely ignoring the alphabetic principle, holism produces and cannot but produce poor results, as many things that should be learned fail to come under control. (Of course, the ablest students manage to learn with or despite any method. It is the results with average and below-average students that show how good a method is.)

After thousands of hours of exposure to an SL under the holistic CAN megatheory, students still haven't mastered certain basic structures that students in systematic programs learn to control in a few hours. After many years of communicative interaction, students come out speaking rapid 'tourist Spanish', Tarzan-like English, and so on hardly valid educational goals.

Of course, those who are not familiar with successful systematic SL teaching consider communicationism or 'immersion' an improvement and in an insidiously attractive way it *is* an improvement of sorts over poorly thought out systematic methods like the grammar-translation method. Systematicity does not, by itself, guarantee successful learning. Under the grammar-translation method, delaying speaking until the advanced level causes students to accumulate 'nonmasteries', even if largely subvocal. When students in traditional programs are finally encouraged to talk, they produce Frenglish, Spanglish, and so forth just like their communicative approach counterparts. But who says the choice must be between a poor systematic approach and a linguistically unsystematic one?

What I have proposed in this book is *not* a step back toward a poor systematic method like grammar-translation, but a step forward beyond the evident failures of communicationism, toward *a new synthesis* of the best established and new ideas within a theory of systematic instruction. It includes several new ideas, not for novelty's sake but because they are sound ideas (if I may say so myself) that contribute to the attainment of specific objectives. And it restores basic principles of teaching and learning selection, gradation, and so on that educators have lost sight of in the holistic obsession of the last two decades.

I have already described the Two-Cone Model (in Chapter 3) and the Cumulative Mastery Method (CMM). The CMM's reliance on (semi-)intensive, systematic, audio-oral, cross-linguistic instruction needs not be re-explained. Many of the components of the CMM have already been tried, with considerable success, at a few institutions. For many years I used most of the components of the CMM very successfully to teach Spanish to speakers of English. Evidence of its excellent results comes from both interviews and standardized tests (see Appendix A for the latter).

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A cone model two cones, as shown, for SL learning can be used to represent the systematic teaching and learning of most (perhaps all) subjects in the curriculum. Cumulative mastery, too, can be applied to each subject of study. The value of careful, principled eclecticism is recognized by many excellent teachers maybe we should be sending new teachers off into the classroom with what brides are supposed to wear: 'something old, something new . . .'.

Another trend that emerged in the 1960s and that, fortunately, has weakened is *nativism*. The innate 'language acquisition device' (LAD) is another one of Chomsky's disproof-proof speculations that cannot stand the tests of either reason or time. NL acquisition is a once-in-a-lifetime unconscious language experience that cannot be reproduced under vastly different conditions later in life. This is certainly the case with learning an SL in the classroom, with developing literacy in the NL, and so forth.

Naturalism is still another trend of the 1960s that we should leave behind, at least as far as classroom instruction is concerned. It is based on the general belief in our society that 'things that are *natural* are right'. This may be true in many respects, but the classroom is not a natural learning environment definitely not for SLs. Furthermore, the only 'natural' way to acquire an SL being surrounded by, and interacting freely with, native speakers is not the best way to learn it, after reaching the age of linguistic adulthood, at least not initially.

Since the classroom is not a natural environment (for SLs *or* other subjects), 'naturalness' or 'authenticity' is not a valid criterion for accepting or rejecting classroom approaches, methods, procedures, or materials, especially in the early levels. Some things must be *taught*, whether formally in the classroom or informally through parental or peer tutoring. For example, rarely does a child learn to read 'naturally' some instructional focus is necessary. The only thing SL learners can develop 'naturally' in the classroom is faulty terminal pidgins like Spanglish, Frenglish, etc, and they have, by the millions.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the educational establishment would promote *functionalism* (as 'insurance' against the failures their trends have caused?). According to functionalism, it doesn't matter whether a student can read well, but whether he or she can 'function', that is, understand road signs, simple directions, and so forth. Can high school graduates fill out applications and write simple letters? Then they are 'functional'. Can SL learners communicate their ideas, albeit with frequent errors of the most basic kind? Then they are 'functional bilinguals'.

By stressing function at the expense of form, by accepting mediocrity instead of aiming at excellence, educators show a lack of respect for the learner.

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Most learners want to learn things well, not just squeak by. When becoming 'functional' is declared to be the objective of the program, the message students get from their teachers is that their potential is limited and that they need not aim very high. This then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The pursuit of excellence is abandoned. This is the opposite of 'empowering' learners. In linguistics, functionalism panders to the philosophy of immediate gratification, for it is certainly more 'fun' to communicate emotions and ideas freely than to take the time to master the structures needed to do it in linguistically accurate ways.

Holistic, communicative, functional approaches to SL learning fail to respect not only the learners but also native speakers of the target languages. Spanglish and Frenglish, for example, are painful to the ears of native speakers of Spanish and French. Acceptance of such classroom pidgins by our society constitutes a new version of *anglophonic linguistic imperialism*. The old version, you will recall, went like this: 'If I speak English slow enough and loud enough, foreigners should understand me'. The new version seems to run as follows: 'I can speak Spanish/French/etc. any way I want to, and foreigners should not only understand me but appreciate it'. When will English speakers accept that in order to communicate successfully with the rest of the world we must respect them enough to make the effort to learn their languages *well*?

A general educational trend which has also been very strong in the last two decades is *student-centeredness*, as opposed to teacher-centeredness. I think this is a false dichotomy. Good education requires the teacher to guide each student carefully into becoming gradually more and more capable of making informed, autonomous decisions. But helping an emotionally and cognitively immature child become a confident, wisely self-directed young man or woman is a process that takes many years. Student-centeredness does not even serve the needs of older students, most of whom don't seem to do very well as directors of their own learning. (Of course, at all ages instruction should be *student-sensitive*, but this is very different from student-centered.)

We need education that is teacher-directed, student-sensitive, subject-oriented, standards-centered and excellence-aimed. Take the example of literacy. Alphabetic languages have a certain graphic/oral code whose characteristics largely determine the decoding process. Not explicitly teaching children the code and expecting them to holistically guess their way to literacy makes little sense; moreover, it may largely account for the millions who are not becoming literate at all not even 'functionally'! Another example: one cannot 'invent' one's way to spelling a language is spelled in a given way. The third example is SL learning. Although there are dialectal variations, speakers of French, English or Spanish speak in a certain way. Learning to speak an SL is not therefore a matter of students 'creating' the language but

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of learning to speak the way native speakers do. We can't encourage students to create their own codes and expect these codes to approximate the real ones. In all of these matters there are standards (with some variation), and excellence consists in meeting those standards as one makes free, creative use of what one has learned of the codes.

Talk of standards of excellence or of systematic, teacher-directed practice leading to mastery raises in the minds of some educational leaders the specter of authoritarianism. A democratic educational system, they stress, should be anti-authoritarian. Authoritarianism restricts freedom of expression, impedes self-discovery and self-development, and can lead to narrow mindedness and even blind obedience. They are right, of course; and yet, while an authoritarian mind-set can be very destructive, the other extreme is not constructive either.

In education, as in much of life, one needs to strike the right balance between freedom and discipline, liberty and order, self-indulgence and responsibility, the individual and society, and, specifically, student-centered learning and teacher-directed instruction. But in the last two or three decades the emphasis has shifted so much toward the first element of the above pairs that the second has been almost lost sight of.

Three brief points about the otherwise valid concern over authoritarian education. First, it is curious that educational reformers should have attacked North American education as authoritarian, when by comparison to any other it is the most permissive educational system in the world. Second, other educational systems from mildly to strongly authoritarian are producing far better academic results. Of course, we don't just want good academic results, but we do want them. Depriving schools and teachers of the degree of authority they need to maintain an orderly environment where successful learning may take place is indefensible. The third point is that authority (decision-making power) must reside *somewhere*. If educational authority does not reside in society teachers and parents then where should it reside? In children who lack the emotional or cognitive level of development that wise decision-making demands?

Of course parents and teachers should encourage children to discover their own interests and to make more and more decisions (even allowing them to make some erroneous ones), so that they may grow cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Only thus can children become well-rounded persons and useful citizens. But even under the best conditions, the move from dependent child in need of adult guidance to independent young adult who can direct his or her own course takes many years.

Through education chickadee eggs can become flying eagles, but this metamorphosis requires guidance and time; except for rare cases, it isn't a process

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that just happens undirected. To expect children to decide what to learn and how to learn it long before they are ready to make such choices ensures educational anarchy and collapse. Close guidance of children by adults is essential to the survival of democratic societies. Adults should not be authoritarian, but neither should they forgo the proper exercise of authority.

As we have seen, certain recent educational trends have been counterproductive. It isn't clear how trends develop; they seem to follow the same path that turns rumors into myths. One or a few persons express an apparent new truth, and the great majority follow. Once educators in any field adopt, promote, and institutionalize a theory, they become impervious to the most convincing evidence that the theory is incorrect and that its teaching applications are unsuccessful. They perpetuate wishful thinking, defending their intellectual investments even when their yield is negative. This is true even in the fields of literacy and SLs, where the failure of the favored theory and methods is staring everyone in the face.

Trends could be countered with research if researchers weren't themselves part of the trends, if they didn't set the research agenda so as to exclude crucial questions. As I have stressed in previous publications and in this book, *the* research question in languistics is how we can produce SL program graduates who are both accurate and reasonably fluent. Certainly SLACC/I/'I' is not the way to do it. I have suggested a better way, but of course it should be tested through unbiased research (if that is possible), as I suggest in Appendix B. In the meantime, the few facts that have escaped when communicationists didn't hold the lid tight enough are sufficient to show that the CAN megatheory is incorrect and the communicative approach is linguistically ineffective. As John Adams put it, 'Facts are stubborn things' stubborn enough, I believe, to outlast any popular trend.

Teaching, like medicine, is an applied multidisciplinary field; but, unlike medicine, there is in the teaching profession no movement to establish a code of ethics. The rise of the CAN megatheory even though it is incorrect, and the institutionalization of the SLACC/I/'I' approach despite evidence that it doesn't work well have strong ethical implications.

If there is something called *educational ethics*, it places the long-term welfare of the students ahead of that of theorists, teachers, etc. This involves more than being receptive to students' needs and ideas. Ethical educators won't encourage students to follow the 'easy' way whether it is easy for the students or for the teachers themselves because they realize that usually the easy way is not the best way. Educational ethics requires aiming at excellence, being firm and reasonably demanding with students, expecting them to work (including homework) and, yes, master what they are studying. An ethical teaching pro-

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fession should do what is right rather than what popular opinion prefers, especially when the latter is mistaken. Ethics requires that educational researchers 'tell it like it is' instead of obfuscating or embellishing the facts in support of some trendy theory, whether someone else's or their own. Ethical educators are willing to risk the professional and personal consequences of going against the prevailing current.

Education should enable learners to think, to discover themselves and the world, and to develop the ability and a desire for life-long learning that meets individual needs especially the universal human needs for meaning and truth. But education should also help socialize learners, acculturate them, and train them for useful work that calls on the best in them. These two sets of goals are different the first are individual, the second social. There are social *and* individual meanings, values, needs, and goals. But these two types of goals are not mutually exclusive. If balance is maintained (or, rather, restored) in education, I believe they can all be attained.

Perhaps the most important implication of the CAN/SLACC/I/'I' experience is that it represents, in one field, what can happen in any field when balance is lost. Ideas that may be valid and may yield better results than current ideas drown in the tide. The tide of holistic, nativistic, naturalistic, functionalistic, student-centered, authority-relinquishing, mediocrity-accepting education has been so strong that millions of children have mislearned SLs, have not learned to read their own language well and have, more generally, graduated from school without much knowledge or even the basic skills simple jobs require.

I would like to end this book on a personal note. Since the age of ten I have looked up to 'Norteamérica' as a democratic ideal, as the place of equal opportunity where one didn't need to 'know someone' to get ahead, where a good education was the key to personal fulfillment and a useful, satisfying life. This was the dream of much of the world. It still is.

I realize that criticism by the foreign-born is unwelcome and yet, sometimes the foreign-born are in the best position to compare different places and different times. It has been sad for me to witness, from within, how the North American reality has deteriorated. I am not being nostalgic. In education as in much else there has been very real deterioration.

Has North American civilization deteriorated so much that excellence (and all the work it involves) is no longer even a thinkable option? Are fundamental values ethical, moral, Judeo-Christian, or what-have-you so 'irrelevant' that they no longer apply at all?

Describing what *is* may be good science, but bringing about what *should be* involves decisions based on the moral values of a society. Should present trends

continue much longer, it may be too late to reverse their effects, on education as on other aspects of society.

I remain, however, optimistic enough to hope that clear realization of the situation and how it came about in languistics, in education in general, and in society as a whole will result in a reaction for the better.

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Appendix A
Results of Standardized Tests

I tried many of the components of the Cumulative Mastery Method in the teaching of Spanish to speakers of English, first for one year at Ohio State University and then for many years at Simon Fraser University (SFU). In order to estimate the degree of effectiveness of these procedures, I often interviewed students. I also administered standardized tests of the four intralingual skills, on and off, to several groups of students from fall 1969 through summer 1977. These groups were not selected in any way but were given this test whenever I had time to administer it.

The test I used was the (US) Modern Language Association/Cooperative Spanish test. It measures listening comprehension, speaking ability, reading comprehension, and writing ability. It is available for two levels with two forms each, LA or LB for after one year (two semesters) and MA or MB for after two years (four semesters) of instruction. Almost all of the questions in the listening and reading sections are contextualized rather than just concerned with discrete points. They use the multiple-choice format. The writing section requires many discrete answers but also has a semi-free writing task. Scoring of the speaking section is more subjective, but the test makers give adequate guidance to evaluate student performance.

Figure 11 shows that, after two 13-week semesters (104130 hours of instruction), the average scores of SFU students on Form LA of the test surpassed by far those of the test norm population, which was drawn from many programs and tested after completing two longer semesters (96160 hours of instruction).

Figure 12 (which uses the same key as Figure 11) shows the results on Form MA of the test. After only *three* 13-week semesters (156182 hours of instruction), SFU students' average scores were vastly superior to the test norm population which had completed *four* longer semesters of Spanish (192256 hours of instruction).

Most of the SFU classes were taught by native-speaking assistants who were given a little training but had no university degrees or teaching credentials. These outstanding results stand as a testimony to their efforts and to the effectiveness of the Cumulative Mastery Method.

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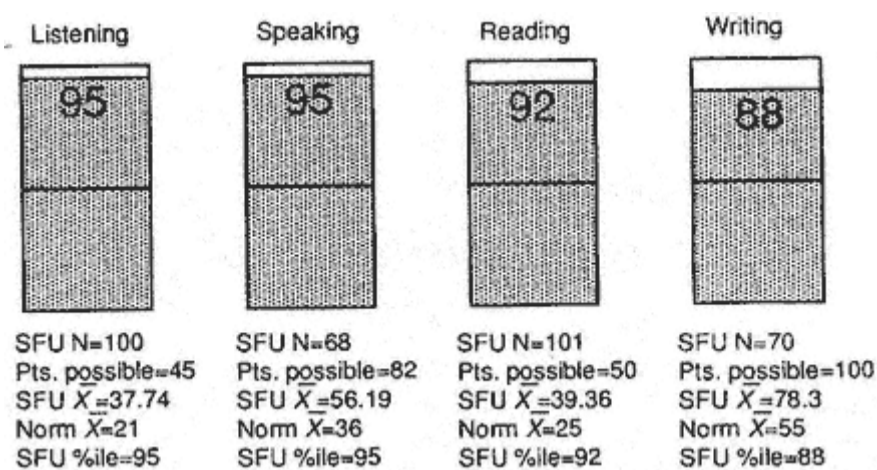
Figure 11

Key

N=Number of students Key

$\overline{X}$=Mean (average) score

%ile=Percentile, i.e., percent of individual norm - population scores matched or surpassed by the SFU average score

Figure 12

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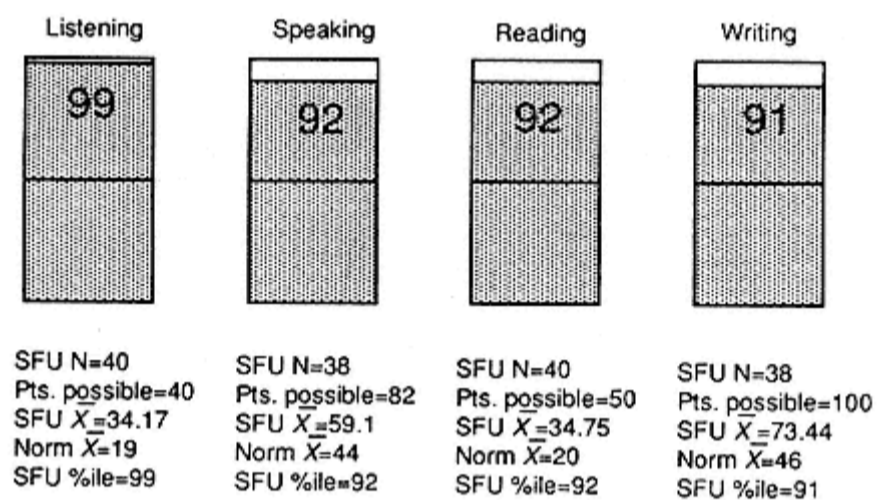
Appendix B
A Plea for (Unbiased) Research on SL Teaching

Much of the research on language learning of the last 15 years or so has been on natural language acquisition rather than on the outcomes of systematic classroom instruction. There seem to be three main, converging reasons for this. One is the generativist-cognitivist revolution in linguistics and psychology, whose paradigm is rationalistic rather than empirically oriented. This is another way in which 'implications' of 'modern linguistics' have been detrimental to our profession. Obviously if we are going to find out what works and what doesn't in SL teaching we must be empirical about it.

Another reason is the strong educational trend away from interest in teaching and toward student-centered learning. Since leading educators do not accord teaching the greatest importance, naturally it does not receive much emphasis in research.

The third reason is the attitude, unwarranted though it is, that 'methods don't make a difference', which was prompted by the mixed results of several methodological comparisons. I am referring in particular to the unjustified conclusions drawn from the studies by Scherer and Wertheimer (1964) and Smith (1970). (There haven't been any major methodological comparisons in North America since then.)

Scherer and Wertheimer's experiment with German at the University of Colorado has been widely referred to as 'a two-year experiment' that showed 'little difference' between the two groups. It was in fact a one-year experiment, since in the second year all students were taught the same way. And at the end of the one year of distinct treatment there *were* marked differences (cf. Scherer and Wertheimer, 1969: 17483) between the two groups. These differences strongly favored the 'audiolingual' students in listening comprehension and speaking ability and the 'traditional' students, though not so strongly, in reading comprehension and writing ability.

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The superiority of the experimental students in spoken German was shown despite the fact that Scherer used the inefficient monolingual ('direct') version of the audiolingual method. If he had used a more efficient *bilingual* oral method, the experimental classes could have made much more progress and could have done much better on tests involving translation.

The most important general conclusion that can be drawn from this one-year experiment is that students will learn mostly what is emphasized in our teaching (and testing). Thus methods do make a difference. So if we wish our students to learn primarily A and B, we would do well to orient our teaching towards A and B. And not of course just for one year but for several years (which was not possible in this study).

The Pennsylvania Project reported on by Philip D. Smith, Jr (1970) caused disappointment bordering on consternation among audiolingualists; but the main thing it showed is how methods should *not* be compared. Among its serious shortcomings are the following:

(1) The methods weren't clearly defined. (Methods should not be compared unless their differences are clearly understood and agreed upon.)

(2) Audiolingual teachers did not receive adequate training. Their training (or retraining) amounted to a total of only 19 hours, including six hours on the use of laboratories.

(3) A good number of teachers were placed in audiolingual classes against their preferences.

(4) Observers knew what method they were observing.

(5) Teachers did not adhere to their assigned method. The spoken language was used less than planned in many audiolingual classes; many 'cognitive' (traditional) method teachers used the spoken language much more than expected.

(6) Language laboratories were used inconsistently and rather unwisely.

(7) All students were given tests that required a large passive vocabulary even though only the traditional method offered it.

The main conclusion one can draw from the Pennsylvania Project is that, in the absence of rigorous planning and controls, it is better not even to attempt empirical research. This was not, of course, an experiment in the strict sense but a study of how methods were faring out there under real-world conditions. The problem is that these conditions were favorable to the traditional method and unfavorable to the audiolingual method.

I don't want to defend audiolingual teaching as practiced in American schools by the mid- and late 1960s because it *had* been distorted into an unenlightened, largely mechanical method. But I think experimental comparisons

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should offer each method the conditions it requires for success, not unfavorable conditions, whether or not such conditions are prevalent in school systems.

For all these reasons, I think research on SL teaching should be conducted under careful controls at research centers and should focus on what can and could be done, not on how things are actually being done in schools which may be very poorly. Furthermore, a condition for the employment of researchers in such centers would be a commitment to scientific objectivity no *parti pris*, no vested interests of any kind. Biased research is misleading indeed, worse than no research at all.

Research is more likely to be unbiased if it is based on an integrated *linguistic* theory that attempts to take all factors in SL teaching and learning into account, rather than on theories and implications from other disciplines. (My book *An Integrated Theory* [1985] represents such an attempt.)

Research on SL teaching at special centers should consist of numerous *small-scope* studies (i.e. testing one or two hypotheses) before any *large-scope* studies (e.g. overall comparisons of methods) are conducted all of this on a *small scale* (e.g. two or three classes). Only after that, if need be, should *large-scale* studies (i.e. many classes in many schools) be conducted if at all, for they seem to be inherently uncontrollable.

As noted in the main text, research on SL teaching should be based on remote-SL learning situations, in which input and communicative interaction are amenable to control or at least observation. Because local-SL conditions such as ESL (ELL) are difficult to control, conclusions from such research are unreliable.

A careful, systematic program of unbiased research in remote-SL teaching situations would greatly help the field of languistics by providing reliable answers to many of our questions.

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Note: The following abbreviations are used in the index: CAN approach = communicative acquisitionist naturalistic approach; EFL = English as a foreign language; ESL = English as a second language; NL = native language; SL = second language; SLA = second language acquisition; SLACC/I - second-language-acquisition-through-classroom-communication/interaction

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