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THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

In recent years, the shift from a "linguistic content" in English language teaching syllabuses to a "communicative content" has paralleled the growing conviction in applied linguistics and in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) that the communicative competence paradigm provides a sounder theoretical basis for investigating both what language is and what language does. This has given impetus to the debate on communicative approach in the teaching and learning of English.

My understanding of the term "communicative approach" refers not only to principles of syllabus design, but also to the presentation of classroom teaching materials and the methodology that underlies them. This understanding departs from that of Wilkins (1978) who limits his discussion to the former aspect.

THE BACKGROUND TO AND DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATIVE LEARNING-TEACHING

Employing the broadest perspectives, most contributors to the current communicative approach debate would probably agree with White (1980) that teaching and learning English communicatively involve using the language for particular purposes in tasks and activities which evoke a strong sense of relevance to the learner's interests. Similarly, few commentators who have contributed to this debate would disagree that, historically, the principal contribution to the theory of communicative language teaching and learning was the impetus afforded by sociolinguistic and sociosemantic parameters in the late 1960's and throughout the 1970's. However, in saying this I do not wish to detract myself from the importance of other contributions such as those of the cognitive theorists and the philosophers of language. One cannot deny that these theorists and philosophers had also, in their own ways, contributed to the theory of communicative language teaching and learning.

In 1970 Campbell and Wales were among the first to argue that Chomsky's 1965 definition of communicative competence was

inadequate as it failed to refer to performance phenomena and to the sociocultural parameters of appropriateness to the context in which language was used. Two years later, Hymes took up the argument stressing that:

A child who might produce any sentence whatsoever – such a child would be likely to be institutionalized ... We have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires a knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, and in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values and motivations concerning language ... (Hymes, 1972: 277–278)

Therefore, as was suggested by Hymes (1972: 278) there are “rules of use” without which the rules of grammar would be useless.”

In addition to commenting on the interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociocultural, and probabilistic aspects of situated language use, Hymes also considered the formulation of rules of language use by analysing speech events in terms of their constituents or components. These he identified as: participants, setting, scene (psycho-cultural setting), message form and message content, purpose, key, channel, code, norms of interaction, norms of interpretation, and genre. Although there has been little conclusive research into the way in which these factors systematically interact, their categorization and clarification have been of considerable benefit to language teachers working on syllabus specification, (for example van Ek in 1976 and Munby in 1978) in terms of providing a framework for the series of questions which need to be asked in identifying parameters of relevance.

Halliday (1973), in discussing the inter-relations between language and social context, has perhaps been the most influential in providing a sociosemantic orientation and in linking social context, meaning potential, and grammatical exemplification. To express it simply, Halliday sees the social system as providing a set

of behavioural options that are realized as sets of semantic options which in turn are realized as sets of grammatical options.

It is interesting and relevant to note that in seeking a pedagogic application of the Hallidayan view of factors accounting for communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980), in contradiction to Munby (1978), doubt whether grammatical competence can or should be developed from the standpoint of meaning at the very beginning of a second or foreign language learning programme. Canale and Swain argue that:

It may be more realistic to view the normal process at the beginning of such learning as one in which what can be said (grammatical options) determines in some way what can be meant (semantic options) in the second language... Nonetheless, it is quite possible that at later stages of second language learning... grammatical options are more of a direct realization of semantic options rather than the reverse (Canale and Swain, 1980:18).

It is recognized that communicative use of language from the earliest stage possible will facilitate this development.

Besides Hymes (1972) and Halliday (1973), the influence of other sociolinguists and discourse analysts is more noticeably apparent in their more detailed discussion of discursal sequencing and rhetorical language use, thus relating to Hymes' more general definition of communicative skills. Fillmore (1972), for instance, in discussing the question of coherent discourse within a theory of conversation and the varied relationship between form and function, provides us with various pertinent examples of the rhetorical rules of language use:

... in fact we can imagine contexts in which the sequence **Thank you - You're welcome** is inappropriate. Consider a three-line conversation in which A says **You have lovely eyes**, B says **Thank you** and A then says **You're welcome**. The sequence can be given an interpretation of course, but we recognise it as bizarre by realizing that the function of **You're welcome** is partly that of acknowledging that one has done somebody a favour. A compliment cannot stand as a compliment if its speaker acknowledges that in saying it he has done his subject a favour (Fillmore, 1972:4).

Widdowson (1978a), in his discussion of "cohesion seen as linking propositional development" and "coherence seen as linking illocutionary development" has suggested that these relationships are discovered by the reader or listener as a consequence of practical reasoning in his/her interpretation of the discourse. In much of Widdowson's discussion, textual and discorsal processing factors are seen as one important aspect of the reading process.

Up to this point, this short overview has dealt briefly, but not in any way exhaustively, with the contributions which sociolinguistics and sociosemantics have made to communicative language learning. Candlin (1976) has the last word:

... it is perhaps worthwhile to set down the areas of enquiry commonly accepted among applied linguistics as contributing to the study of discourse and which are drawn on in the development of communicative syllabuses for language learning ... These are

- (A) **Studies in textual cohesion** (especially the work of Halliday and Hasan and the Prague School),
- (B) **Studies in language function** (Jakobson, Hymes, Halliday, Ervin-Tripp),
- (C) **Studies in speech act theory** (Austin, Searle, Sadock, Gordon, Lakoff),
- (D) **Studies in sociolinguistic variation** (Labov, Bailey, Bickerton, Fasold),
- (E) **Studies in presuppositional semantics** (Grice, Kempson, Venneman),
- (F) **Studies in interaction analysis** (Bales, Argyle),
- (G) **Studies in ethnomethodology and face-to-face analysis** (Goffman, Sacks, Garfinkel, Schegloff),
- (H) **Studies in ethnography of speaking** (Hymes, Gumperz),
- (I) **Studies in process analysis** (Wunderlich, Rehhein and Ehrlich), and
- (J) **Studies in discourse analysis** (Sinclair and Coulthard).

(Candlin, 1976: 238-239)

Candlin's list, at least as regards to contributors, is clearly not intended to be comprehensive, but taken together the contribution will have been to underscore the crucial importance of context in most of the recent decisions that have been taken regarding formal classroom language learning. It is equally clear that not all of the fields or areas of enquiry in Candlin's list will have contributed in equal proportion to the debate on the communicative approach in the teaching and learning of English. It is inevitable that individual course designers in certain projects will have favoured certain areas at the expense of others. It might, for instance be argued that Candlin, in his own research into communicative teaching-learning and its application in course design (Candlin et al. 1974), has borrowed heavily from category G (Studies in ethnomethodology and face-to-face analysis) and category J (Studies in discourse analysis). In Candlin's own estimation (particularly in Candlin and Breen, 1979), an essential characteristic of communicative behaviour is negotiation of meaning. The importance with which Candlin attaches to this is reflected in ethnomethodologists' perspectives which focus on interpretive procedures in an attempt to make sense of any discourse which is met. Research into discourse analysis suggests that discourse patterning of a hierarchical nature, whilst not invariant, is often observable and this principle is reflected in doctor-patient communication materials.

THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH: A CLOSER LOOK AT ITS DEFINITIONS

The preceding has so far indicated some areas of agreement concerning the background to and definition of communicative learning-teaching. Such agreement, however, does not extend to more detailed definitions of the process, as we will see presently. "Using the language for particular purposes in tasks and activities which evoke a strong sense of relevance to the learner's interests" describes communicative language learning-teaching only in the most general of terms. When one attempts to focus more clearly and to probe the essential characteristics in some detail, one encounters a very broad spectrum of definitions.

At one end of the spectrum lies the archetypal functional-notional definition of communicative learning-teaching as applied to syllabuses primarily concerned with the development of mainly

oral production skills in general English, and reflected in a substantial number of course books appearing in the English language teaching market today. Canale and Swain (1980) provide a relevant summary definition:

A communicative (or functional-national) approach ... is organized on the basis of communicative functions (*example*: apologizing, describing, inviting, promising) that a given learner or group of learners needs to know and emphasizes the ways in which particular grammatical forms may be used to express these functions appropriately (Canale and Swain, 1980:2).

There are, briefly, four comments to be made on a functional-notional approach thus defined and exemplified. Firstly, the approach's concern is normally with a group of language learners rather than with individual learners. Secondly, what language learners need to know is interpreted as desired target competence with little, if any, attention given to initial sub-skills or competence. Thirdly, the appropriateness criterion is often poorly specified, especially in those cases where the discourse or sociocultural context aspect is poorly defined and where most attention is generally focused upon items or series of functional items. Lastly, courses of the functional-notional approach are normally teacher-centred, employing methodologies similar to those associated with structurally-oriented courses.

Functional-notional approaches then, it would appear, as a result of their preoccupation with usage, give insufficient attention to the contextualized use of language. Widdowson (1977), however, reminds us of the importance of discourse, and of the ability to process discourse in any genuinely communicative approach:

If we are to adopt a communicative approach to teaching which takes as its primary purpose the development of the ability to do things with language, then it is discourse which must be the centre of our attention. There are two basic characteristics of discourse which we need to account for ... The first is that it is essentially interactive, and involves the negotiation of meanings ... The second characteristic is that this interaction creates hierarchial structures whereby the combination of

propositions and illocutions builds up to a larger unit of communication (Widdowson, 1977:254, 257).

At the opposite end of the spectrum, learner-centred communicative approaches consider the language learner, the learning task, and the discourse arising from it as their primary foci of attention. Corder (1977) reminds us of the nature of language learning:

I am adopting for this analysis the theoretical point of view that language learning is an inductive cognitive process of discovering those regularities which underlie talk in the target language which are often called the rules of grammar, and the rules of rhetoric and interactional management, or rules of usage and rules of use respectively ... The processes involved are basically those of data processing, hypothesis formation, and testing. Clearly the first requirement for learning to take place is that the learner shall be exposed to, (or have available), the data upon which these processes can operate (Corder, 1977:6).

Corder refers to the rules of "interactional management" and points out that language learning involves "data processing, hypothesis formation, and testing". However, what may receive insufficient emphasis in this more psycholinguistically-oriented definition is the social nature of a great deal of learning behaviour and the negotiated aspect of meaning or knowledge which is assimilated.

Candlin and Breen (1979) make good any discrepancy in their discussion of language learning in a communicative curriculum by stating that:

Communication we have defined as a process of relating language forms and language behaviour in the context of social events. We have stressed that the conventions that link forms and behaviour are not fixed for all time, nor certain among different participants in an event or across events. They are variable and need to be constantly negotiated and accepted. Communication becomes a convention-creating rather than a merely convention-following activity. It is a

social and interpersonal process. Learning to communicate is, as a result, not a matter of digesting a static and predictable body of knowledge, but learning how to interpret, express, and negotiate through and about these conventions (Candlin and Breen, 1979:209).

The process of negotiation is therefore seen as having both personal and interpersonal dimensions, for, on the one hand, the language learner is interacting with language data in order to define and control communicative language use, and, on the other, and with the same aims, with all other participants in the learning-teaching process.

The research findings of Canale and Swain (1980) on the communicative approach in the teaching and learning of English are interesting and should be noted here, since the re-orientation which is implied or promised by their view of communicative language learning is not in fact followed through. They have proposed a theoretical framework not dissimilar to that of Candlin's, as follows:

... we understand communication to be based in sociocultural, interpersonal interaction, to involve unpredictability and creativity, to take place in a discourse and socio-cultural context, to be purposive ... to be carried out under performance constraints, to involve use of authentic (as opposed to textbook contrived) language, and to be judged as successful or not on the basis of behavioural outcomes. We must assume with Candlin ... that communication involves the continuous evaluation and negotiation of social meaning on the part of the participants (Canale and Swain, 1980:29).

Canale and Swain suggest then, one paragraph further on, a practical application of those views, as follows:

The communicative approach that we envisage is thus an integrative one in which emphasis is on preparing second language learners to exploit ... those grammatical features of the second language that are selected on the basis of, among other criteria, their grammatical and cognitive complexity, transparency with respect to communicative

function, probability of use by native speakers, generalizability to different communicative functions and contexts and relevance to the learners' communicative needs in the second language (Canale and Swain, 1980:29).

From this, it is difficult to ascertain in what sense the communicative learning programme is really integrative for the syllabus appears to be teacher-dominated and teacher-determined, perhaps even arising out of item analysis and pre-selection in accordance with these criteria that Canale and Swain have listed. It is not made clear, in fact, to what extent the items are preselected or to what extent they are seen as arising out of the learner's exploitative relationship with the data, though the emphasis does seem to be on items rather than on discourse units. Unfortunately, further comments on syllabus design, exploitative methodology, or teacher's role, do not succeed in clarifying matters for they are at times too vague and at others too verbose, and in relation to syllabus design, contradictory.

On the role of the teacher in the communicative approach, Canale and Swain comment:

... the teacher will have to take on an activating role as the instigator of situations which allow students to develop communication skills ... (Canale and Swain, 1980:33).

On teaching methodology, they comment that:

... it is crucial that classroom activities reflect, in the most optimally direct manner, those communication abilities that the learner is most likely to engage in ... Furthermore, communication activities must be as meaningful as possible and be characterized (at increasing levels of difficulty) by aspects of genuine communication such as its basis in social interaction, the relative creativity, and unpredictability of utterances, its purposefulness and goal-orientation and its authenticity ... (Canale and Swain, 1980:33).

On syllabus design, Canale and Swain comment:

It is our view that a functionally organized communicative approach ... is more likely to have positive

consequences for learner motivation ... (Canale and Swain, 1980:33).

Thus, not very much progress, if any, is made in translating the theoretical framework into a practical application.

CONCLUSION

It is self-evident that in the communicative approach in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language the characteristics of learner-centred approaches are radically different from those of teacher-centred approaches. The concern now is with the individual learner in the first instance, whose learning is however supported by the group effort. Extant knowledge and skills are of prime importance, as the learner's process competence is developed. Language use is always relevant to extant needs with the result that in the discorsal context of social events, tasks, and activities, the appropriateness criterion is inevitably involved. The re-focusing of learner and teacher roles and their manner of participation have, of course, profound implications for a re-routing of methodological decisions.

It can also be concluded that Candlin and Breen's (1979:209) definition of communicative ability as "relating language forms and language behaviour in the context of social events" does have profound implications for a communicative methodology in second language teaching and learning. The basis of their view is that the imprecise nature of communication will require language learners "to interpret, express, and negotiate through and about" discourse conventions using whatever process competence they possess.

In conclusion, the communicative approach in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language is thus seen as three dimensional. It involves interacting with self, interacting with discourse data or materials, and interacting with significant others, one of whom would unavoidably be the manager or monitor of interactional activity, the language teacher.

Paper read at the Seminar on English Language Teaching, Autumn term, University College London, 16 November 1983.

GRAMMAR DRILLS FOR THE ESL CLASSROOM

"Good grammar is not merely grammar which is free from unconventionalities, or even from the immoralities. It is the triumph of the communication process, the use of words which create in the reader's mind the thing as the writer conceived it."

Janet Aiken

INTRODUCTION

What we usually refer to as "good grammatical English" is the use of words and word forms in a multitude of combinations appropriate to English as it is spoken and written by native speakers of the language. To be able to recognize and to avoid common errors in English one requires a sufficiently good knowledge of English sounds, words, and the formation and arrangement of words. Grammar is that science which deals with words, forms of words and word combinations. In general, grammar is a descriptive statement of the way language works.

Like any science, grammar becomes difficult and involved once first principles are out of the way, but the purpose of the English as a Second Language (ESL) student is not to become a linguist but to learn how to use the English language that is appropriate for him/her in different situations. **Grammar describes but does not prescribe.** Even so, in order to speak and to write without making what are generally considered minor mistakes or outright blunders, the ESL student needs some knowledge of the English way of saying and writing things. A minimum knowledge of fundamental grammar can be a powerful aid in effective writing on all ESL levels. In the ESL classroom it is the teacher who is responsible for providing the necessary grammar drills to help the students express their ideas clearly and effectively in both speech and writing.

GRAMMAR DRILLS

This paper attempts to discuss some drills that could be appropriately used in the ESL classroom to help students master basic grammatical principles and apply them in both speech and writing.

There is a vast variety of grammar drills for the ESL classroom, and as many names for the different types. ESL teachers should not let the name of the drill confuse them. The important thing is to understand how each drill works.

The major kinds of grammar drills are:

1. Substitution Drills
2. Transformation Drills
3. Response Drills
4. Translation Drills
5. Directed Discourse Drills
6. Cued Discourse Drills

Excluded from this paper are presentation activities such as the **repetition of examples or the memorization of dialogues**. There are no drills here that would be used exclusively for vocabulary, pronunciation, composition, or literature.

1. SUBSTITUTION DRILLS

A. Simple substitution drill (change in one slot)

Example: To practise the pattern MODAL + VERB

Teacher	Students
Repeat.	We should decide now.
leave	We should decide now.
talk	We should leave now.
go	We should talk now.
	We should go now.

The student's attention is focused on the verbs being substituted, but what they are learning is the pattern SUBJECT + MODAL + VERB (base form).

B. Correlated substitution drill (a substitution in one slot will cause a change elsewhere in the sentence)

Example: The practise the two patterns VERB + TO + VERB, and VERB + VERB + ING

classroom,
should not
thing is to

Teacher

Students

Repeat.
avoided
needed
enjoyed

He wanted to go.
He wanted to go.
He avoided going.
He needed to go.
He enjoyed going.

C. Moving slot substitution drill (this can be done with or without correlated change)

Example: To practise placing frequency words and time expressions in their proper positions.

Teacher

Students

We always eat
lunch at noon.
sometimes
at 1 pm.
usually

We always eat lunch at noon.
We sometimes eat lunch at noon
We sometimes eat lunch at 1 pm.
We usually eat lunch at 1 pm.

uch as the
es. There
cabulary,

D. Moving slot with correlated change

Example: To practise the "subjunctive."

Teacher

Students

It's important
that he goes
home.
necessary
you
important

It's important that he goes home.
It's necessary that he goes home.
It's necessary that you go home.
It's important that you go home.

B
ow.
ow.
w.

2. TRANSFORMATION DRILLS

A. Transposition drill (rearrange the constituents of patterns without otherwise changing them)

Example: To practise the formation of yes/no questions with the present continuous.

Teacher

Students

He's doing his work.
We're speaking English.

Is he doing his work?
Are we speaking English?

s being
pattern

ne slot

TO +

In order to provide a more **natural context**, something like the above drill could be carried out in the following way: the teacher says "I'm going to tell you something about Ali, you ask a question about Samy. For example, ..."

Teacher	Students
Ali is doing his homework.	Is Samy doing his homework (too)?
Ali is learning Japanese.	Is Samy learning Japanese (too)?

Then, after more such items using this model, the teacher says, "I'll tell you what Ali and Jim are doing, you ask about the other students."

Teacher	Students
Ali and Jim are running.	Are the other students running?
Ali and Jim are playing.	Are the other students playing?

B. Transposition drill with correlated change

Example: To practise the negative transformation plus the selection of **many** or **much** with count and mass nouns.

Teacher	Students
Ahmad eats a lot of apples.	Ah Kow doesn't eat many apples.
Ahmad eats a lot of fish.	Ah Kow doesn't eat much fish.
Ahmad eats a lot of potatoes.	Ah Kow doesn't eat many potatoes.
Ahmad eats a lot of rice.	Ah Kow doesn't eat much rice.

C. Expansion drill (adding new slots)

Example: To practise the correct positioning of expressions of time, place, and manner.

Teacher**Students**

That boy studied
at college.

That boy studied last year.
That boy studied last year.
That boy studied at college
last year.

hard

That boy studied hard at
college last year.

D. Reduction drill (decreasing the number of slots)

Example: To practise **some** and **one** as substitutes for count and mass nouns.

Teacher**Students**

Would you like some
vegetables?
Would you like a piece
of cake?
Would you like some
soup?
Would you like a piece
of gum?

Would you like some?
Would you like one?
Would you like some?
Would you like one?

E. Integration drill (combining two or more sentences into a single longer, more complex sentence)

Example: To practise included question patterns

Teacher**Students**

How old is he?
I don't know.
Where will we go?
Ali knows.
How does he know?
I can tell you.
What did he say?
Can you tell me?

I don't know how old he
is
Ali knows where we will
go.
I can tell you how he
knows.
Can you tell me what he
said?

F. Completion drill (The student hears an utterance that is complete except for a word or phrase. He completes the sentence and then repeats the full utterance).

Example: To practise the possessive pronouns **mine**, **yours**, etc.

Teacher

You drive your car
and I'll drive
I'll talk to my boss
and he'll talk to
You bring your friends
and we'll bring

Students

You drive your car and
I'll drive mine.
I'll talk to my boss and
he'll talk to his.
You bring your friends
and we'll bring ours.

3. RESPONSE DRILLS

A. Yes/no questions

B. Alternative questions

C. Information questions

The "chain drill" procedure can be used with any of the above response patterns.

Example: To practise CAN + VERB in questions and short answer.

Student A: Can you swim?

Student B: Yes, I can. Can you swim?

Student C: No, I can't. Can you swim?

Change the question frequently (dance, sing, play the guitar, speak French, etc.) and do not go straight around the room. Do a few in one row, switch the cue and start again in another row.

D. Patterned response drill (The student is instructed to answer a question and add some information.)

Example: To practise short answers with echo statements.

Teacher

Is Kim in a hurry?

Should Sam and Aziz
go?

Does Ah Mooi
understand?

Students

Yes, he is, and his sister
is too.

Yes, they should, and Ali
should too.

Yes, she does, and her
sister does too.

E. **Cued response drill** (The student answers the cues given)

Example: To practise irregular past tense verbs.

Teacher	Students
(some books) What did you bring with you?	I brought some books.
(a new shirt) What did you buy at the store?	I bought a new shirt.
(last night) When did you hear the news?	I heard it last night.

4. TRANSLATION DRILLS

In the ESL classroom possibly the only valid translation exercises are the ones in which the students go from the native language (cue) to the target language (response). Such a process forces the student to think in the language he is learning.

Example: To practise count and non-count nouns in English when teaching native speakers of Malaysia.

Teacher	Students
Itu pensel.	That's a pencil.
Itu kopi.	That's coffee.
Itu kerusi.	That's a chair.
Itu garam.	That's salt.

5. DIRECTED DISCOURSE DRILLS

A. **Reported speech** (The teacher, after eliciting an utterance from one of the students, asks another student to relay what he has heard to the rest of the class.)

Example: To practise the future-in-past-time, and the reported speech pattern.

Teacher	Students
When will you come here again?	S1: I'll come again tomorrow.
What did he say?	S2: He said he'd come tomorrow.
When can you do the lesson?	S3: I can do it next week.
What did she say?	S4: She said she could do it next week.

- B. **Directed dialogues** (These are most effective with role-playing where the teacher supplies cues to two or more students who act out the situation(s)).

Example: To practise a variety of constructions – **tell**, **commands**, **have to**, etc.

Teacher	Students
Paul, tell Bob not to miss the show at the Star tonight.	Paul: Bob, don't miss the show at the Star tonight.
Bob, ask Paul why. Tell him you were planning to play tennis.	Bob: Why? I was planning to play tennis.

6. **CUED DISCOURSE DRILLS** (A minimum of control over the situation leading toward unrestricted communication.).

A. **Response discourse drill** (The drill can represent free communication when the questions are about local or universal topics).

B. **Cued pattern drill** (In this drill the same pattern is elicited each time but leaving the students freedom in the choice of a number of lexical items)

Example: To practise connecting clauses with **BUT**.

Teacher	Students
Alice/English German	Alice speaks English but she doesn't speak German.

Maniam/guitar/drums

Maniam plays the guitar but not the drums.

Mr. Lim/car/truck

Mr. Lim likes to drive a car but he can't drive a truck.

Mariam/a \$5 hat
a \$50 coat

Mariam would buy a \$50 coat but she would not buy a \$5 hat.

- C. **Cued composition** (This is usually meant for written practise but it can be used for oral practise with advanced ESL students.)

Teacher

went to museum/last week

Students

My friend and I went to the museum last week and we saw an interesting exhibit of Malaysian Art.

- D. **Reporting** (This can be anything from "Show and tell" to a formal report or a classroom lecture.)

Example: The teacher assigns reports to students about professions in their hometowns, etc.

Before such oral report assignments, just as in written compositions, the teacher must give thorough advance preparation, that is, ask the students questions that will elicit details about the topics, and get imaginations working, and also to give the necessary vocabulary lessons to the class.

- E. **Interviewing** (The teacher can interview students on their interests, such as favourite games, hobbies etc.)

- F. **Role-playing.** The teacher describes a situation and has two or more students improvise their parts.

Example: Teacher tells students to imagine that a guest has come to the house and they want the guest to stay for dinner.

Role-playing can be extended to having students write short plays that they will present to the class.

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Paper reprinted from SUARA PENDIDIK, 8(3), 1982. Shah Alam: MAE.

WHAT GOES ON IN THE PROCESS OF EFL WRITING

In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, when a student writes in the target language he or she may commit errors of various types. Some, such as lexico-grammatical errors and spelling errors, are easily recognized by the language teacher as there are correct forms to compare these errors with. There may be other weaknesses in the EFL student's writing such as a serious lack of variation in vocabulary or syntax. Sometimes there are problems of poor text construction as a result of lack of cohesion and coherence.

TEACHER CONCERN AND AWARENESS

Every EFL teacher is concerned about his or her student's writing errors and this is natural. Does the teacher, however, realize some of the mental difficulties experienced by the student in the process of writing in English? Has the teacher also considered questions such as the roles of memory and reading in good and effective writing in the foreign language?

In order to better understand some of the EFL writer's difficulties, this article will focus on the role of reading as an aid to memory in the composition process.

Any text, irrespective of whether it is written in the native language or in the target language, has to be characterized by internal coherence. The content of the text constitutes a definite kind of totality and its structure manifests a well-thought out plan. A writer who produces a text is assumed to follow consciously or unconsciously such a plan and his writing consists, among other things, in the construction of this plan and its various sub-plans which all help to regulate in a specific way what is written.

In general, the writer's plan is adjusted and enriched continuously as the writing proceeds. The plan for what is going to come necessarily builds upon what has already been written, otherwise the final text would not be coherent and there would not be any cohesion.

Sometimes, if it is impossible to continue, for example, in the case of an EFL learner, the writer has to rewrite an earlier portion of the text, to labourously reorganise the plan behind it. This is, of course, to maintain that the writer must remember the important parts or features of what he has already written in order to be able to continue in a way which makes the final product a coherent and a true text, without errors where possible. It is therefore essential that the writer has to remember what he has written, in which order it was written, and to a certain extent also the lexico-grammatical form that was given to it.

Inevitably, the writer has to be constantly aware of where he is in his text production, which events or arguments he has already presented, or the text will have content gaps or repetitions, literal or otherwise. Apart from that, most texts contain regular references back and forth in the totality. There might be promises to be fulfilled later on: a general statement has to be exemplified or modified, a reason has to be properly substantiated, a suggestion has to be further motivated through arguments, or a foreboding has to be realized as true or false.

DETERMINING REFERENCES MODES

The choice between a definite and an indefinite expression very often depends upon whether a particular referent has already been introduced by the writer in the text. When a writer uses expressions such as *too*, *also*, *again*, *in addition to* or *for the second time*, it is usually presupposed that the text has already presented the same or a similar entity or process earlier. Through the text the writer builds up expectations, and he has specific words to signal whether these expectations are realized or contradicted in the sentences succeeding these expectations. If someone has been reported as saying that vegetables are cheap in France and the person who hears this goes to France he will observe that vegetables are in fact cheap there or he will be able to report "... but vegetables are not cheaper there at all."

In the process of writing, it is not always sufficient just to know that something has been said or has not been said in the preceding sentence or paragraph of the text. Sometimes the writer has to know also where in relation to other linearly ordered text elements a

certain entity, state or process was brought to the fore. As an example, let us take a sequence of sentences like the following:

$$S_{z-2} S_{z-1} S_z$$

Let us say that S_z begins with the word "Nevertheless." For the text to be well-formed, "Nevertheless" must refer to the proposition of S_{z-1} (or S_{z-1} and backwards, $S_{z-2} S_{z-3}$), not to the contents of the other sentences with the exception of S_{z-1} .

HOW SPECIFIC?

Similar restrictions govern the use of anaphoric pronouns versus more specific definite noun phrases. Which type of definite noun phrase a particular writer chooses depends upon the Greek quantity maxim: a writer should not be more specific than necessary. Usually, the pronoun is preferred if it unambiguously tells the reader which referent is meant; otherwise the writer has to further specify – by means of nouns, adjectives, relative clauses, and the like – what the sentence refers to. It is again important for the writer to keep in mind the organization of content in the preceding text. The following example illustrates this importance:

"A young child came along with a small dog. The dog was limping. He was dirty all over".

If the writer wants to indicate that the young child was dirty all over, he cannot use the pronoun, since the preceding main clause is about the dog. The writer would therefore have to replace the pronoun with "The child" or with something to that effect.

The choice between anaphoric pronouns and more specific noun phrases is not only a question of linear distance. There are also definite rules which require knowledge of the referent's previous grammatical realization. The writer of the text has to remember grammatical structure not only within clauses but also over longer distances. Let us consider the following example:

"It is obvious that the pretty girl resembles her sister. But she has a sharper nose".

If "she" can refer semantically to both subject and object in the preceding sentence, its unmarked reference is the subject.

Let us now consider the following short text:

"It was no secret to Mariam that Lisa was sick. She could not conceal that."

In the above short text, the pronoun "she" is ambiguous. On the one hand Lisa is the subject and Mariam is the non-subject, but on the other hand Lisa is in the subordinate clause, while Mariam is in the main clause. If the writer of this text is to be aware of the ambiguity, he has to remember the structure of the preceding sentence.

THE ROLE OF MEMORY

The examples given above are meant to illustrate how the memory of the content and the organization of the preceding text determine what can be written and how, in the succeeding text. An awareness of this role of memory in the writing task will help teachers understand some of the great difficulties EFL students encounter in their writing tasks in the language classroom. The examples also serve to inform language teachers that they should not only be overly concerned with their students' writing errors but that they should also attempt to explain to their students what is actually involved in the process of text production. Certainly there are matters other than the role of memory which are also important in EFL writing, such as lexico-grammatical features, but grammatical restrictions and their domains can best be dealt with by consulting available reference books, such as Halliday and Hasan (1976). EFL teachers can find a thorough presentation by Halliday and Hasan on cohesion in writing. Their cohesion factors constitute textual contracts, which require the writer in various ways to remember what he or she has written before; when planning what is to be written next.

In addition to memory, the role of reading during writing is also important and relevant in text production. It seems intuitively reasonable to assume that we read what we write in the same way as we hear what we say. There are, however, different opinions on the role of auditory feedback during spoken discourse. Speech can

be greatly disturbed and hindered if the feedback is delayed, but it is not certain, according to Webster and Lubker (1968), and McNeilage and McNeilage (1973), if that is because one cannot talk without auditory feedback or if one is only disturbed by hearing one's speech ringing in one's ears a little too late. More research into this area is necessary. Nevertheless, the speaker also gets kinetic feedback: if the normal articulation is hampered, usually the speaker is ingenious in discovering other ways and means to accomplish what he or she is after.

READING DURING WRITING

Reading during writing, as a counterpart to listening during one's speech, means that one follows with one's eyes and reads the text as it emerges on the paper. Those who type their ideas directly onto a piece of paper also look at the text, although they are perfectly capable of typing without looking at the sheet of paper or the keys, as can be observed when they type copies of manuscripts.

There is another kind of reading during writing that is clearly documented too. This is when a writer stops and looks through what he has written. At times, the writer stops in the process of writing to read his last sentence as if he expects to get some kind of inspiration from the content, or from its rhythm, to continue writing. Perhaps, the writer's thoughts go astray in the preceding pause, and he now has to retrace his line of reasoning. This kind of re-reading in the process of writing, can, of course, lead to revisions, deletions, and additions to the text.

One can also expect that the writer uses a third type of reading during writing. This reading process is, on the whole, as unconscious as the first. Through this reading, the writer sees and is immediately reminded of key words and key structures in the preceding sentence(s) which will help him further develop his ideas in the writing process. Probably, this kind of reading is done via peripheral vision during writing. It could also be something that the writer is able to do in the short pauses where he makes lexical decisions. The purpose of this hypothesized peripheral reading during writing would be to keep recall of the preceding text and its lexico-grammatical organization at an acceptable level.

It is true that most writers, even the proficient ones, pause during writing. EFL students often pause during writing hesitating over the choices of lexical items or deciding if a subsequent expression would be an appropriate follow-up. Like most other writers, an EFL writer may stop not only between paragraphs or at full stops but also in the middle of paragraphs and sentences. Most of these pauses seem to occur when the writer does not know how to proceed. It is possible that re-calling and checking of the previous text in various ways are closely integrated in the writer's planning strategy at these moments of pause.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPEECH AND WRITING

In order to assist EFL students to write more proficiently in the classroom, language teachers need to be aware of the difference between speech planning and the planning of written text. One obvious difference is that the writing process generally takes more time and requires more mental energy than the speaking process. At the same time, the demands on the planning of what is going to come in writing are heavier than those demands made on spoken discourse.

In the writing process it would not be surprising then, if a writer lost some pieces of the previous text because what is out of the writer's mind can be retrieved through reading and re-reading; the trace of the verbal production is still there for inspection later on. The writer is aware that the context is always available, a glance backwards can help refresh the writer's memory. Such a strategy need not be conscious, in fact one should expect that it operates without disturbing the higher mental planning activities or the motor part of the writing process. However true that may be, it can only be applicable to native writers - with EFL students the problem is more serious than just glancing backwards to "refresh the writer's memory". EFL students do not possess the competence of native writers. Often, these EFL writers' command of the English language is poor and they lack variation in syntax, vocabulary and text construction so that the writing process demands more mental energy from them.

In EFL writing, it is not unusual to come across texts with very poor cohesion and coherence, indicating insufficient recall of what

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the writer had already written, either because of a low level of language proficiency or because of ineffective reading during the writing process. Too often EFL students' writing strategies remind one of those used in spoken discourse: they write straight ahead without bothering too much and certainly without editing and reediting. The question of how the reader will react often does not concern them at all.

Many students suffer anguish when they approach writing, and writing in a foreign language can be especially frustrating and difficult. A language teacher, aware of and sensitive to the nature and role of memory in the writing task, can better understand the difficulties of his or her students. This understanding should be accompanied by a desire to develop practical steps to better writing so that the teacher can work more closely with his or her students to improve their performance. When the level of English language instruction in writing is appropriate to the students' level, learning to write better offers them the interest, challenge and personal satisfaction of self-expression. Tichy (1966:6) reminds us that "good writers are not born, they are made and unmade".

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Paper reprinted from PROBLEMS AND EXPERIENCES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, 3(3), 1986. Rome, Italy: La Nuova Italia.