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From the Editor

When this issue comes out, MEXTESOL will be celebrating its 25th Annual National Convention in Guadalajara. For a quarter of a century, MEXTESOL has been supporting the classroom EFL teacher with national conventions that have been held throughout Mexico. With this issue, the *MEXTESOL Journal* thanks all the people, throughout the years, who have helped make our organization what it is today and who will continue to support it for the next twenty five years.

We begin this issue with an article from a writer who has supported MEXTESOL from afar for many years. Marianne Celce-Murcia, a plenary speaker at the Guadalajara Convention, has sent us an article (*How Discourse Helps Us Understand Grammar More Fully: The Past Perfect*) dealing with the importance of teaching grammar at a discourse level, not just on a sentence level. She uses the difficult-to-explain *past perfect* tense to exemplify her thesis.

In our second article, Andrew Littlejohn, who has also been participating with us from afar, offers us an article (*Language Teaching for the Future*) which is based on the plenary he gave at the MEXTESOL Convention in Veracruz last year. In this article, he looks towards the future and gives his opinion on where language teaching will go in the next millennium.

Again, our supporters in Venezuela make their appearance with an interesting review article on the teaching of literature in the classroom (*The Role of Literature in the Teaching of Foreign Languages*). This article includes some useful suggestions for using literature in your classroom, based on the author's experiences in Venezuela.

For those of you who are interested in what students' really want to improve in their pronunciation should read the article, *Adult Learners' Pronunciation at the End of a Communicative English Program: A Needs Analysis*, by Maria Eugenia Correa Breña. The author did research to find out if learners from a communicative English program "have intelligible pronunciation, speak with a foreign accent and want to reduce their accent,

... to investigate whether experts ... are justified in their conclusion that pronunciation should focus on intelligibility rather than on accent reduction.” (p. 42)

Our next article, *Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses Yearning to Speak English: The English Only Debate in the United States*, by Kimberly W. Daniel is quite timely. In this article, the author examines recent events affecting non-native English speakers in the United States and also probes the possible causes of the current *English-only* debate.

In our final article, *Back to the Basics*, Kristine Karsteadt offers us a set of tips for both teachers and students to help them find their way back to the basics we might have forgotten in the complex world we live and teach in today.

Finally, we have a rather long book review which, besides reviewing a book, asks an absorbing question.

The Editor

Editorial Policy

The MEXTESOL Journal is dedicated to the classroom teacher in Mexico. Articles and book reviews related to EFL teaching in Mexico and in other similar situations throughout the world are accepted for publication. Articles can be either practical or theoretical and written in English or Spanish.

Refereed Articles: Articles are refereed by members of the Editorial Board and by other experts in a field related to that of the article. The refereeing process is not blind and, if necessary, a referee will be assigned as a mentor to guide the author through the publication process. Refereed article will have a footnote referring to the fact that the article was refereed. The MEXTESOL Journal retains the right to edit all manuscripts that are accepted for publication.

Unrefereed Articles: In order to open the publication process to more authors, unrefereed articles will also be accepted. These articles will be read and judged by the Editorial Committee and edited by our Style Editor.

Book Reviews: The Journal welcomes previously unpublished reviews of professional books, classroom texts, video- or audio-taped material, computer software and other instructional resources. Reviews are not refereed.

Submission Guidelines: Submissions are accepted by e-mail. If mailed, please include two copies of the manuscript, including all appendices, tables, graphs, references, professional affiliation and an address and telephone/fax number where you can be reached. If you fax your manuscript, be sure also to mail two copies to the *Journal* since fax service in Mexico is not always reliable. Whenever possible include the article on a 3.5" diskettes, prepared to be read with IBM or Apple compatible program, unless the article was sent by e-mail. **Please specify if you want the article to be refereed or not.**

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Manuscript Guidelines

1) Articles should be typed, double-spaced and preferably no more than twenty pages long. References should be cited in parenthesis in the text by author's name, year of publication and page numbers. (For example: "The findings were reported (Jones 1979: 23-24) although they cause no change in policy.")

2) The list of references in an article must appear at the end of the text on a separate page titled "References". Data must be complete and accurate. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of their references. This format should be followed:

For books: Jones, D. J. 1984. How to spell. New York. ABC Press.

For articles: Moore, Jane. 1991. "Why I like to Teach." *Teacher's Quarterly*. June, 6-8.

Note: A copy of these guidelines in Spanish is available on request from *The Editor*.

Si usted quiere obtener la versión de este texto en español, favor de solicitarla a *The Editor*.

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How Discourse Helps Us Understand Grammar More Fully: The Past Perfect ¹

MARIANNE CELCE-MURCIA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES ²

Introduction

Most EFL teachers still envision the teaching and learning of grammar as a sentence-level exercise or activity. This view raises both theoretical and pedagogical problems. From a theoretical perspective, if it is true that not all meanings and uses of grammatical forms can be described and explicated with reference to the sentence level, then sentence-level approaches will be incomplete and inadequate in terms of description. From a pedagogical perspective, most language teachers are now trying to get their learners to communicate rather than having them acquire linguistic knowledge for its own sake. Since we do not necessarily communicate messages through sentences but rather through utterances or texts functioning at the discourse level, many teachers feel that sentence-level rules and exercises do not transfer when their students try to communicate.

In this article I would like to use the past perfect tense as a test case. Not all uses of this tense can be explicated at the sentence level. This fact requires that we step back and consider what types of grammar learning activities we can use when grammar “rules” apply at the discourse level rather than at the sentence level. I will illustrate my discourse-level pedagogical approach, drawing heavily on descriptions presented in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, Chapters seven, nine, twenty-seven and thirty-three).

Sentence-level uses of the past perfect

Most Mexican EFL teachers probably feel that teaching the past perfect tense to their students is not a high priority. Certainly, beginners do not need it. However, for intermediate and advanced learners this tense becomes useful since it is needed to form past conditionals:

- (1) If John had arrived earlier, we could have gone to the movies.

¹ This is an invited paper.

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(2) I would have gone to the party if I had known you were coming.

Notice that such past conditionals are counterfactual, i.e., the event reported in the past perfect did not take place:

(1') John did not arrive earlier.

(2') I did not know you were coming.

This same counterfactual sense of the past perfect appears in other contexts as well—such as in clauses occurring after the verb “wish” that refer to the past:

(3) I wish I had said that.

(4) I wish you had been there.

Again, we know that these sentences are counterfactual because the events that occur after “wish” did not in fact take place:

(3') I didn't say that.

(4') You weren't there.

Occasionally, in sentences with “before” clauses, the past perfect again clearly conveys a counterfactual sense:

(5) The teacher collected the tests before I had finished mine.

(6) We left the theater before the play had ended.

We know that these “before” clauses contain counterfactual uses of the past perfect because the following paraphrases are true:

(5') I had not finished my test when the teacher collected it.

(6') The play had not ended when we left the theater.

Thus we know that the past perfect is an important resource for expressing past counterfactual meanings in English in a variety of sentence types.

Another important function of the past perfect is suggested by sentences (5) and (6) above since we often think of the past perfect—first and foremost—as a form that is used to signal the fact that one event occurred before another in real time:

(7) Before I arrived, Ann had cooked dinner.

(8) Peter had washed the car when I went to get it out of the garage.

In these sentences there is nothing counterfactual about the use of the past perfect. We know that “Ann cooked dinner” and “Peter washed the car”. What the past perfect signals here is that the event encoded with the past perfect occurred in real time prior to the event encoded with the simple past.

One other environment where we sometimes find that the past perfect is used instead of the simple past or the present perfect is in indirectly reported speech where the reporting verb (usually “say”) occurs in the past tense and influences the tense of the verb in the reported utterance to shift back in time:

(9) Mr. Jones said that he had sold his car last week.

(10) Myra said that she had just talked with Stan.

Here it is not unreasonable to reconstruct the sentences that were originally spoken as:

(9') Jones: I sold my car last week.

(10') Myra: I've just talked with Stan.

However, these sentences are different from the preceding ones in that use of the past perfect is rarely obligatory in such indirect reports. Indeed its use is quite formal and prescriptive; it would probably not occur in informal oral indirect reports. Nonetheless, when the backshifting of tense does occur in reported speech and results in use of a past perfect form, one can argue that the event in the quoted utterance marked with the past perfect tense did indeed occur before the report, i.e. the reporter's saying of it. In this sense the use of the past perfect in past indirect reports can be seen as being related to the use of the past perfect to mark a temporally prior event in the past.

Occasionally, sentences like (5) and (6) above have been cited to show that the past perfect does not always signal what occurs before something else. However, what we need to recognize is that, at the sentence-level (and we are talking about the complex sentence level here), there are three different uses of the past perfect in English (two are very different and two are related):

- (1) counterfactual past event
- priority
 - -(2) event prior to a past event
 - -(3) shifted tense in a past indirect report

Discourse Level Uses of the Past Perfect

If one were to peruse a large amount of written English discourse and identify all instances of the past perfect, many of these instances would be signaling past counterfactual events or prior past events or shifted past reports. However, some instances would also be quite different and would defy a sentence-level explanation. Consider the following two texts:

(11) “The Convocation”

The students sat in the bleachers of Pauley Pavillion, watching the faculty enter in their caps and gowns. Dignitaries continued to arrive while the band played a festive melody for the onlookers. To the cheers of the crowd, President Clinton came in and took his assigned seat on the podium...UCLA’s 75th anniversary had begun. (*UCLA Daily Bruin*, May 24, 1994)

(12) “The Case of Koko”

In the 1980’s researchers at Stanford University were trying to teach American Sign Language to Koko, a female gorilla. Koko was well cared for and was surrounded by interesting objects. Her caretakers continually exposed her to signs for the foods and toys in her environment. Koko particularly loved to eat bananas and play with kittens. One day she was hungry but couldn’t find any bananas. She went to the researcher and made a good approximation of the sign for “banana”. Koko was immediately rewarded with a banana, but even more importantly, the research team knew that Koko had made the connection between a sign and the object it represented. (author data)

What is the function of the past perfect occurring in the final sentence of both texts? It does not signal a prior event/report or a past counterfactual event. It signals a climax or an author’s coda of sorts. By using the past perfect, the writers of these past narratives are saying, somewhat dramatically, “Pay attention; this is why I am telling you this story.” Because the past perfect is a marked form (in contrast to the simple past), authors

can use it to signal some important climax, breakthrough, or discovery with respect to the past narrative they have been recounting. Even the verbs used in the past perfect in texts like these are quite limited in terms of their lexical aspect: they reinforce the significant moment when something happened: something had begun/started, a discovery/ breakthrough had been made, etc. This is not a sentence-level use of the past perfect, but a discourse-level use that can only be conveyed to learners through exposure to and engagement with appropriate authentic texts.

A Pedagogical Strategy

How might we teach something like the discourse-level use of the past perfect that the above texts illustrate? In my own ESL classes I have used texts like the two above (it would be good to use at least one more). First, I direct students to read the texts and ask me questions about any vocabulary items and structures that are unclear. Second, we discuss the literal meaning of the texts. I then ask students to work in groups to answer questions like the following about the texts:

1. *Where does the past perfect occur in these texts?*
2. *What other tense(s) occur(s)?*
3. *What is the function in the text of the sentence that contains the past perfect?*
4. *What kind of a verb takes the past perfect in such a text?*

Once the groups have come up with their explanations, we discuss them and use the best of the suggested explanations as the grammar explanation for this phenomenon.

As the final step, I ask the students to try to think of some past event they are familiar with that involves some important climax, result, or turning point that one might want to mention at the end of a narrative about the event. Ask them to write their own short narratives (in groups or individually) in the simple past but to use the past perfect for the somewhat dramatic climax.

I did in fact try this exercise with a class of advanced ESL students and many of them wrote good narratives; the best one was written by a student majoring in archeology, and I'd like to share it with you (it has been edited for minor errors):

(13) “The Rosetta Stone”

Before 1800 no one knew how to read Egyptian hieroglyphics. In 1799 archaeologists found a basalt tablet in the town of Rosetta, Egypt, which later was called the Rosetta Stone. This stone was important because it contained the same message written in Egyptian hieroglyphics, in Egyptian Demotic script, and in Greek. Because the researchers already knew how to read Demotic script and Greek, they were able to figure out the meaning of the hieroglyphics for the first time. The code had finally been cracked.

Conclusion

What has become increasingly clear to me in my ongoing study of English grammar is that we can explain only part of grammar at the sentence level (sometimes an important part as with the past perfect, sometimes very little as with articles). To fully understand any form or construction, we must also understand how it functions at the discourse level—this is true even for structures we can describe at the sentence level since teachers (and learners) still need to know in what discourse contexts such sentences normally occur. Once we change our perspective from sentence-level to discourse level, we are in a position to teach grammar both as a resource for creating discourse and as a resource for using language to communicate. Since this is what most of us are in fact trying to do, such discourse level analyses of English grammar which supplement and go beyond existing sentence-level accounts have the potential to enrich and transform the way we teach grammar and the way students learn grammar. I hope my example in point (the past perfect tense) has helped illustrate this new analytical and pedagogical perspective.

Reference

Celce-Murcia, M. and D. Larsen-Freeman with H. Williams (1999). *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher’s Course, 2nd Edition*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Language Teaching *for* the Future ¹

ANDREW LITTLEJOHN, INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON ²

The prospect, it seems, of a ‘new millennium’ has captured our imagination. In Britain, as elsewhere, there have been great discussions about how we should celebrate this historically significant event. Like the onset of a new year, however, a new millennium also marks a moment when it is appropriate to think about what we have done, where we are now and how we should plan for the future. By all accounts, we are in a period of rapid change—socially, politically, technologically, environmentally and culturally. It is likely, for example, that people who are now in their twenties, thirties or forties will experience significant changes in their working lives in the years ahead. Younger people (who may for example be around sixty in middle of the next century), will grow up into a world quite unlike the one we inhabit now. The significance of these changes has led many educationalists to call for a “futures curriculum”—that is a curriculum which actively discusses the future and prepares students for their lives ahead. In this short article, then, I want to consider what, *our* role as language teachers could be in this. That is, what it might mean to talk of “language teaching *for* the future”. My aim is to stimulate discussion—to be provocative, in fact. To do this, I will discuss two related questions:

- What will the future be like?

and from that,

- What should **we** be doing **now** to prepare our students for the future?

What Will the Future Be Like?

Predicting the future is always a hazardous business. Natural occurrences, catastrophes, sudden unexpected events all make it impossible to reliably describe what the future will be like. But we can make reasonable

¹ This article is based on a plenary given at the 1997 MEXTESOL Convention in Veracruz. It is an invited paper.

² Other articles by the author are available free of charge from the following web address, where you will also find a complete on-line A-Z of ELT methodology:
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/A_Littlejohn

predictions. The future won't just suddenly happen; the nature of the future exists in our present. It is here that history can help us. If we look back at our recent past, we can identify trends which are likely to characterise the nature of future society. Social scientists working in this area, have identified a number of aspects which they suggest will typify future 'post modern' society, as they call it ('post modern' being what comes after 'modern' times). These characteristics refer principally to the West, but with the advent of 'globalisation' they will be increasingly relevant everywhere. Some of the more significant of these are:

- *a fragmented society*—A society divided into smaller 'communities' which extend across national borders. The notion of a 'culture' (shared by all) will be replaced by 'cultures'—in which meanings, customs, habits, and references will vary considerably, even within the same geographical area.
- *decline of national governments*—'Globalisation' as a dominant feature, limiting the power and relevance of national governments. Supranational governments and businesses will exercise greater influence.
- *rapid (dis)appearance of jobs*—Technology will cause the disappearance of many types of jobs, but also the emergence of new ones. In their lifetime, individuals may expect to have ten or more different occupations. Making choices, decisions and adapting will be essential.
- *spread of 'the market'*—The force of the market (advertising, consumer products, cost/profit analysis, etc) will be evident in all spheres of life: education, health care, religion, the family, etc. Globalisation will also lead to standardisation in the market - the same products will be available everywhere for.
- *influence of electronic media*—Electronic media (television, computers, interactive video) will dominate as the principal means by which people receive information and spend their leisure time. Electronic media will far outweigh, for example, the influence that the school may have (already, estimates suggest that by the time the average student has finished high school in the USA, they have spent 11,000 hours in class, but over 22,000 in front of a television).
- *'endlessly eclectic'*—An emerging characteristic of many societies now is the manner in which the elements from very different areas

of life are combined. Images from traditional life in Africa, for example, are used to advertise fashion clothes. Individuals can decorate their homes to look like houses from hundreds of years ago. Pop stars sing and politicians speak at the funerals of royalty. At the same time, the limits on what is expected are breaking down—with the result that it is becoming increasingly difficult to be really ‘shocked’. ‘Expect anything’ is the best advice.

Each of these trends, social scientists suggest, are likely to become more evident in the years ahead. Whether they are good or bad depends, of course, upon your own individual point of view. What is clear, however, is that there are dangers. The increasing dominance of electronic media, globalisation and the dominance of multinational organisations, all pose dangers for democracy and individual freedom. Similarly, the spread of the ‘market’ may also pose dangers for the integrity of social services such as education, where economic efficiency may not always be compatible with educational goals. What this suggests, then, is that we need to be aware of what is happening so that we can make the future as we would like it to be, and not simply drift forward.

What Should we be Doing *Now* to Prepare our Students for the Future?

Language teaching practices today

The description of emerging characteristics of a future society may seem very remote from the day to day moments of language teaching. In reality, however, language teaching is a part of society as much as anything else. It is not difficult to see, therefore, signs of a ‘post modern’ society already present in contemporary practices in language teaching. A survey through published coursebooks for school-aged students, for example, can identify some significant characteristics. The following are based on my own observations which you may or may not agree with.

Language learner as consume—The content of language exercises may be centred around performing commercial transactions (e.g. ordering hamburgers and cola in a restaurant) or expressing preferences about consumer items (e.g. fashion clothes, pop music, popstars, and videos).

Fragmented, eclectic content—A ‘unit’ of materials may be composed of seemingly random content—linked together perhaps by an underlying grammatical thread. A newspaper article about a protest may be fol-

lowed by a listening passage on UFOs, which may in turn be followed by a role play to solve a murder—all intended to present examples of the Past tense. (“Expect anything!” being also suitable advice to a language student.)

Significance—Meaning has long since been important in language teaching, but beyond this there is also the matter of *significance*. On the one hand, much of the content of language teaching tasks appear to focus on what is essentially trivia. On the other hand, the true significance of something may be disregarded in the pursuit of a syllabus item. A text about the first tests of a nuclear bomb, for example,—potentially one of the most significant events in modern history—may be made the focus of classwork simply for the form it examples (“What were the journalists doing when the bomb exploded?”). Similarly, a storyline about a boy stealing cigarettes from a shop may be used to practise language forms (“What was the boy doing when the girl saw him?”) without the morality of the action being questioned.

Standardised lessons—Although teaching practices and teaching materials have become much more interesting for the learner in recent, one element in this has been the growth in standardisation of teaching practices. I say, superficially, however, because it is not the fact of globalisation that is important here, but what coursebooks and teaching qualifications may actually propose. My own view is that there is increasing tendency towards (and danger of) ‘scripting’ lessons—standard lessons and lesson formats that are reenacted all over the world. This means, for example, that students and teachers on opposite sides of the planet, in widely differing contexts, can end up working with exactly the same language, through the same standard closed tasks, producing more or less the same outcome.

A ‘futures curriculum’ in language teaching

I said earlier that I think that it is important that we are aware of how society is evolving so that we can try to make the future as we would like it to be. As an educational activity, there is thus a particular responsibility for language teaching. On the one hand, we need to think about how we can help to prepare our students for the very different demands that the future will make—the need to be able to make rapid decisions and adapt, for instance. On the other hand, we also need to look beyond the concerns of the language syllabus, and not simply drift with the flow of post-modern development. We need, for example, to think about the content and signifi-

cance of our materials, the values and attitudes we project, the kinds of ‘mental states’ we are fostering—how, indeed, we contribute to the way the people see themselves.

A futures curriculum for language teaching, then, will be based not only on what our students are likely to need but also on a vision of how we would like the future to be—how we need to guard against dangers and shape the way we wish to live. This is of course a very subjective matter which will vary from individual to individual, culture to culture, but to end this article I would like to set out six principles that I think could underpin developments in language teaching. As a set of ‘desirable’ characteristics, they may also function as a means of evaluating what we are doing now, so for each one I have added a question which we can use to review our present practices.

Some characteristics of a “futures curriculum”	Questions to evaluate present practices
<p>1 Coherence The use of themes, topics, projects to bind lessons together and provide coherence and a deeper focus and understanding.</p>	<p>Is there a coherent topic over a lesson or series of lessons?</p>
<p>2 Significant content The selection of content that is worth learning and thinking about, dealt with in appropriate ways, which does not, on the one hand trivialise significant issues or, on the other hand, make trivial things seem important. A key topic could itself be “the future” – attempting to raise students awareness of future developments and discuss their own hopes, aspirations, worries and personal action.</p>	<p>Is the content worth knowing or thinking about? Is significant content treated appropriately?</p>
<p>3 Decision-making in the classroom A structured plan for actively involving students in making decisions in the classroom, taking on more responsibility for what happens in their lessons.</p>	<p>Are students required to make decisions? How do they help to shape lessons, such that each lesson is unique?</p>

4 Use of students' intelligence

The use of types of exercises which require *thinking*, beyond memory retrieval or repetition, for examples, and involving students in hypothesising, negotiating, planning, and evaluating.

Do classroom tasks require *thought*?

5 Cultural understanding

Tasks and texts which require students to look through the eyes of others, to learn the relative nature of values, to *understand* why people in different contexts think and do different things.

Do texts and tasks promote cultural understanding?

6 Critical language awareness

To view all language use critically—that is, to look beyond the surface meaning and ask oneself questions such as “*Why* are they saying that?” “What is *not* being said?” and “Who benefits from what is being said?” We might for example ask students to think about deeper reasons for why the passive voice is used in a newspaper headline or why particular adjectives are used to describe a consumer product.

Are students asked to think about *why* language is used that way?

The Role of Literature in the Teaching of Foreign Languages ¹

LIGIA MERCEDES ALVAREZ DE ORTEGA, UNIVERSIDAD SIMÓN BOLIVAR, CARACAS, VENEZUELA²

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986) modification in language teaching methods throughout history takes into account changes in learners necessities, the goals of language study, and theoretical advances. There has been a proliferation of approaches and methods in contemporary second or foreign language teaching which reflects the wish to find better ways of teaching languages. The early 1980s witnessed a revived interest in the role of literature and a great number of recent language teaching texts, particularly those which use a communicative approach, have included literature in their contents for language study. (Jackson and Di Pietro 1992, Smalzer and Lim 1994)

This article presents the results of research into the use of literature in the EFL/ESL classroom. We will try to justify the benefits of the literature-based approach in the teaching of foreign or second languages and to sketch some activities derived from it. Included are some extracts taken from students' actual performance. Literature offers contextual, linguistic, cultural and methodological advantages in the teaching of second or foreign languages. All these benefits together lead to a communicative and motivational EFL/ESL teaching-learning process. In the following paragraphs, we will try to support each one of these benefits.

The first advantage that has been mentioned here is the fact that literature offers a context that promotes meaningful learning. When we speak about meaningful learning—learning that is real, important and interesting to students—unavoidable is mention of Ausubel (1983) and Novak (1988). They see the process of acquiring knowledge as accumulative. They state that what is going to be learned must be related to what students know. In other words, it must be related to any relevant aspect which pre-exists in the students' cognitive structure. In meaningful learning, the process of ac-

¹ This is a refereed article.

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quiring new information produces changes not only in the existing information (thesis) but in the new information as well. This supposes an interaction between pre-existing and new information (anthesis) and the result of this is learning (synthesis).

In contrast to learning by heart or senseless repetition, meaningful learning material is potentially related to the learners' cognitive baggage; that is to say, it can be included in the existing cognitive structure. Yet also, as the definition of meaningful learning implies, it is not only what is related to students' experience but also what is interesting to them which will be learned easily in an stimulating way. Meaningful learning leads to motivating, communicative and personal-responding classes.

Specifically speaking about the EFL/ESL field, Sorani and Tamponi (1992) recommend that the teaching of a second or foreign language should consist of meaningful contexts, especially those interesting to students according to their experience, knowledge of the world and interests. They also claim that the teaching of a second or foreign language should not be an isolated activity but an activity related to what students have to learn or have learned in other courses or in life to make them grow up as exceptional human beings.

When there is a good selection, literature is a rich source of meaningful context. A meaningful context is linked to the motivational aspect of literature, since it permits learners to read non-trivial material which makes them think about their own experience and give a personal response, and in that way its use is justified (Duff and Maley 1990). The use of literature in the EFL/ESL classroom is recommended, since it generates purposeful lessons and provides the basis for highly motivated small-group work (Enright and McCloskey, 1985).

The importance of literature has been stressed because literary texts are seen as potential material which provides the basis for interactive, meaningful and content-based ESL/EFL classes. In addition, literature serves as a stimulus for writing compositions. (Povey 1979; Widdowson 1983, and Spack 1985). Frequently in foreign or second languages teaching mundane topics are used and justified, but when there is a need of some change, literature can serve that purpose. Widdowson (1983) establishes the significance of an interesting context when he explains what happens in a classroom when trivial situations or mundane tasks are presented:

..Its not easy to see how learners at any level can get interested in and therefore motivated by a dialogue about buying stamps at a post office. There is no plot, there is no mystery, there are no characters; everything proceeds as if communication never creates a problem. There is no misunderstanding and there is no possibility of any kind of interaction.(Widdowson, p. 98).

Such a dialogue cannot produce any important effect in learners and of course it does not foster a desire to work with classmates in a motivating way. A text of this kind would supply a relevant point for learners, (but when they have to communicate really, they have nothing interesting to say). A trivial situation can offer students the opportunity to use the foreign language but only in a vacuum. But literary texts offer teachers and learners opportunities for escaping from everyday routine.

Hill (1989) also claims that literature offers a genuine context for communication because a story or a poem is easier to remember than a collection of unrelated items (rote learning). He points out that people analyze incoming messages in two ways: They have information connected with certain collections of sounds and symbols stored in their memory, and they have their own knowledge of the world and the context of the message from which to work (meaningful learning). When the teaching of language consists of using isolated sentences to illustrate particular points, it prevents the learners from making any analysis on the basis of context. In this way, they are unable to participate in the meaning. Not only foreign students but native speakers have difficulty remembering unrelated words and structures. If they do not have a meaningful context from which to work and to which they can relate what they learn, their communication and competence will be reduced: literary texts provide relevant materials, and necessary stimuli incite learners to speak and share ideas. In the case of a poem, there is little room for rote learning. Students do not have to learn it by heart but rather to extract the topic that it presents. Since, generally speaking, poetry discusses issues that are important to all human beings, students will have an interesting topic to talk about, and they will be involved not only intellectually but emotionally.

Literature is a non-trivial authentic material. It is non-trivial because it says something about fundamental human aspects, and it is authentic in the sense that it was not created as a classroom aid to teach a language. On the contrary it is genuine language as it is exposed to native speakers. Literature can be complementary to other authentic materials, such as advertisements, newspapers, city plans, travel timetables, forms, comics, and so

forth. (Brooks 1989, Dicker 1989, Hussein 1989, Ahellal 1990, and Ibsen 1990).

Literature offers cultural benefits. In the study of a foreign or second language, it is important to have some knowledge about the culture of that target language, so some time must be devoted to this task. Literature can be a complementary material to other ways of knowing the foreign culture such as films, radio or TV programs, magazines, newspapers, and music.

Literature gives learners the opportunity to get an understanding of the cultural values of English-speaking people, and make them see not only the differences that separate their own culture from the target one, or one target culture from another target culture but the similarities between both cultures and their own culture. About this topic, Bastrkmen (1990) states that: "...literature opens up to the learners the culture of the people whose language is being studied..." (p.18).

Literature gives linguistic advantages. The linguistic justification of the use of literature refers to literary texts as language. Pieces of literature "offer a genuine sample of a very large range of styles, registers and text-types at many levels of difficulty." (Duff and Maley 1990, p.6). For Littlewood (1986) literature offers opportunities to use language structures in reading comprehension if accompanied by grammatical analysis and explanations. Drills and exercises can provide students with needed linguistic structures. Literature may also help students expand the second language. This author also refers to literature as a vehicle for the learning of language varieties (formal and informal English, slang, etc.), and ranges of styles such as a poetic style, a conversational style for dialogues, and informative style for narrative. He also thinks that the work of a writer can lead readers to know local dialects, and illuminate the state of linguistic development. For McKay (1989) literature is also an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use and for differentiating use from usage (usage involves knowledge of linguistic rules, and use means knowing how to use these rules for effective communication).

What has been discussed so far is how literature can be beneficial in the EFL/ESL classroom, and it is necessary to stress the fact that all these benefits lead toward what Ibsen (1990) has called a creative methodology and what Duff and Maley (1990) consider is the methodological justification of the incorporation of literature in the foreign or second language

teaching. When the students become personally involved with the literary texts studied, such an involvement gives them the chance to be exposed to other viewpoints (the author's and their classmates' points of view) express their own ideas and feelings and at the same time get new and motivating classroom experiences, such as re-creating literary texts or even creating their own texts.

The aim of using literature in the EFL/ESL context should be to provide students with suitable lessons, but, as was mentioned earlier, in order to be successful, educators have to devote enough time and thought to selecting texts and methods. Specifically speaking about selection of texts, it is important to state that sometimes experimental literary works are not advisable in the EFL/ESL context due to the fact that some of these works remain obscure even for native speakers. The point related to methods is also very important, because the success of a class frequently depends on how to deal with the text in the classroom. The following part of this article concerns these topics.

Selection of texts and teaching methods

Littlewood (1986) recommends to teachers that they should be clear about what literature offers and what students require to discuss its role and select appropriate methods and texts. The factor of student interest is so important that it should be taken into account by the teacher when s/he is selecting literary texts for her or his classes. Dellinger (1989) thinks that educators need to select interesting and motivating texts for his or her students. Undoubtedly, that will stimulate students to relate what they read with their own experience or their classmates experience. The literary texts to be read should be adapted to students' interest, age and experience. If professors select a difficult and inadequate text considering his or her students' linguistic experience and prior knowledge, this text can remain obscure.

Regarding selection, it is important to comment on what Ollmann (1993) found after designing two questionnaires and presenting them to his students in order to discover what strategies they use to choose books and whether they are making successful choices. This researchers conclusion provides a basis for thinking that when students speak out, they give teachers very good ideas for making good choices for their classes.

According to McKay (1986), success in using literature depends not only upon the text linguistic level but upon its cultural level as well. We have to take into account that if it is an extremely difficult text, on a linguistic or cultural level it will probably bring few benefits. Neither would it be a good idea to use a simplified version of the text. One solution is to select texts which are relatively easy to read. Another important aspect to take into account is how to deal with the selection in the classroom. The text must be stimulating and the students must be taken into account.

Considering that sometimes it is hard to select appropriate literary texts, it seems necessary to include Bastrkmens (1990) guidelines for selection:

1. Choose texts with universal topics and themes so that students can have had personal experience of their own. This will facilitate classroom interaction.
2. Select works in an everyday setting and avoid abstract or fantasy-type literary pieces. In this way interaction will be easier and the vocabulary familiar.
3. It is better to work with contemporary texts, so that students will not have problems trying to understand archaic language.
4. Choose authors who use a simple style such as Hemingway, Frost and so forth.
5. Prefer works whose characters or themes are related to student age and interests.

Dealing with the text in the classroom

For Mackay (1986) selection is only one step. The following one shows how to use the text in the classroom. She differentiates between efferent and aesthetic reading. Following Rosenblatt's tradition (1978), she defines efferent reading "as reading in which the reader is concerned with what he will carry away from the text" (p.195). Or in other words, the usefulness of it. In aesthetic reading "the readers primary concern is with what happens during the actual reading"(p.158). Or as Rosenblatt herself points out: "in aesthetic reading, the readers' attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with the particular text" (p. 25).

Mackay concludes by saying that classroom approaches to efferent and aesthetic reading must be different. In this sense, the text can be used

to get to know the author's ideas, and how the language he is using functions. But it is also necessary to have students think in advance about the possibilities that they can find in the text, and to take into consideration their own experience in order to approach the text.

In what follows, a selection of activities from published sources are summarized, and some new activities are suggested.

Activities

Pre-Reading Activities.

Skills involved: writing and speaking.

Level: high intermediate or advanced learners

Objectives:

1. Contextual benefits:

To activate previous knowledge (aesthetic reading or reading which takes into account interaction between reader and text)

To make students reflect before they read (aesthetic reading)

To have students create meaning in advance

To avoid misunderstanding of the text to be read.

2. Linguistic benefit:

To attack difficult words.

The learners background knowledge with respect to the topic the reading selection discusses is crucial in text comprehension. Writing and discussion are not necessary follow-up activities; they can be carried out before reading the literary texts. Knutson (1997) points out that discussion and writing tasks can elicit students personal views or previous readings on a topic, or other expectations regarding a text content. Prior to reading, students can articulate their expectations as to what aspects will be illuminated and what perspective the text will reflect. Discussion before reading provides focus, which creates interest in the text. As preparation, the teacher may ask a question and have students debate it. Each student writes a short composition which represents his or her point of view. Afterwards, students compare their written productions and discuss the various compositions orally in order to obtain a focal point of reading that will follow.

Another pre-reading activity can be providing students with the title of the text to be read and or some key words which summarize the main idea of the literary work. When presenting the poem that the American

writer Maya Angelou wrote and read in the inauguration of president Clinton “In the Pulse of the Morning”, the author of this work decided to ask students what the title and some key words suggested to them before giving them the poem. Some students said that the poem would be about a “new beginning”, “another opportunity”, “union among different people”, “sun-rising”, “hope”, “learning from mistakes”, and so forth. After having access to the text, students felt that their predictions were close to what the poet tried to express. Additionally, they realized that there were more ideas that could be developed when they actually read the literary piece.

At the beginning level, previewing is very useful in order to make students guess meanings of unfamiliar words. If the teacher knows that students will meet some difficult words, s/he should work with those words in advance. In that case students will not have any vocabulary problems when reading the text. For instance, giving them an exercise sheet where they have to match words from the text with their corresponding synonym using an English-English dictionary is an advisable pre-reading activity.

Reading/Discussing Activities

Skills involved: all

Objectives:

1. Contextual benefits:

To introduce literary texts in class

To have students interact with their classmates sharing their points of view.

2. Linguistic benefit:

To have students exposed to silent and oral English

Smith and Johnson (1994) propose the following six basic activities for implementing literature in content studies:

- *Paired reading and discussions.* Two students of different reading levels read, question, review and share insights to assist one another.
- *Kaleidoscope reading.* Students read different portions of a text and share with the group what they have read.
- *Taping the text.* The teacher provides an audio copy of a text for the students to listen to as they read. (The author of this work taped the poem “In the Pulse of the Morning” to her class read by its own au-

thor due to the fact that *English Teaching Forum* gave its readers the disc as a present in the July 1995 issue.)

- *Guided reading.* The teacher reads some passages of the reading selection and gives students the opportunity to talk, silently read and think their way through the text.
- *Literary circles.* Students read and discuss a passage of a literary text in small groups.
- *Large group discussion.* The total learning community exchanges ideas, insights, questions and answers.

Reading, writing and speaking

Level: High intermediate or advanced learners.

Objectives:

1. Contextual benefits:

To have learners involved in the literary text.

2. Linguistic aspects:

To write letters.

To have students exposed to an informal register

3. Cultural benefits:

To have students exposed to a different culture.

The epistolary *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker can be used to fulfil the three objectives. After having discussed the novel in class, as a follow-up creative activity, students can write a letter to the main character of the narrative, telling her what they feel and think about her situation and even advising her what to do. In this way the students will be involved in the literary world presented and at the same time they will produce written language. The author of this article asked her students to write a letter to Celie, the main character of the novel who usually writes letter to God. The most surprising letter was the following one :

Dear Celie:

I have received and read all your letters but I hadn't had time to reply to them. I have been very busy trying to solve all my children's problems. Finally, this is your turn. I know that your life has been very difficult. Please, take your problems as they are just as high walls that you have to climb. I am sure that you are able to overcome difficult times. If you feel weak, then think of your dear sister who had found her way. She has discovered that to serve others makes sense. Try to search for a reason to live and you will see that things will be better.

Sincerely,

God

Additionally, *The Color Purple* has good examples of informal English, or Black American English to be more specific. In this way students will be exposed to these registers and learn when and by whom they are used. As an exercise, students can be asked to find out the standard English equivalent of the black American English expression. Black American Culture seems to be different from other cultures, since it has its own features, but in spite of its differences, there will always be similarities among cultures. For instance, in many countries of Latin America there is a mix. However, there are places within some of these countries where only people with African ancestors live. In this specific case, it would be interesting for students to compare African community of their country with that of African American people.

Activities with stories.

Skills involved: all

Level: Initial intermediate

Activity: Reconstructing the story (Adapted from Harwood 1990).

Objectives:

1. Linguistic aspect:

To practice the four skills of language

2. Contextual aspect:

To have students think about the differences between quality and quantity.

Preparation: the teacher selects a short story that students do not know.

The one selected for this activity is the following Aesop's fable:

A female fox treated with scorn a lioness because she never bore more than one young lion. Only one, the lioness replied, but a lion.

Fables are short, simple stories with animals as characters designed to teach a moral truth. They really refer to human beings and say something about human issues whose relevance endures with the passing of years.

This Aesop's fable is so short that students may take it for granted, so it would be useful if the teacher explores what the students think about the topic. It is a good idea to have the students think of what they consider more important: quality or quantity. The teacher will connect the fable with students' life if s/he asks them whether they prefer to have a lot of not really friends or only one good and honest friend. After this discussion, four groups will be formed. Each group will have a storyteller. The teacher

must give each storyteller a copy of the fable. He or she must remove the storytellers to part of the room where the other students cannot read the story. The storytellers have to re-create the story using their own words, and add whatever they want but without changing the main idea of the fable. The storyteller tells his or her group the fable. In each group, the students try to create a new version of the story by adding new elements. At the end a member of each group (not the storyteller) tells the final version to his or her group and each version must be compared with the original version that was told to the storytellers.

The following version was created by students of the author of this article when she put the activity into practice in her class:

The lion said: "You should be disappointed because you can bear only foxes. I have a lion but a lion is the king of the jungle." Then, the fox replied, "Well, in spite of the fact that you are the king of the jungle, it is more important to be intelligent than to be big. See this: if a hunter wants to kill me it is easier for me to hide." The lion answered without showing any emotion: "Perhaps you are right but if I am hungry I can eat you." Immediately the lion ate the fox.

Activity : *A story in jumble questions (Adapted from Misra and Sylvester 1990).*

Level: initial intermediate

Skills Involved: all

Objectives:

1. Contextual aspect:

To have students recreate a story from some questions given by the teacher.

2. Linguistic aspect:

To practice the four language skills.

Preparation: select a story and put it in questions.

Give students the story in questions. Afterwards, ask them to write a story from the questions individually, and compare their versions in pairs. The teacher may ask some students to read their versions. The whole activity must be completed in more or less thirty minutes. At the end, the teacher may give students the original version of the story so that they can compare it with their own version.

The author of this work gave her students some questions based on a story taken from oral tradition. This is the story:

That morning everybody woke up with sugar on their lips. Unfortunately, only a few people realized of what was happening: Those who kissed each other when they woke up.

It is important to stress that the students do not read the story. They only read the following questions:

1. What happened that morning?
2. Did people wake up with sugar on their lips?
3. Did every body realize of that?
4. Who realize of what had happened?
5. What did the people who realized of the situation do?

These are two versions of the story based on the questions:

That morning I woke up quietly. He continued to sleep. When I realized that his lips had a strange brightness. I approached him. I noticed that there was some sugar on his lips. I began to kiss him. His mouth was so sweet! I was enchanted. He woke up and we continued to kiss each other” I said to myself: What a sweet day!

--Natalia

That morning something had happened. Only a few people noticed. Everybody was very kind. Every body said good morning with a smile. Since that morning no one was angry. People from other towns said: It seems that these people have sugar on their lips. From their mouths only sweet words go out.

--Erika

Involving students with poetry (Adapted from Reimel 1992)

Objectives:

1.Contextual Aspect:

To involve students with poetry

To motivate them to read poetry

Ask students to bring markers, old magazines, white sheets or cardboard, crayons scissors, glue, cloth ,etc. to class. In class give each student a different poem to read. After reading the poem ask them to produce a plastic response, for instance to make a collage or a drawing with their perceptions of the poem. Once they have created their collage or drawing, have them read the poem to their classmates and show to them their plastic work while explaining the relationship of its different elements with the poem itself.

After reading the poem “This is just to say” by William Carlos Williams, a student made a collage expressing her perceptions about the literary piece. Afterwards, she wrote some of her perceptions:

“This is a childish poem. The fact of being so honest and innocent at the same time is what is being transmitted here. A child doesn’t understand the meaning of private property and might think it is normal to take what is not his. There is also a naive way of expressing apology: “forgive me they were so delicious”. There is guilt for taking what doesn’t belong to him but there is also innocence because he is a child. That is why the collage has some fruit and lots of children, who are the symbol of innocence and happiness. All of us some time in our lives did such actions without wanting to cause any harm.. The honesty that the poem invites is implicit, but there is a testimony of some illegal action that has taken place.

--Yolanda Serafimov

Short story writing

Objectives:

1.Contextual Aspects:

To use their imagination to create a story.

2.Linguistic Aspect:

To produce written language.

At the end of the term, when students has been sufficiently exposed to literary texts, especially short stories, educators can motivate them to create their own story. This can be a final task since it synthesizes what has been experienced in class.

The following is a story written by a student after being exposed for a trimester to short stories.

I used to talk with him. I spent hours of my short life, talking with him, trying to make him understand my little world. I have to recognize that he knew everything about me. I didn’t have to make a big effort to be understood by him. He could predict everything related to me. I was transparent to him.

I was working very hard because I had too much work at the university. In addition, I was worried about my new relationship. I met a boy and I was convinced that he was an excellent prospect, but nobody liked him. Appearance was very important to my family and also to him. I was confused and I couldn’t find a good solution to my problem. I mean, to their problem because for me it wasn’t a problem. I only wanted to enjoy it. You know... life is short and you should take advantage of it and enjoy it, don’t you think?

He was very sad... I didn’t want to talk to him because I was ashamed. I didn’t find out how to express my feelings. He ignored me and I also tried to ig-

nore him. But I couldn't stand that situation. He was my only friend, the best one. He was my best friend, the only one.

I went to bed late at night. Probably it was five or six o'clock in the morning. I was tired, but it was a common situation during the class period. Mom woke me up early in the morning because I had to go to class. I saw him this morning for the last time...He kissed me and said that we had to talk. I asked him to give me a ride to the university... and like everyday he did it. He never said: "No, I cant". He was disposed to help me everyday. I couldn't speak to him, I really wanted to but I was tired...I would never imagine that was our last morning together. I went to class and he went to his job. I came back home early in the afternoon. I took the bus and I arrived one hour later. I only wanted to sleep. I felt very happy because we broke the ice and I thought that this was the first step to find a solution and not to fight anymore, but it wasn't...well, it wasn't enough... I tell you everything you can read here not because I want you to feel sorry about me but because I think that you are on time, your chance is now, not tomorrow, your opportunity is this one not another.

My sister got me up at eleven o'clock at night and she told me that he hadn't arrived yet. I was sleepy and I couldn't understand what she was talking about. Everybody began to call us. They didn't want to say anything, no explanations, just diffuse words, just confused words, no more words, just silence... I realized what happened, he was dead. My only friend, my best friend was dead.

I used to talk with him. He knew everything about me and he knows more than everything. I didn't have to make a big effort to be understood by him and I don't need to make any effort, at present. He was my father. I was transparent to him, but now...he is transparent to me.

--Raiza C. Pietri

The activities above are very useful in an integrated class of English as a foreign or second language. The students will be listening and speaking without neglecting the two remaining skills; reading and writing. On the one hand, students will be exposed to literature and will have the chance of being creative and using their imagination. In this way, they will not see literature from afar. Literature will appear as something that they themselves can enrich and even create with their own experience.

As can be seen, the students will be engaged interactively with the text and with their classmates in the performance of tasks involving literary texts. In order to complete the tasks, students will have to pay close attention to the texts. This will generate silent and oral language. In the process, students will be active agents, and there will be real interaction between the learners and the texts and between the learners and their classmates.

In the class work and discussions, any response will be welcome. The teacher must move around the room monitoring each group, and encouraging students to participate. The students will be the center of the learning experience while the teacher will be relegated to the role of facilitator.

The students' seats should be arranged in a circle or semi-circle which is best to the needs of communicative activities. The first part of a one-hour class period will be devoted to the work of four or more groups depending on class size. The second portion of the hour of class will be a whole group activity, so students will form a circle. This arrangement will create the best conditions for listening and speaking.

Conclusions

Since literature provides exposure to universal human experience and relevant topics whose importance survives with the passing of years, students can be involved in the texts and give personal responses while practicing the four skills, as well as improving their performance in the foreign or second language. Literature also gives learners interesting and stimulating material which enhances and deepens their knowledge about the target culture. Additionally, literature can give students chances to use the foreign language in a creative way.

In order to have really successful lessons, it is necessary for the teacher to select the literary texts according to his or her students' age, linguistic knowledge and interests, and devote time and thought to considering how the text will be used in the classroom.

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Adult Learners' Pronunciation at the End of a Communicative English Program: A Needs Analysis ¹

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Introduction

Recent research has suggested that pronunciation teaching for foreign languages should focus on intelligibility rather than on accent reduction. This idea is not new. Actually, for years pronunciation experts (Abercrombie 1956, Grant 1993, Kenworthy 1987, Morley 1991, Tench 1981) have made the same recommendation. Munro and Derwing (1995) have made such a suggestion lately on the basis of experimental evidence. In their study, they asked native speakers of English to listen to audiotapes of nonnative speakers of English and they found that the native speakers did not find that a heavy foreign accent interfered with intelligibility.

Munro and Derwing's study seems to be unique. In an extensive literature search, no other experimental work on the same topic was found. In fact, the authors recognize that this research is singular. They write, "these are the first experimental data demonstrating what pronunciation experts have long believed" (Munro & Derwing 1995:92).

The results of their research are quite interesting for second language educators. The recommendation that instruction should center on intelligibility and comprehensibility and not on accent reduction could be applicable in many second language courses. Nevertheless, learners' subjective needs (wants and expectations about the learning of English) vary and it may be that some learners would prefer to improve their pronunciation and to reduce their accent because they do not like to sound foreign in the target language, while others would be content only with being intelligible, without worrying about foreign accent.

¹ This is a refereed article.

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To find out what the learners' expectations in pronunciation are, it is necessary to ask them what they want. Munro and Derwing (1995) did not do that, and as far as I know, neither has anyone else. In this study³, one of the objectives was to survey learners' subjective needs. To ask learners about their needs is important in learner-centered curriculum development. For example, the currently dominant approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), is learner-centered, taking learners' subjective needs into account for curriculum design (Nunan 1988): see below. Experts and researchers have given their recommendations about intelligibility and accent reduction but the learners' point of view is still missing.

In general, the purpose of the research presented here is to find out if learners who have studied in a communicative English program have intelligible pronunciation, speak with a foreign accent and want to reduce their accent. In short, the intention is to investigate whether experts, including Munro and Derwing (1995), are justified in their conclusion that pronunciation should focus on intelligibility rather than on accent reduction. If their recommendation is correct, then all well and good. But if it is partially wrong or completely incorrect, some changes in communicative curriculum design are then perhaps necessary.

It is important to define some terms that are central in this research. The first one designates the general area of this study, *pronunciation*. As no one satisfactory explanation of the term was encountered in the literature, the following definition is provided by the researcher. *Pronunciation* is the production of speech sounds. Speech sounds embrace phonemes (minimal units in the sound system of a language) or segments (vowel and consonant sounds which form syllables, words, phrases, and sentences), as well as prosodic features or suprasegmentals that involve: stress, intonation, rhythm, loudness, tone, tempo, and voice quality. The combination of phonemes and the patterns of prosodic features are systematic and follow specific phonological rules in every accent. *Accent* is understood as the characteristic pronunciation determined by the regional and social background of speakers in L1 (first language) or by the phonological system of the native tongue and developmental and learning processes in L2 (second language). The goal of the production of speech sounds is communication, which implies comprehension. However, in the interactions of people with different

³ This article is a summary of research conducted for the MA in Second Language Teaching (Correa 1997).

accents, especially foreign accents, comprehension may fail. So pronunciation may range from intelligible to unintelligible to those who listen.

The specific area of research of the present study takes into account three elements related to pronunciation: intelligibility, foreign accent, and learners' needs.

Pronunciation intelligibility occurs when someone's pronunciation is understood by a listener. In second language teaching, the goal, according to Abercrombie (1956), is a comfortably intelligible pronunciation "which can be understood with little or no conscious effort on the part of the listener" (p. 94).

Foreign accent is a characteristic of pronunciation that is caused

...by the speech sounds of one language through another. By applying to the foreign language the system of analyzing or sorting the sounds of one's own language, one misinterprets the foreign sounds and, as a result, mispronounces them. (Politzer 1954: 20-21)

Politzer is suggesting that the primary cause of a foreign accent is transfer from one's first language. Nevertheless, pronunciation is also affected by developmental processes and the overgeneralization of L2 rules (Ioup & Weinberger 1987).

Transfer, developmental processes, and overgeneralization may lead to pronunciation errors, which one may define as deviant pronunciation from native pronunciation. Some other causes of deviant pronunciation may be distraction, tiredness, nervousness, and momentary forgetfulness. Slips caused by these four factors are considered *mistakes*—not errors—by some authors (e.g. Underhill 1994). According to Underhill (1994:133), a mistake implies that the speaker has "the inner criteria for self-correction", and an error occurs when the criteria for correctness do not exist in the speaker. In the present study, the causes of mispronunciations and the existence or non-existence of criteria for correctness are not relevant. For that reason, here *pronunciation errors* will designate indistinctly errors and mistakes, deviations of pronunciation from the target pronunciation. These errors may obscure meaning and affect intelligibility or may be compensated for by the listener, leading to no break-down in intelligibility. Through recognition of these two listener responses to errors, it is possible to appreciate that intelligibility and foreign accent are two different ele-

ments of pronunciation that have a complex relationship, one that is dependent, in part, on the way they are dealt with by the listener.

Learners' pronunciation needs have not been defined fully in the literature yet. Learners' general language needs, however, have been defined. Brindley (1994) distinguishes between objective and subjective needs. Objective needs refer to "the gap between current and desired 'general' proficiency level" (Brindley 1994: 66). This level is generally determined by curriculum designers. Subjective needs are defined as follows:

... the cognitive and affective needs of the learner in the learning situation derivable from information about affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learners' wants and expectations with regard to the learning of English and their individual cognitive style and learning strategies. (Brindley 1994:70)

Hence *objective learners' pronunciation needs* will be viewed as the gap between present and desired pronunciation proficiency as determined by curriculum designers. The desired pronunciation proficiency for those learners that are finishing an English communicative program will be intelligible pronunciation because that is precisely the goal of a communicative program. *Subjective learners' pronunciation needs* will be regarded as learners' attitudes, wants and expectations concerning the learning of pronunciation. In this study, both dimensions were considered in order to carry out a needs analysis (a tool for programming and designing courses, foreign language courses included, and services), i.e. the needs analysis was objective and subjective. Berwick (1994) points out that CLT has used this tool since its early stages. However, this approach has not utilized needs analyses to thoroughly assess learners' pronunciation needs.

A study with college learners conducted by Correa (1995) also identified meaningful needs in pronunciation. Through a questionnaire, she surveyed student interest in seven elective modules. These modules or courses would be offered for learners in their last semester of the English program during the following session. Every module would last a month. Four modules would make a semester. The topics of the modules would be conversation, pronunciation, listening, writing, reading, grammar and culture. She found that learners were highly interested in the module of pronunciation. Such a module was the second in order of interest, only the module of conversation surpassed it. Grammar was not very popular, placed in the sixth position out of seven, compared with first place in Little and Sanders

(1990). Another finding in Correa's investigation was that learners were interested in reducing their foreign accent. 63% of the 92 subjects who answered the questionnaire wanted to reduce their accent and only 47% cared about intelligibility.⁴ This indicates that learners were more interested in accent reduction than in intelligibility. These learners were not in a communicative program, they were in an academic ESP program, and their pronunciation was left to develop without special training. Thus, their answer was a reaction to a program in which pronunciation has little importance.

Correa's results confirm what Macdonald, Yule and Powers (1995) say about surveying preferences with respect to pronunciation (i.e. subjective pronunciation needs): "learners consistently give extremely high priority to mastery of pronunciation of the target language when opinions and preferences are investigated" (p. 76).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Pronunciation

CLT is an approach to teaching foreign and second languages that began in the mid 1970's. It is very influential nowadays. In this approach, pronunciation is not emphasized. The desired goal of the approach is communicative competence. Accuracy is a factor tied to the context, that is, to be intelligible in a given situation is what matters and comprehensible or intelligible pronunciation is the objective. As Moy (1986) mentions in CLT pronunciation receives a secondary emphasis compared with other skills, thus no pronunciation drills take place. Learners are not expected to acquire native-like pronunciation. Pronunciation is not neglected but is contemplated "as a small part of linguistic competence" (Moy 1986:82). Pronunciation is monitored principally during communicative activities; however some genuine communicative pronunciation tasks have been developed (cf. Pica 1984, Celce-Murcia 1987). Nevertheless, there are practically no materials available to teach pronunciation with an emphasis on communication (Celce-Murcia 1987).

⁴ The sum of the percentages of the reasons of improvement is more than 100 because, in this case, the learners could choose more than one answer.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Assuming that a communicative approach has positive effects on all skills, it was hypothesized that the majority of learners finishing such a communicative English program would be judged as ranging from *mostly intelligible* to *perfectly intelligible*.
2. Taking into consideration the fact that there is little emphasis on accent reduction in the communicative approach, it was hypothesized that learners who finish such a program would be judged as varying from *a heavy foreign accent* to *a medium foreign accent*.
3. Considering previous research (Correa 1995), it was hypothesized that most learners who finish a communicative English program would like to improve their pronunciation by reducing their foreign accent.

The two first hypotheses are related to the objective needs analysis. They were structured to verify whether Munro and Derwing's finding (1995) that intelligible pronunciation may be highly accented might be replicated. The third hypothesis is concerned with the subjective needs analysis. It contradicts what Munro and Derwing and other experts recommend, that FL (foreign language) pronunciation teaching should not focus on accent reduction.

Methodology

This section presents a summary of the subjects, the material and the procedure employed in the study (see Correa 1997 for more details). Briefly, it is possible to say that learners finishing a communicative English program were audio taped retelling a short story in a recording studio. The tapes were listened to by native-speakers of English who evaluated intelligibility of pronunciation and foreign accent.

The sample of subjects who were studying English within a communicative program was selected from students of the Universidad de las Américas-Puebla. They were 23 learners in the last semester of their English program, who had reached a low intermediate level according to insti-

tutional objectives and measures. They had not lived in a city or town next to the US border for more than a year and they had not lived in an English speaking country for two months or more.

The materials and the procedure were the following:

First, learners who were studying in one of the three skill courses (Oral Communication, Reading, and Writing) filled out a form to determine who was eligible for the study. The form was written in Spanish to avoid misunderstandings. The subjects selected went to the UDLA recording studio individually. Initially, learners were given an instruction sheet. It was in Spanish and very straightforward. Second, they were given a cartoon with text to be read silently. The cartoon was taken from a EFL book for beginners, so the grammar and the vocabulary were very easy for the subjects. Third, learners were audio taped telling the story having only the pictures of the cartoon as a stimulus (i.e., with the text removed). To record the voices, high quality equipment was used in a sound-proofed studio. Fourth, learners were given oral instructions for the recording of the narrative in the cabin. After learners were recorded, they answered a questionnaire on their subjective needs for learning pronunciation. It was written and answered in Spanish.

In order to establish coding scales, a pilot evaluation of intelligibility was conducted with three native-speakers of English, students in the UDLA graduate program in Applied Linguistics. Training tapes specially recorded for this study were used for the pilot assessment. Finally, five coders took part in the actual evaluation. They were native speakers of English with only limited knowledge of Spanish. They were students in exchange programs from Canada. The coders were trained in order for them to distinguish intelligibility of pronunciation from broad intelligibility and intelligibility from foreign accent using: i) training tapes, ii) two six point scales which were also used for the actual assessment, and iii) evaluation sheets. The training sessions and the evaluation sessions with actual coders were intercalated. The sessions devoted to intelligibility lasted one hour each and were conducted on two successive different days. Two days later the evaluation session on foreign accent took place. They lasted 20 minutes each and were on the same day with a five-minute break. The training and the evaluation sheets were also used for the actual assessment.

Results

The scale used for the evaluation of intelligibility of pronunciation is the following:

INTELLIGIBILITY OF PRONUNCIATION SCALE	
1.	Speech full of pronunciation errors . Almost totally unintelligible.
2.	Frequent pronunciation errors that obscure meaning. Very unintelligible.
3.	Several errors obscure meaning. Partially unintelligible.
4.	In general, good pronunciation but with occasional errors that obscure meaning. Occasionally unintelligible.
5.	Uses English with few pronunciation errors that obscure meaning. Mostly intelligible.
6.	Pronunciation errors—if any—do not interfere communication. Perfectly intelligible.

The results related to the objective needs analysis are the following:

RATING	SCORE
Intelligibility mean was	3.6
Minimum intelligibility rating	2.4
Maximum intelligibility rating	4.8

The mean is the average between two points of the scale: partially unintelligible and occasionally unintelligible. The maximum intelligibility rating was mostly intelligible and the minimum was very unintelligible.

There were no subjects rated with scores at the beginning and at the end of the continuum (almost totally unintelligible (1) and perfectly intelligible (6)). Only three learners were rated mostly intelligible (5). To reach the goal of intelligibility that characterizes a communicative program learners should have rated mostly intelligible as it was hypothesized. In sum, it can be said that the level of intelligibility of pronunciation is lower than one would have expected.

The scale used to assess foreign accent is given below:

FOREIGN ACCENT SCALE	
1.	A heavy foreign accent
2.	A marked foreign accent
3.	A medium foreign accent
4.	A mild foreign accent
5.	A near native accent
6.	A native-like accent

These are the foreign accent results:

RATING	SCORE
Foreign accent mean was	2.6
Maximum foreign accent rating	4
Minimum foreign accent rating	1.2

The mean is an average between two points of the scale: marked foreign accent (rating 2) and a medium foreign accent (rating 3). The maximum foreign accent (4) was a mild foreign accent and the minimum (1.2) a very heavy foreign accent. Neither a native-like accent (rating 6) nor a near native accent (rating 5) were encountered. Twenty-one ratings accounting for 91% of the total between 1.2 and 3.49. This means that almost all the learners ranged from a heavy foreign accent to a medium foreign accent, congruent with the little emphasis on accent reduction characteristic of the communicative programs. Hence, the hypothesis concerning foreign accent was fully confirmed by the data gathered. Subsequently, diagnostic ratings of the foreign accent and desired goal were also compared in order to complete the objective needs analysis. Results showed that the ratings of intelligibility and foreign accent have a weak correlation. However, the value of the correlation (.409) was not far from a significant correlation. In fact, .413 was needed to determine the existence of a significant correlation. After all, it is possible to say that foreign accent ratings do not predict intelligibility scores well and vice versa.

The main results of the subjective needs analysis are those concerned with the learners' interest in intelligibility and in accent reduction. It was found that 91% of the learners wanted to improve their pronunciation, 69% wanted to reduce their accent and 56% wanted to be more intelligible. Hence, learners are more interested in reducing their accent than in being intelligible.

Discussion

The evaluation of intelligibility indicated that learners in a communicative program were less intelligible than one would have expected, i.e. the goal of intelligibility is not being fully achieved. Learners were not well understood by native-speakers. This suggests that the CLT approach to pronunciation may not be the most effective option. It seems that some pronunciation work is still needed. Monitoring pronunciation during some activities may not be enough. The research reported here indicates that more specific communicative pronunciation exercises are required.

Regarding foreign accent scores, it was found that they corresponded to those hypothesized. They ranged from *a very heavy foreign accent* to *a medium foreign accent*. Since accent reduction is not contemplated in CLT, a result like this was expected. As it was not possible to find a diagnostic of foreign accent similar to the one carried out in this research in the literature reviewed, a comparison with other teaching approaches is not feasible. Whether the Direct Method, the Oral Approach and the Audio-lingual Method which explicitly involve accent reduction have yielded learners with less foreign accent is quite difficult to establish.

The data concerning pronunciation improvement correspond to previous research. Here, most learners wanted to improve their pronunciation, 69% wanted to reduce their accent and 56% wanted to be more intelligible. The last two results are similar to those found by Correa (1995) at the same institution when a non-communicative (ESP) program was used instead of a communicative program. On that occasion, 63% of 92 subjects wanted to reduce their accent and 47% cared about intelligibility.⁵ These results were closely replicated in the present survey.

The preference for accent reduction over the deeper issue of intelligibility may perhaps be explained on the basis of affective and socio-cultural factors: i) learners may feel ashamed of their accent; ii) a near native or a native-like accent may be more prestigious for Mexicans and for native speakers; iii) learners like to show off when they speak English, using a near native or native-like accent; iv) they like to do things well and in consequence they want to pronounce properly; v) they identify with the English speaking community; vi) they belong to a social class (high or middle) which values having a near native or a native-like accent. In order to confirm these possible motivations, more research would be necessary.

It was interesting to find that in the present study the scores of intelligibility and foreign accent did not correlate significantly. Munro and Derwing (1995) found a correlation between them. In spite of their result, they reported that “foreign accent scores did not predict intelligibility very well” (p. 91). The absence of a statistically significant correlation in this study implies that the prediction of ratings is weak. This confirms that there is certain independence between intelligibility and foreign accent although it

⁵ The sum of the percentages of the reasons for improvement is more than 100 because, in this case, learners could choose more than one answer.

is not total. Therefore, to consider them as two separate factors in this survey was justified. Hence, it was appropriate to design specific scales for every factor.

Taking into account Munro and Derwing's (1995) results concerning intelligibility and foreign accent, the findings of this study are not surprising. After all, it is clear that the relationship between the two factors is complex. The ratings that do not correlate are of two types : i) those that are of strong foreign accent but medium intelligibility; and ii) those that are of very low foreign accent but less than expected intelligibility. This reflects a complicated relationship in which scores cannot be predicted very well. The results reveal that a heavy foreign accent may not be very unintelligible and that a mild accent may not be very intelligible. In short, it is possible to confirm what Munro and Derwing (1995) claim, that is, that a heavy foreign accent does not necessarily reduce intelligibility and that less accented speech does not necessarily increase intelligibility.

In sum, the results of the subjective needs analysis reject Munro and Derwing's assumption that accent reduction is not necessary. To have a goal of comfortable intelligibility is not enough according to the needs detected. The present study provides teachers and curriculum designers with data that indicates the necessity of reorienting the teaching of pronunciation in order to achieve better levels of intelligibility and to maximize accent reduction. Thus, the needs analysis suggests that pronunciation teaching might deal with both: intelligibility and accent reduction. The extent to which an accent can be reduced is not quite clear. Future research may clarify this question. For the time being, the researcher agrees with Avery and Ehrlich (1992), who hold that the Critical Period Hypothesis is not an impediment to teaching pronunciation, accent reduction included, since there is variability among learners and since there is no clear indication that age is a determinant to acquire a native-like accent.

Considering the results of this study, higher levels of intelligibility and accents nearer to native speakers should be sought. Learners are willing to improve their pronunciation in general, and to perfect their accent in particular. This is a good beginning. Teachers and curriculum designers may take advantage of the situation and give them more pronunciation instruction. Taking into consideration learners' responses to questionnaires, special courses on pronunciation are also an option to perfect their pronunciation. Learners' needs like the ones encountered in this survey may be

met in general English courses or in skill courses. It is important to discuss such an issue in the language departments of schools and universities because pronunciation is a skill that learners actually value and may profit from.

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Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses Yearning to Speak English: The *English Only* Debate in the United States

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During the short history of the United States, language has played a major role in the texture of American society (Heath 1980). The United States began as a union of different people from many different countries with different linguistic backgrounds. The creators of the United States constitution appear to have taken this variety and difference into consideration when they wrote the United States Constitution, a document which expressed freedoms and rights but no clear restrictions (Heath 1980).

Many Americans currently see the missing language clause in the United States Constitution as a large error on the conscious of America. In efforts to fix this perceived “error” groups have formed, like English First and U. S. English, in order to push a constitutional amendment that would make English the official language of the United States.² The movement, called *English Only*, attempts to abolish the use of all languages, other than English, in government, education, and all public spheres within the United States.

This paper contains four major sections. The first section will review a brief history of languages in the United States and major language related legislation.³ The second section will examine the *English Only* movement discussing the sides, their expressed and implied goals, and their possible effects on bilingual education. The third section will discuss some studies that have examined the effect of bilingual and *English Only* education for immigrant students and will summarize the conclusions they make regarding English acquisition and overall student language learning in the different environments. In summary, the forth section will discuss the implications of the *English Only* movement on a world wide scale as well as a re-

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² See English First 1997; House Republican Committee 1996

³ See also Heath 1980 and Marshall 1986 that further review the history of languages in the United States.

cent California legislative decision to abolish bilingual education within that state.

United States Language History

The 13 colonies that eventually became the United States were founded by a variety of different people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Heath (1980) reminds readers that when these people received independence from Great Britain they included no choice of a national language in their constitution. This is not very surprising considering their feelings towards the British control over their lives during the formation of their colonies and their successful attempt to break from the oppression of British rule.

Their break from British control is not to imply that Americans did not want to speak English. Some early national leaders such as John Adams and Noah Webster kept the goals of a national language in the minds of Americans through their writings on the English language (Heath 1980). These writings were influential during that time but they did not call for an amendment to the United States Constitution to make English the official language. Marshall (1986) writes that

There seems to have been a conscious effort to make the new and growing republic a country welcoming peoples from diverse cultures and with differing languages; few fears were expressed about the loss of national unity or the possibility of sundering the body politic. (p. 11)

He cites slavery, industrialization, urbanization, growing mechanization of agriculture, the rapidity of western expansions, and other concerns as higher on the list of priorities for Americans during this time.

Many of the first settlers during this time settled into colonies of Dutch, Swedish, French, German, and other language speakers. These settlers started schools where their native language was the primary source of teaching and learning (Marshall 1986).

The United States welcomed immigrants during its founding days but as more and more immigrants from Eastern Europe and Asia began to go to the United States, there was more concern with a national language and English literacy laws in efforts to control the distribution of power within the United States (Marshall 1986; Heath 1980). Among the fears of

the people already in the U. S. citizens was the fear of the effects that new immigrants, who were not Protestant and not from Western Europe, would have on society. Many states passed literacy laws during the late 1800's and early 1900's in efforts to establish a level of English literacy, which limited the chances of citizenship of many immigrants (Marshall 1986). These laws continued into the beginning of the 20th century in their efforts also to curb the teaching of languages other than English in schools.

War time also effected the acceptance of other languages within American society. Fear of Germans, Russians, and other foreign "enemies" within the United States caused many states to make *English Only* laws. Marshall (1986) states that the "war psychology," which saw multiethnicity and multilingualism as threats to national unity, along with economic depression effected attitudes towards those who did not speak English.

Many laws, that often followed large historical changes within the U.S., affected the acceptance of different languages within public spheres and sometimes even private spheres. In the early 1900's, the state of Nebraska passed a law prohibiting the use of languages other than English in both public and private schools. Other states had similar laws prohibiting the use of languages other than English in their schools also. In 1923, the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to prohibit the use of languages other than English in private schools but citizens could do so in tax-supported public schools (Marshall 1986). This law provided one of the first explicit court Supreme Court actions regarding languages within the United States.

The national Civil Rights Movement within the United States also helped to positively effect the use of languages other than English for teaching. It gave American immigrants the rights to more educational opportunities in their own language through the Bilingual Education Act. The first Bilingual Education Act which passed in 1968, only four years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, recognized the role of teaching languages other than English for ethnic groups in the U. S. (Heath 1980 and Marshall 1986). Later in 1974, *Lau v. Nicholas* also found that instruction solely in English deprived students of understanding the curriculum of their school and of an equal opportunity in education. Marshall (1986) states that this case did not legally require schools to provide bilingual or bicultural education but it did prevent schools from excluding students from such programs.

For more in-depth coverage of the history and legislation of languages Marshall (1986) and Heath (1980) give more coverage of the topic in their writings on languages in the United States.

English Only: Proponents, Critics, and the Controversy

The *English Only* movement grew out of the history of the United States and its acceptance of some immigrants and rejection of other immigrants (Wiley 1996). It has also grown out of the fear that new immigrants are not as susceptible to the assimilation paradigm used to “Americanize” immigrants for more than a century. The proponents of *English Only* use the history of many immigrant groups and their quick assimilation into American society and the English language as an example of how they think things should be.

There are several strategies that have been used by *English Only* proponents, many politicians, to build a case against bilingualism in schools and to implicate immigrants who do not want to use English as part of the perceived problem. Crawford (1997) gives two important examples of the politicalness of the *English Only* debate and how the public is convinced that there is a need to end bilingual education.

Crawford (1997) quotes speaker of the House Newt Gingrich as saying

there are over 80 languages taught in California school as the primary language... in a country where in Seattle there are 75 languages being taught, in Chicago there are 100.

Crawford reminds readers that Gingrich takes the number of student groups speaking other languages and uses it to intensify people’s disbelief and anger against the system. Neither 80 nor 75 nor 100 languages are being taught in these cities. Due to the lack of teachers to teach the astronomical number of languages Gingrich quotes and the transitional state of most bilingual programs, this is an extreme exaggeration. A smaller number of students are reached by bilingual programs which tend to be primarily in Spanish.

To go even further into the minds and the pockets of Americans, Crawford (1997) quotes Representative Roby Roth (Republican of Wisconsin) stating that:

Much has been said this morning about education and wasting of money. We spend some \$12 billion a year in this country, \$12 billion a year on bilingual education, which means we teach kids in other than the English language.

He, like U. S. English, manipulates statistics in order to further the cause of stopping “wasteful” spending, or at least stopping bilingual education. They both take the average expenditure nationally per pupil and multiply it by the number of LEP⁴ students. This does not take into consideration that only a small percentage of these students are actually in bilingual classrooms and there are “real” figures about bilingual education that are closer to \$100 million rather than billions of dollars. This \$100 million includes transitional programs also (Crawford 1997).

Immigrant degrading comments also seem to be a tactic that is used to back *English Only*. Attempts to portray immigrants who don’t want to learn English or who haven’t learned English as “un-American” are also used as ammunition against bilingual education. Ron Unz, of the new California movement to ban bilingual education in 1998, compared today’s Spanish speakers in opposition to his own Jewish grandparents “who came to California in the 1920s and 1930s as poor European immigrants. They came to WORK and become successful... not to sit back and be a burden to those who were already here.” (Crawford 1997) These tactics are readily swallowed up by those who are against immigrants and bilingual education.

The House Republican Committee also warns readers that bilingual policies discourage immigrants from becoming part of the American Dream (House Republican Committee 1996). They feel that Americans must have a common basis for mutual understanding and English is it. They define differences in languages as “divisive linguistic separatism.” They also use language conflicts in Canada and Israel in order to back their argument on the divisiveness of language. Their arguments about Canada and Israel do not seem to take into consideration that if people would not try to force their own language on everyone within their country’s borders there might not be linguistic conflict.

On the other hand, there are many organizations that are attempting to fight *English Only* initiatives including the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and the National Education Association (NEA) to name a

⁴ Limited English Proficiency.

few. The NEA is attempting to propose reverse legislation that would value all languages within the U. S.. They argue an English Plus position that takes into consideration that:

1. Many residents speak native languages other than English; these linguistic resources should be conserved and developed.
2. This nation was founded on a commitment to democratic principles and diversity. There was no commitment to racial, ethnic, or religious homogeneity.
3. Multilingualism is a tremendous resource and helps in American competitiveness and diplomatic efforts. (National Education Association 1996)

These are only a few of the reasons why they support bilingual education and are against *English Only*. The NEA and other organizations that have made statements concerning their views against *English Only* provide only a portion of the support for diverse language teaching within American society. Many language educators reject *English Only* also because its attempts to assimilate immigrants instead of valuing their cultures and their languages.

Academia and *English Only*

English Only receives much attention within academic literature in a variety of different academic disciplines. Authors write about *English Only* in political, social, psychological, educational, and language journals just to name a few. In this section I will first define the *English Only* movement as it is defined by many of the articles written in English language teaching journals. Next I will review *English Only* as it relates to academic language teaching literature discussing how academics see the use of other languages in teaching immigrant students and the effect the use of other languages has on students overall learning experience.

Language teaching literature often makes a dichotomy between those who are for *English Only*, generally labeled assimilationists or some almost equivalent derivative, and those who are against *English Only*, generally labeled cultural pluralists, in attempts to define the sides of the controversy (Lucas & Katz 1994; Phillipson & Skutnab-Kangas). These two sides constantly disagree concerning what is the best way to teach immigrant children. The assimilationists feel that English is the goal and should be the only method by which the goal is reached. While cultural pluralists feel that

students should not have to abandon their culture or language in their attempts to learn English.

Cultural pluralists, which encompass many language educators, define the *English Only* movement as one of primarily political intentions with little or no connections with language pedagogy nor the goal of complete and sound education for children (Wiley & Lukes 1996; Auerbach 1993; Lucas & Katz 1994). They point out that the *English Only* movement only concentrates on the goals of English acquisition often to the detriment of other learning of content.

Auerbach (1993) writes about the use of other languages in the ESL classroom and cites experiences where students would have benefited from instruction in their native language to facilitate their acquisition of English. She also observes a better attitude toward language learning and learning in general as possible benefits of a bilingual education. Other benefits include reducing the affective barrier of the student which facilitates language learning in both English and the student's native language.

Lucas and Katz (1994) review effective programs that were *English Only* in theory and on paper, but the students interacted and helped each other understand difficult concepts and words in their native languages. Both of these authors take the view that students' native languages provide effective ways to strengthen students conceptual knowledge of English as well as students' ability to help each other within the ESL classroom.

There is not a large amount of literature concerning positive student language acquisition when English used solely in the ESL classroom. Although Lucas and Katz (1994) assessed classrooms where the teacher knew only English and English was predominately spoken, many of the teachers allowed students with greater English proficiency to help students with little or no English proficiency in the native language of the students. The demands of the assimilationists seem to have little to do with the pedagogical soundness of teaching other languages nor to teachers' in-class behaviors.

Bikales (1986), the leader of U.S. English at the time, reminds readers that public schools should socialize "immigrant young, teaching them our language and our ways, quickly transforming these young foreigners into citizens at home in the new society (79)." This conveniently conflicts

with what she states in the beginning of the article as her personal view concerning her value of foreign languages and cultures. She states, that she is an “advocate of legal protections for English who is also fluent in several languages and deeply immersed in the richness of [her] ethnic heritage (77).” It is wonderful that she is immersed in the richness of her own ethnic heritage but that says nothing about her valuing or tolerating of the ethnic heritages of others, particularly immigrants, that she wants to “quickly transform” into someone more like herself. She later refers to “corrupt ethnic politicians ready to trade favors in return for votes (80),” exhibiting more of a moral argument than one on the grounds of the educational benefit or detriment in learning native languages along with English.

Clearly Bikales (1986) gives more arguments against bilingual education and for *English Only* but primarily she is exemplary of the politicalness of the argument. Many of the assimilationists argue solely on the basis of assimilation without regarding any intrinsic educational value of learning foreign languages in the classroom. They also want to look at the learning of English as something that is quick and easy.

As can be seen by the literature there are two main views exist concerning what is the best or more appropriate way to teach languages in the classroom (Lucas & Katz 1994). This difference and variety provides evidence and possible fuel for both sides of the *English Only* debate. Views concerning language use in English as a Second Language (ESL) range from those practitioners whose mainly emphasize the goal of learning English to those whose main concern is the overall learning experiences of the student.

Conclusion: English Now and Around the World

Currently one of the most pervasive battles for *English Only* is being fought in California. Recently an *English Only* initiative passed which attempts to make English the only language spoken in Californian public schools and has implications not only for California but also the rest of the states that are looking at California and its history of landmark cases and laws.

Currently many states have laws legislating *English Only*. Marshall (1986) lists in detail the states with *English Only* laws up until 1986. He also provides brief histories of many states that have the most influential

language laws. One aspect of state law that can be pointed out to the present is that they have had little if any influence on bilingual educational opportunities though there are many states with Official English laws.

The initiative in California is more extreme than the usual politics of U.S. *English, English First*, and more extreme than any of the previous state law English provisions. Within California they have voted on and passed an initiative that will, according to Crawford (1996):

- Outlaw the use of languages other than English to instruct any student in the California public schools
- Dismantle successful programs that not only teach English but keep children from falling behind in other subjects (bilingual programs)
- Impose unproven pedagogical approach “sheltered English immersion... not normally intended to exceed a year.”
- Limit options for English-speaking students to learn another language by requiring them to score above grade level in English to receive a waiver.
- Destroy two-way bilingual education.
- Invite lawsuits to enforce the English only mandate and hold teachers and administrators personally liable for such “crimes” as using another language in class.
- Stimulate yet another round of ethnic conflict in California.

This legislation would not only effect the way in which immigrants are educated but it would also effect the access of language programs to all students within the state of California.

This stance on English seems also to be one that has been taken around the world. Phillipson & Skutnab-Kangas (1996) present a persuasive view of English around the world. The stance taken by many Americans and British, advocated that English be spoken around the world often to the exclusion of other languages. The assumption is that the common worldwide language should be English without consideration of the imperialistic language goals of such language policy. Thus the *English Only* mindset affects not only the United States but it is also going beyond country borders to a more global mindset.

As one can see at the beginning of the history of languages within the United States, there was little concern demonstrated regarding languages. With the influx of non-Protestant and non Western European immigrants there became concern over the superiority of English and the Protestant religious tradition. This concern provoked language legislation that sought to curb the teaching of languages other than English within schools and attempted to make immigrants assimilate as soon as possible.

Further legislation during the civil rights era made it possible for immigrant students to have access to education in their native languages as well as access to English. Currently there is much pressure to do away with bilingual education programs that were facilitated during this era in attempts to go back to the early 20th century assimilationists approach to education. This is currently being fought by many educators that value language and cultural differences and feel that these traits should be promoted instead of ignored within schools.

Even though , the California *English Only* Initiative did pass this could provide another opportunity to prove how the chance and choice to learn different languages are part of the rights that are described within the U.S. Constitution and cannot be taken away from immigrants to the U.S. As many language educators believe, language and culture should be integral parts of the education of immigrant students and all students. There seems to be little possible to stop the imperialistic tendencies of *English Only* around the world but at least knowledge of the intentions of *English Only* proponents could provide motivation to countries to attempt to control the *English Only* tendencies within their countries.

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Back to the Basics

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As we accelerate along the “information highway”, we are all aware that the speed at which our world is changing, in terms of technology, is almost beyond comprehension. As language teachers, we have a responsibility to our students and ourselves to keep abreast of what is out there, narrowing our focus to the features of this “techno-explosion” that can best be utilized to promote faster and more effective language acquisition.

In doing so, though, we must be wary of viewing these new aids to learning as anything but aids. While scanning the electronics market in search of ever better teaching methods it’s easy to be swept along by the hype and the glitter. In our profession, it’s important to bear in mind that we are still human beings working with human beings who are attempting to accomplish a complex and time-consuming task.

No matter what techniques, textbooks, audiovisuals or software we choose to use, a significant percentage of our students will, without a doubt, experience frustration, boredom, and despair along the way, and some of them will give up. What follows is a set of “tips” for learning a foreign language which can help recharge and refocus those who falter.

These points were developed primarily for students, but may also help to remind teachers of what we already know but sometimes forget. Perhaps one day microchips or some other such device will be implanted into our brains for instantaneous language acquisition, but until that time an occasional glance at these guidelines will provide a motivational boost for those learning language the hard way.

General Tips for Adult Learners

1. Accept the fact that regular study and practice is the only way to master a language.
2. Be open minded to the new culture as well as the new language and you will progress faster.

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3. Recognize that if you don't have a good sense of your own language's grammatical structure, you will have a harder time putting together the pieces of the new one.
4. Accept the fact that rote learning of grammar rules, vocabulary, verb tenses, etc. is essential and can't be avoided.
5. Don't be surprised and never feel embarrassed about how much repetition you need—you aren't stupid—it's normal and inevitable.
6. Recognize that children learn differently from adults, and that we all favor certain learning styles over others. Some of us respond better to visual cues, others to auditory input, etc. Determine what works best for you and use that information.
7. Take heart extroverts—people who are unafraid to speak up and enjoy chatting in their own language will usually be willing to experiment more quickly in another language.
8. Take heart introverts—extroverts who speak sooner often make more mistakes and get locked into those mistakes forever—a shy person who is determined, patient, and willing to take a few risks has a very good chance of speaking comfortably and correctly with time.
9. Don't compete with others, compete with yourself. Although some competition can be motivating, it often impedes progress and encourages self-pity.
10. Be prepared and willing to make mistakes; you will make thousands. If you feel like a baby speaking baby-talk, so be it. Remember that babies are masters of persistence and therefore great models for us all.
11. Clear some space in your life, clear your mind with some deep breathing—and study at least five minutes a day.
12. Remember there are no secrets or shortcuts to learning a language. It's hard work, but doable—be positive and realistic.

Tips for Beginners

1. You can hope but don't expect to learn a new language quickly, especially if you are an adult and monolingual. Remember how many years it took you to learn your native tongue well and recognize that language acquisition is a never-ending process.
2. Don't expect there to be a direct correlation between all words, phrases, verb tenses, etc. from one language to another. Accept the differences in languages and you will learn faster.

3. Don't get in the habit of asking questions about the language that are far beyond your level and ability to understand. Be patient and avoid unnecessary frustration.
4. Utilize your opportunities for exposure to the new language—if you can listen to and/or participate in real-life” conversations—by all means DO IT!
5. If you are still too shy to tackle conversation, start with passive listening activities to increase your comprehension and vocabulary listen to language cassettes, radio, TV programs and movies in your target language.

Tips for Intermediates/Advanced

1. Try to avoid too much self-criticism for not progressing fast enough—it's unproductive and blocks learning. If you keep trying, you will keep learning—you'll see.
2. Be aware that translating from your language to the new one in your head before you speak is a normal part of the process and will lessen as you get more fluent, but may never disappear completely, especially in adult learners.
3. Remember that all languages, including your own, are loaded with inconsistencies and exceptions to the rules. Accept them in your target language and move on.
4. Recognize that your abilities may vary significantly from day to day—some days you're great and other days you can't say a thing properly. Comfort level, situations, number of people, and personal chemistry play a large part in this.
5. Concentrate on the pleasure and excitement of communicating with others in their language. It will all be worth it.

Tips for Studying in a Group

1. Unless you can't avoid it, don't study language in a large group situation. It is much more difficult to get the verbal practice you need in a crowded classroom than it is in a small group of five or six or one-on-one.
2. Don't be afraid to ask when you don't understand. If you aren't comfortable asking during class, stay after and talk to the teacher alone.
3. If other students disrupt or monopolize, complain to the teacher. If it doesn't help and your learning is affected, change classes.

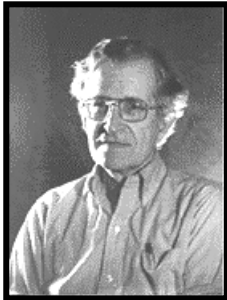
Tips about Teachers

1. Determine beforehand what kind of system and philosophy a teacher uses. If, for example, your own language is never used to explain the new one or to clear up misunderstandings in class, you may want to look for another teacher.
2. Don't waste time forever searching for the perfect text or the perfect teacher. Not finding them will be a good excuse for not progressing; any truly motivated student can learn in almost any situation.
3. Don't expect your teacher to spoon feed you—learning is ultimately your responsibility. Don't blame or praise a teacher too much. **YOU** are the one who makes the difference!

Book Review: Is Change Upon Us?

Jane Willis & Dave Willis, Ed. Challenge and Change in Language Teaching. Heinemann, 1996. 186 pp.

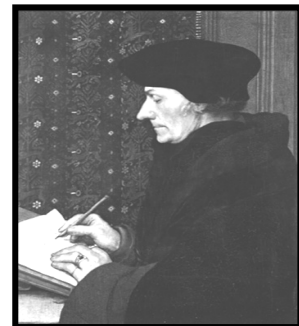
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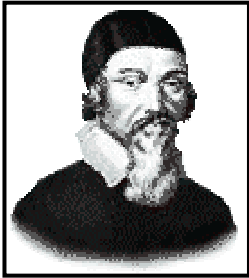
In the history of language teaching many changes have taken place. Just in this century alone we have seen the transition from the Grammar-Translation Approach to the Direct Method to Audio-Lingualism to the Communicative Approach. In general each change is predated by a period of unrest among teachers and a growing number of professional articles criticizing the current theory. In the 50's, beginning with the writings of Noam Chomsky, the end of Audiolingualism was foretold, but it wasn't until the end of the 70's when the first textbooks using the Communicative Approach started appearing .

Nowadays, there are signs of unrest. Teachers are noticing that they are not getting the results they would like from their students—they just can't speak well, they don't know grammar, they don't want to do pairwork, etc. Just notice the talks at most conventions. How many are built around the problem of how to get students to do what they don't want to.

Maybe we're ready for a change. It's easy to say that the Communicative Approach just doesn't work. The hard part is to plan where to go next. Very little is really innovative in the teaching of languages. A study of the history of language teaching shows us that most of what we consider the "cutting edge" of teaching has been suggested before. For example, the Romans used dictation; they had texts with alphabetized vocabulary lists and narrative or conversational readings about mythology, history, fables or daily conversations. Erasmus (1466-1536) was one of the first we know of to question teaching methods. He said that the system of a language could be taught inductively through exposure to discourse and not taught. Grammar and rhetoric were the means not the end. He believed in "conversing and reading" and he recognized three



stages of language learning: (1) at home-conversation, naming and describing, (2) conversation using stories, dialogues and descriptions—increasing vocabulary without translation and little grammar training, and (3) more



reading, now studying grammar, but in context. In the 17th Century, another important educator appeared. Jan Comenius (1592-1670) was against the contemporary instruction of Latin. He said schools treated children as miniature adults. He called schools “the slaughterhouses of minds” and “Places where minds are fed on words.” He believed that teachers should understand how a child’s mind develops and learns.

He believed that understanding comes “not in the mere learning the names of things, but in the actual perception of the things themselves.” Education should begin with the child’s observation of actual objects, or models or pictures of them. He had a long list of preferred techniques: (1) use of imitation instead of rules, (2) having students repeat after the teacher, (3) use of a limited vocabulary initially, (4) helping students practice reading and speaking, (5) teaching language through pictures to make it meaningful using relevant topics. In fact, he wrote one of the first picture textbooks *The Visible World in Pictures* (1658) to teach Latin.



So, if the communicative approach as we are using it doesn't work. What should we do?

One recent book, *Challenge and Change in Language Teaching* edited by Jane and Dave Willis (Heinemann, 1996), criticizes communicative language teaching and suggests another approach. This book is a compilation of articles by well-known researchers, including the editors, Tessa Woodward, Michael Lewis, Jim Scrivener, Martin Bygate, and Sue Wharton among others. The book is divided into five sections. The first section (*Theoretical Perspectives*) explains the stance the authors take in criticizing the Communicative Approach. It begins with an interesting article by Tessa Woodward (“*Paradigm shift and the language teaching profession*”) in which she anticipates the way the reader might react to the implications change brings with it. The second section (*Some Classroom Applications*)

offers alternatives to the existing Communicative Approach at the same time as it accentuates its weaknesses. The article (“*A flexible framework for task-based learning*”) by Jan Willis is a clear description of task-based learning and how it can be used in the classroom. The third section (*Professional Development and Teacher Training*) discusses how to change teacher training so that the less proven aspects of the Communicative Approach are not constantly propagated. Two of the best articles here are that by Jim Scrivener, who expounds a descriptive model of classroom actions (“*ARC: a descriptive model for classroom work on language*”) and that by Philip Kerr discussing how the emphasis can be taken off grammar for beginning teachers (“*Grammar for trainee teachers*”). The fourth section (*Investigating New Approaches*) includes ideas for the teacher on how to introduce innovations into their daily teaching and includes an interesting article by Martin Bygate (“*Effects of task repetition: appraising the developing language of learners*”), relating research into the effects of task repetition on student language development. The final section (*Assessing and Managing Classes*) discusses different management functions, including testing in a task-based approach.

The thread that links all these articles, is that of criticism of the methods currently used in most language classrooms. One example is Dave Willis’ article “*Accuracy, fluency and conformity*” which exemplifies this criticism. It is said that teachers consciously and consistently control the form of student responses, shaping them to the desired, often artificial end:

T: Virginia, ask erm Sokoop, Sokoop, being erm a father. Can you ask him?
Being a father.

V: Er yes, er yes. Do you like being a father?

T: Mm hm.

S: Yes, I am...I am er father of four children.

T: Yes, Listen to ehr question though. Say it again. Say it again.

V: Do you like being a father?

S: Yes I like being...to be...

T: Mm hm. Yes.

S: Yes, I do.

T: Yes I do. I like being a father. (p. 45)

When Sokoop says “Yes, I am. I am the father of four children.” he is answering the question, but he isn’t using the form the teacher wants. That’s why she asks Virginia to repeat the question and continues guiding him until he answers the way she wants him to. His original answer was correct English, though, and it was even correct communication, showing

his pride in having four children. It communicated, but not the way the teacher wanted. She didn't just want accuracy, she wanted conformity.

The major criticism of Communicative Approach in this book is related to the limited nature of the PPP methodology. PPP stands for Presentation, Practice and Production. (p. v)

Presentation: Teacher highlights a form for study and contextualizes it. Learners produce form, guided by the teacher, until they can do it with consistency.

Practice: Teacher control relaxes. SS ask each other questions.

Production: A role-play, discussion or problem solving activity including the structure. Teacher control relaxed.

Some people find that the PPP sequence can be useful at specific times, but other researchers think that this method is completely useless. Peter Skehan (*“Second language acquisition research and task-based instruction”*) says:

The underlying theory for a PPP approach has now been discredited. The belief that a precise focus on a particular form leads to learning and automatization (that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught) no longer carries much credibility in linguistics or psychology.” (p. v)

Skehan states that very little evidence has been found that supports the success of a PPP model and that most language learning attempts are associated with failure. In fact, many studies have shown little difference in language learning between different approaches. Also, nothing has ever proven that focus on a particular form leads to learning and that learners learn in the order in which structures are taught. Apparently learning is constrained by internal processes. You aren't just converting input into output. (p. 18)

But, although there is little evidence of the success of the PPP model, it continues to be popular. Skehan cites that “the attraction has been that to implement a PPP approach is simultaneously satisfactory for:

- the professional techniques a teacher is seen to command
- the power relations which operate within the classroom

- the role that teacher trainers have in perpetuating familiar, but outmoded, methodologies.
- the accountability mechanisms which can be seen to operate. (p. 18)

Obviously, a PPP model is easier for book writers to serve as a basis for textbook development, to teachers whose roles are clearly defined in the classroom, and to administrators who find that clearly seriated language programs are easier to organize and to test than any freer model.

So, let's throw out the communicative approach. Let's burn the textbooks. Shred the exams. Let's change...

But where are we going? Remember that historically, a period of unrest predates a radical change in teaching theory. Remember that twenty years passed between the moment Chomsky first attacked the language learning theories of his time and the publication of the first communicative textbooks. It's easy to complain, but we can't abandon everything we have now until there is somewhere to go. We need a strong model to follow if we are going to leave the communicative approach and go elsewhere.

So, maybe we are just seeing the beginning of the change. We can't abandon what we have now until the theoretical foundations are clearly laid for a new approach to be built, if one ever is. However, we can abandon the parts of our current methods which we find not to work and we can experiment with new ideas. This has to be an individual effort. Neither book writers nor institutions can experiment due to the large number of learners involved and the disastrous results that would occur if they made the wrong decisions. But, we can experiment in our classrooms. We can incorporate new ideas and try them out in a course or two. If we don't like them we can abandon them and either return to the old ways or try another new idea.

I remember when the Audio-lingual method was on its way out. We used Audio-Lingual textbooks, but we were experimenting in class with a variety of different communicative techniques—some worked and others didn't. We called it being eclectic. We were always finding new ideas in articles and at conventions. We'd share those revolutionary ideas like: pair and group work, color-cued chats, role-plays and problem solving. We knew we didn't have the answers, but we were open to new ideas. I remember one teacher who tried every new idea that came out. I can even

remember when he taught an entire course in silence—mimicking the Silent Way. He was considered kind of a nut, but his students never got bored—and they never complained either.

That is what we should be doing now. Critically trying out new ideas. I say critically, because the worst thing a teacher can do is blindly jump on every bandwagon that comes by. We have to realize that most ideas are not new. We have to study our history, know where we as language teachers came from and learn from those who came before us. What didn't work years ago, probably won't work now. But if we adapt old ideas to our new situations, they might.

We also have to realize that change is coming. New ideas, and new theories will soon become everyday events. Conventions and professional journals will be full of new, inventive ideas. We must be prepared, or we will be left behind.

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