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The Teaching of Listening Comprehension

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The British Council was established in 1934 and one of our main aims has always been to promote a wider knowledge of the English language. Over the years we have issued many important publications that have set the agenda for ELT professionals, often in partnership with other organisations and institutions.

As part of our 75th anniversary celebrations, we re-launched a selection of these publications online, and more have now been added in connection with our 80th anniversary. Many of the messages and ideas are just as relevant today as they were when first published. We believe they are also useful historical sources through which colleagues can see how our profession has developed over the years.

The Teaching of Listening Comprehension

This 1981 volume, a collection of papers from a colloquium organised in Paris two years earlier, provides various practical insights into the development of listening skills. Rinvolucri begins with reflections and practical ideas related to getting listeners to give full attention. Several contributions look at the nature of listening materials, and a key theme is authenticity (in the chapters by Besse, Nakić , Dirven, Rixon and Fish, for example). Other chapters (for example, those by Dudley-Evans and Johns, and Vandermaelen) focus on teaching methodology. Finally, Urbain focuses on needs to teach pronunciation in the context of development of listening comprehension, while Riley concludes with a chapter on using video.

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The Teaching of Listening Comprehension

The British Council

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The Teaching of Listening Comprehension

(Papers presented at the Goethe Institut Colloquium held in Paris in 1979)

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CONTENTS

THE USE OF AUTHENTIC SOUND MATERIALS FOR BEGINNERS

Anuška Nakić

It is generally felt that authentic text materials, and particularly authentic sound materials, are not suited for beginning levels of foreign language study. The reason given is the difficulty of such material. It differs from carefully and slowly pronounced text in tempo, phonetic variability, register etc, and however carefully one searches it is hard to find authentic samples which fit into grammatical and lexical grading of beginning levels. Hence listening practice is usually done on specially composed text material, mainly in order to develop hearing skills, ie identification and aural memory of phonetic groups and sounds, as well as linguistic competence as a whole, with the hope of one day achieving the skill of understanding the content of spoken text at an advanced stage of learning or outside of class. Thus transfer of knowledge from pedagogical to authentic material is excluded from the educational process at the beginning stage of auditory work.

Experience has, however, shown, eg in the development of speaking competence, that there can be no transfer if the pupil does not constantly have the opportunity to apply what he has learned, and that however many elements and patterns he may have learned, he will still have difficulties in making his own foreign-language sentences if he has not practised them from the earliest stages of learning. In the same way, the pupil must be led from the start to understand messages in the foreign language, rather than just identifying them, if our goal is communicative competence. For such work authentic texts have advantages over all other types.

This article, based on experience with English learners eleven years old, the age when obligatory foreign language study begins in Croatia, seeks to show that authentic text has a place even in the first year as part of a systematically organised approach to developing the skill of listening comprehension.

Beginning language teaching is traditionally organised around pedagogic text since it is felt that this phase requires careful dosage of the language material in a particular number of servings and in a particular order. Such texts are usual in Croatian schools at least. At one time they were written passages, whereas now, as a result of our adoption of the oral approach, these have given way to recorded texts which for the first few years of study are visually illustrated sentence by sentence[1]. The recordings were made by native speakers trying as far as possible to speak the texts rather than read them aloud. Pupils see the text written only after having mastered it in spoken form. The introduction of

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[1]The sound texts are part of the series of five multimedia kits, *I Speak English* A, B, C, D, and E, by Blanka Brozović and Oktavija Gerčan, published by Školska knjiga, Zagreb. The first kit in the series appeared in 1974.

sound materials in daily class work has done much to develop listening skills but not everything that is possible or necessary. In the early 70s, when these sound materials were produced, listening was not in the foreground. Although the purpose of learning was even then communication in the foreign language, this was understood primarily as speaking communication, and listening was *considered mainly as a necessary precondition for speaking communication.* Only later was the term 'communication' reinterpreted in school curricula so as to give listening an autonomous status as a goal of language-learning; this called for re-examination of the functionality of the existing pedagogical spoken materials as well as a re-examination of approaches to sound materials.

Outside the classroom situation different types of texts go with different types of communication; in the classroom, however, every text is normally subordinated to the rules of class communication whatever its real communicative function would have been. Thus a dialogue from everyday life, which in the outside situation a speaker would participate in, listen to, or retell to another, in class is made dependent on the goals of language learning or a particular approach or the techniques of work. In our schools, in work with beginners such a text would most frequently be listened to, repeated, memorised to some extent, retold, dramatised, subjected to question-and-answer treatment, and then broken down into lexical, grammatical, and other elements and put back together into similar texts. At some time it would probably also be read, copied, etc. The main source of the inauthenticity of the text used in the classroom situation is just these rules of class communication which ignore the out-of-class purpose of each type of text, making all types into an 'all-purpose' text. Even a recorded snippet of spontaneous communication will not ensure authentic listening just because of its authentic source. Therefore when choosing material for listening we should not merely ask where the text is from and how it originated, but also what happens to it in class.

The traditional approach to an 'all purpose' pedagogical recorded text gives good results in developing hearing ability but it is not well adapted to developing global understanding of spoken messages. The global sense of the text is offered to the pupils beforehand through the pictures that accompany the text, so that understanding does not demand reliance on the verbal context. Understanding is taken as something given, and the main task is to decipher the individual sentences, phonetic groups, words, and sounds. In content and structure pedagogical text follows the level of the pupils' speaking ability, which at this phase is very limited, much more so than understanding ability, so that the pupils are exposed exclusively to texts that are below the level of their listening competence. Thus they have no opportunity to develop strategies needed in a real communication situation, like prediction, selection, etc, at least not on the level of the text as a whole.

This specific 'classroom' type of communication is presumably necessary in beginning stages, but there is no need to make it the only type of communication that goes on, particularly not in listening, since authentic listening, unlike speaking, can be organised in school conditions.

In Croatia, therefore, authentic spoken texts[2] were recorded later to go along with the pedagogical sound materials. These texts are specifically intended for listening comprehension, and do not parallel the progression of courses for a particular year of study. They contain interviews (3 to 4 minutes long), stories, and traditional British songs. The interviews were conducted with three English children and the topics were chosen to be familiar and interesting to our 11 to 15-year-old pupils. They are accompanied by instructions for teachers. The author considered that they could be used with better learners from the second or third year on.

Most teachers also feel the texts are too difficult to be used in the first few years by average learners and average classes. We can see two sources of difficulty. First is the text itself, since it does not follow the progression in the textbook. The learners have to guess at or to make do without the meanings of a large number of words. (This is a normal situation in communication but they are not accustomed to it.) Even words they know cause problems when appearing in a new context and a different pronunciation. Further, the learners are used to short, complete sentences, while in spontaneous speech there are repetitions, pauses, and unfinished sentences. For the native speaker these elements make the text easier to follow, but the learner does not know what to ignore; for him eg a hesitation sound has the same potential importance as an unknown word.

The second source of difficulty is the way teachers present such a text. Being used to 'all-purpose' texts, they try to get the learners to understand everything and to be able to reproduce it. In this case, when an authentic text intended just for listening is treated the same way as the recorded text of a lesson, it is certainly far above the abilities of learners at this stage. But if the texts are truly used for comprehension practice, they can be introduced as early as their first year, though the degree of understanding we ask of the learner and his reactions to the text will be different from those in the second, third, or later years.

We decided to test the comprehension abilities of 11-year-old learners after their first year (105 lessons) on one of the easier, conceptually familiar interviews, 'School Life'. Our aim was primarily to determine whether the learners could understand the text well enough to follow it with interest. The lesson procedure was determined with this in mind.

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[2]The authentic texts are part of multimedia kits prepared and equipped with instructions for use by Patrick B. Early.

To show the difference between this authentic text and the last lesson text the learners had worked on before hearing the interview, we will cite some characteristics of the two texts.

The lesson text (Appendix, Text 1) consisted of seventeen speeches (lines of dialogue) and 85 words. If we except **Yes**. or **No**. which preceded some of the speeches, only one had two sentences. The longest speech was seven words.

The interview (Appendix, Text 2) contained 51 speeches, but we decided not to listen to the last eleven, since the topic shifts somewhat. So the learners were offered a text of 40 speeches or 394 words. (The Text 2 in the Appendix is the 40 speeches version.) Most of the speeches had several sentences; the longest was 54 words long.

The lesson text had a visual accompaniment to each sentence, while the interview had nothing visual with it.

The grammatical points learned previous to hearing the interview included: singular and plural of nouns, Saxon genitive (*'s*), personal and demonstrative pronouns, question words, possessive adjectives, the comparative, the present of **to be** and **to have**, the present simple and continuous, **can**, interrogative and negative structures. The interview contains the simple past, past continuous, present perfect continuous, gerund, etc.

The lexicon of the interview was familiar to the learners in their mother tongue, but they had not yet learned the English school vocabulary appearing in it. In the first speech alone, of 54 words, there were nine unknown words, not counting new grammatical forms. The text mentions school subjects, while the learners so far learned only the name of the subject taught in the language lesson, ie English. Of the rest of the school vocabulary, they have had only **school**, **lesson**, and **learn**, while they have never met **subject**, **term**, **examination** etc. When the boy in the interview explains what subjects he likes and which ones he doesn't, which he does well in and which not so well, the pupils know **good**, **not very good**, **to like**, while the expressions **enjoy**, **favourite**, **to be good at it**, **best subject**, etc are unknown.

Many more difficulties could be listed, but this is sufficient to show that the authentic text was considerably above the learners' linguistic competence. However, we supposed that the text would not be equally far above their communicative competence, particularly if their attention was focussed on listening for content, if attainable demands were put on comprehension, and if they were stimulated to use all available means for extracting the content — linguistic and non-linguistic means, from the foreign and from the mother tongue. The whole lesson was conducted in the mother tongue, since the text and all the activities connected with it surpassed the learners' expressive abilities in English.

Before listening we directed the learners to pay attention to the following elements: who is speaking (men, women, adults, children); what the type of text is (story, report, conversation etc); what tone the story or conversation is narrated or carried on in (happy, sad, official, familiar etc); where what they will hear takes place, and what it is all about.

After the first hearing, we found through conversation in the mother tongue that the pupils had found answers to all the questions asked:

it is a conversation between an adult man and a boy;

the boy is being interviewed by a stranger; the pupils came to this conclusion gradually; in talking to each other they had concluded that the interviewer could not be the boy's father or his teacher since both would know all about the boy and would not have to ask so many questions;

the conversation is about school, about what the boy likes in school and how well he does; on the basis of this they concluded that the conversation was taking place at school, although there are no indications of this in the text;

The conversation, they felt, probably also mentions hobbies; the word **hobby** is not mentioned in the text, but is a projection of the learners' own associations of the words **music**, **guitar**, **instrument** etc.

It is worth noting that they have not met the words **music**, **guitar**, **instrument** in their English lessons; they have either heard them elsewhere or managed to recognise them by their similarity to the words *muzika, gitara, instrument* in their mother tongue. But we should remember that the similarity between these words in the two languages is much more obvious in writing than in pronunciation. Their aural understanding of these words and others to be mentioned below is probably due to success in developing hearing competence for English sounds — and ability to compare them with Serbo-Croatian — in their work with recorded lesson texts.

Before the second hearing the pupils were given some new tasks and some information to help them go a step further in listening. We instructed them to pay attention to the school subjects mentioned in the text and the boy's attitude to them. We supposed that the expressions important for further understanding were those with which he states his preference in relation to some of the subjects and describes his success in them. Since these expressions could not possibly be recognised without help, we wrote them on the blackboard and explained them: **his favourite subject**, **he likes it**, **he enjoys it**, **he is good at it**, **he is not good at it**. These were the only words on the board during the whole hour.

After the second hearing the learners had mostly understood everything we asked of them. They understood that the boy was talking about French, History, Music, Mathematics, Maths (in their mother tongue: *francuski, historija, muzika, matematika*). They did not understand the words Spanish and Science. (Spanish is not taught in our schools so they did not expect the word to be in the text; the Serbo-Croatian word for Science is *priroda* which cannot be easily connected with the English word.) As soon as we explained that Spanish was one more foreign language like English, they guessed at once that Spanish could be *španjolski,* probably by analogy with English-*engleski*. A girl who had learned the word Science somewhere outside the classroom translated it, so that the rest learned it from their classmate and not from the teacher, creating the feeling that they had after all been able to complete the list of subjects themselves.

At the end of the hour we asked the pupils to do a very simple written exercise so that we could see whether they had been able to understand the essential information in the text individually. The paper had a list of subjects mentioned in the interview in English. The assignment was to write the names of the subjects in the mother tongue and to add a plus-sign if the boy liked that subject and a minus if he didn't, and finally to add to each subject one of the expressions on the blackboard: his favourite subject, he likes it, etc, according to what he had in the texts. The great majority of the students did all this successfully.

The learners found the whole activity very interesting. One of the reasons is certainly that they usually do not do this sort of thing in language lessons, but we can suppose, judging by the discussion, that the text was interesting in content as well and that its difficulty and our method of work stimulated them to an intellectual effort appropriate to their age, which is not always the case with language lessons.

APPENDIX

Text 1

Slika 1	**Jack:**	Come on, Peter. Let's have a swim.
Slika 2	**Peter:**	Are Fred and Bill coming along?
	Jack:	No. They're rowing their boat.
Slika 3	**Peter:**	Where are your flippers and your swimsuit?
Slika 4	**Jack:**	There on the beach.
	Peter:	All right then. Let's go.
Slika 5	**Jack:**	Look. There's David in the water.
	Peter:	How well he swims!
Slika 6	**Jack:**	Yes. — Shall we jump from this rock?
	Peter:	OK. One . . , two . . , three . . !
Slika 7	**Father:**	Where are the boys?
	Mother:	In the water.
Slika 8	**Father:**	Ah, they're just coming.
Slika 9	**Peter** and **Jack:**	Here we are.
	Peter:	Oh, the water is warm today.
Slika 10	**Mother:**	Do you want an ice-cream, boys?
	Jack:	That's a good idea!

Text 2

Interviewer:	Well John, in our last conversation you were telling me about your school, and er — all about the er — food, and the sports, and the way you spend your free time. Today, I'd like to ask you about the er — erm — the part of the day when you're supposed to be working. Now — which is your favourite subject?
John:	Um — my favourite subject is French, because I can do it quite well, and enjoy French lessons.
Interviewer:	So — er — how many lessons do you have of French every week?
John:	Um — I think we have five French lessons a week . . . (Int.: And what d'you learn? You learn to speak it . .?) . . . and to — er — write it, yes.
Interviewer:	And are you good at speaking it, and writing it, or . . .
John:	I'm good at speaking it, but I'm not very good at writing it.
Interviewer:	Uh huh. But it's your best subject, is it?
John:	Yes
Interviewer:	How many marks did you get in your examination this term?
John:	I got 64%.
Interviewer:	64%. Hmm. That's not bad. Was that your best subject?
John:	Yes.

Interviewer: What about Mathematics? How did you get on in Maths?

John: I didn't get on very well with Maths.

Interviewer: What's the trouble with Mathematics?

John: Um. I got 19.

Interviewer: 19. 19 per cent? Oh dear! That's not so good, is it?

John: No.

Interviewer: What's the trouble with Mathematics?

John: Um — well, I like it . . . I'm just not very good at it.

Interviewer: Why? What, what d'you find difficult about it?

John: Um, I don't know — I just don't know, I don't really find it very difficult, I don't know why . . .

Interviewer: You can't . . . you can't add up?

John: Yes, I can but — er — I don't know many of the — um ways of doing the Maths — I don't know all the things like dividing by decimals like that.

Interviewer: You find that very difficult, do you?

John: Well, quite, yeah.

Interviewer: And do you enjoy History?

John: Yes, I like History a lot.

Interviewer: Hm hm? And what have you been learning about this term in History?

John: Well, we've been learning about the Kings of England, and how they conquered France and . . .

Interviewer: I see. Hm hm. And do enjoy that, do you?

John: Yes.

Interviewer: Hm hm. What's your — apart from French — is there any other subject which you're really fond of?

John: Yes, erm, I like Science, and I like Spanish, and I like Music.

Interviewer: Music? Do you play any instruments?

John: Yes, I play the recorder.

Interviewer: The recorder — and er — anything else?

John: Yeah, well er — I play the guitar, but not very well.

Interviewer: I see — and you enjoy it, do you?

John: Yes.

EMPATHETIC LISTENING

Mario Rinvolucri

While all the other speakers at the workshop have asked us to think about listening comprehension in a second or third language, I am going to first concentrate on problems of listening in the mother tongue.

My first problem as a speaker is that I cannot go on speaking to you without finding out if I have got through to you. So this lecture is going to be organised along the lines suggested by Charles Curran and I am going to ask two of you to be what he calls 'cognitive counsellors'. This will entail the two people chosen listening to what is said very attentively and then, when I stop speaking after about 5 to 10 minutes, briefly mirroring back what they have understood of what has been said. May I ask you and you to be my first counsellors?

Good listening in one's mother tongue is not at all easy. Over the past three days of this workshop many of us have lapsed as good listeners. One lecturer on the second day presented such a stimulating thought that I followed the train of ideas it set in motion and became oblivious to the lecture for a patch of about ten minutes. During the same lecture my neighbour ceased to listen for several minutes as he prepared his own presentation that was to follow.

The above examples show gross mis-listening but there are other much subtler varieties. A colleague told me at lunch yesterday that she had listened to one of the presentations partly critically and partly just 'passively noting'. It was clear that she felt that 'critical listening' was creditable but that 'passive' listening was somehow poor and inadequate. She here expressed one of the strange prejudices of our culture, a prejudice that makes us much poorer listeners than we need be. Surely the first thing to do when another speaks is to try to really follow what is being said, yes, passively, faithfully and deeply. It is often quite hard enough to do this adequately, without trying to simultaneously process and evaluate the thoughts being presented.

And this leads me on to mention a deep listening failure of my own. On Monday night I visited a friend and he started to talk about the problems he has with his teenage son. Instead of deeply listening to what he had to say, listening in such a way that he went deeper into his own thinking, self understanding and self expression, I listened socially adequately but allowed my mind to harbour images of my own teenage daughter and my worries around her. This failure on my part to listen deeply effectively stopped Jean Claude, my friend, from really saying what he would have said to a listener transmitting strong attention-paying signals.

As I said a few moments ago, good listening is not easy. May I now ask my two counsellors to mirror back what I have been trying to say?

[Mirroring by two counsellors.]

May I now have two new people to act as my cognitive counsellors? Have you noticed that in English an anagram of LISTEN is SILENT? This perhaps suggests that to really listen you must achieve a kind of inner silence, a stilling of all the distracting thoughts that throng the mind, but may have little to do with what is being said to you.

The Carkhuff scale for empathetic listening tries to identify five levels of listening.

Level 1: the listener fails to attend and thus detracts significantly from the message the speaker is trying to get across.

Level 2: the listener subtracts noticeable affect from the communication.

Level 3: the listener seems to be listening at a depth similar to the depth intended by the speaker.

Level 4: the listener communicates his understanding of the speaker's expressions at a deeper level than they were expressed.

Level 5: as Level 4, but much intensified.

On a few rare occasions I have managed to achieve what one might call Carkhuff's level 4. One such occasion was when a friend started telling me about how his politics and economics course had struck him when he was a raw undergraduate. As I listened I became aware that there were internal contradictions in what was being said, but I repressed my critical faculty which desperately wanted to point these out, and tried to empathise with these contradictions which in fact told me so much about the complexity of what he was trying to express. My empathy was such that he was encouraged to go deeper into his memories and tell me things that would never have come out had I not been listening the way I was. I discovered that empathetic, non-critical listening, though very hard, is very rewarding in terms of its immediate communicational results.

Would you like to mirror back what you have retained of this last bit?

[Mirroring by next two counsellors.]

May I have two more counsellors? The things I have said about listening so far emphasise the very active role the listener plays in facilitating the speaker's utterances. What I have found striking about many of the second language listening exercises that have been presented at this workshop is that in participating in them the learner simply **witnesses** speaking by unseen

speakers on an audio tape or by selectively seen speakers on a screen. In the case of most of the exercises presented the speaker has had no direct, humanly meaningful link with the learner-listener.

Put another way, one could say that what we normally ask our students to do is 'witness-listening' as opposed to 'I-thou listening'.

It is curious that in a workshop on listening comprehension so little mention should have been made of approaches that do involve a lot of 'I-thou' listening such as Willy Urbain's *Expression Spontanée* and Charles Curran's *Community Language Learning*. Perhaps Alan Maley could give us a brief idea of how a CLL session works.

[Alan Maley explained the basic mechanics of a CLL lesson.]

[Mirroring of the preceding section by the two counsellors.]

I have now been talking for 45 minutes plus, which is quite long enough. It would have been even more intolerable for you had my voice not been interrupted by the three pairs of counsellors mirroring back every few minutes.

May I now ask you to work in pairs on Vincent Peterson's *Dyadic Encounter on teaching*, which is also a depth listening exercise? I want you to check out for yourselves how good listeners you are!

[Each participant was given a copy of the dyadic encounter below, and asked to silently complete the first sentence. Each participant shared his/her completed first sentence with his/her partner. The partners spent as much time discussing why they had completed their sentences the way they had as they wanted. They then moved on and repeated the process with the second sentence, and so on . . .]

Here is the first third of the dyadic encounter:

The name I like to go by is . . .

My teaching experience includes . . .

I teach because . . .

I believe I (am) (am not) an effective teacher because . . .

My primary objectives as a teacher are . . .

I have evidence that I am meeting my objectives from . . .

Read through first

I am (very) (reasonably) (not very) satisfied with the evidence that my students are meeting my objectives.

Read through first

One of the most important skills in getting to know another person is listening (empathetic understanding). In order to test your ability to understand what your partner is communicating, both of you should go through the following steps, one at a time:

1 Decide which one of you is to speak first in this unit.
2 The first speaker is to complete the following item in two or three sentences: 'When I think about my future as a teacher, I see myself . . .'.
3 The second speaker repeats in his own words what the first speaker has just said. The first speaker must be satisfied that he has been heard accurately.
4 The second speaker then completes the same item himself in two or three sentences.
5 The first speaker paraphrases what the second speaker just said, to the satisfaction of the second speaker.
6 Share what you have learned about yourself as a listener with your partner, to check the accuracy of your listening and understanding. You may find yourselves saying to each other: 'What I hear you saying is . . .'.

As a teacher, I know that I am helping my students learn to . . .

Some negative things students learn in my class are . . .

The reasons that I use these methods are . . .

The primary way that I test my students is . . .

The reason I use this type of testing procedure is . . .

Listening check: 'What I hear you saying is . . .'

[The paired work on the dyadic encounter went on for about 30 minutes.]

A feed-back session was then attempted, that is to say participants were asked not to turn this into a normal discussion session but were asked to individually express what they had felt during the dyadic encounter and to silently listen to what others had felt.

The feedback session broke up for coffee when the speaker was asked if he was sure he could adequately cope with the depth of feeling that might well be expressed in such a feed-back atmosphere. The speaker replied that there was no way he could be sure he would be up to this task.

Books mentioned in this session:

Counselling learning — whole person model for education
Charles Curran, 1972.

Towards effective counselling and psychotherapy
C B Truax and R R Carkhuff, 1967.

Affective education strategies for experimental learning
Ed: L Thayer, 1976 (The dyadic encounter came from this book.)

THE PEDAGOGIC AUTHENTICITY OF A TEXT

Henri Besse, Credif, E N S de Saint-Cloud
(Translation by Elizabeth White, St Cross College, Oxford)

> 'Je le prédis: le mot authentique qui fut, pendant maintes années, le terme sacramentel de l'antiquaire, avant peu, n'aura plus de sens.'
> S Mallarmé (*Oeuvres complètes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1945, p 684).

The concept of authenticity applied to the teaching of foreign languages is neither easy to understand nor to circumscribe.

As D Coste (1970) observed, 'authentic' 'has become one of the number of qualifying adjectives which have too many connotations to be honest' (p 88). In studies of this concept, authenticity is most often treated as a manifest quality; it evokes the true, the natural, the undisputed (only these texts can carry the label 'veritable French', M Callamand and others, 1974, p 12) and the selective use of this adjective supposes that the texts which are not so described are false, fabricated, artificial. In this way, authenticity is taken to be a quality which is intrinsic to certain texts, and is denied to others by their nature; a quality which compels recognition.

It should be noted that judgments of authenticity or non-authenticity passed on a text which is taken from its proper speech community are always marked by a great degree of subjectivity when we are confronted with the text in question out of any context which would enable us to understand the type of communication for which it is intended. Thus, a group of French teachers, who are nevertheless aware of the problems of speech, might judge a text faithfully transcribed from a 'real' interview with a French-speaking labourer, as non-authentic, on the argument that the labourer's use of French does not correspond to the idea the teachers have of the way he should speak. On the other hand, the same group might judge as 'very probably authentic' a recording of interviews played by actors following invented scripts, simply because these texts were composed in speech terms similar to those of the teachers.

W Labov, in his various experimental studies, seems to have made it clear that the judgments that people make on their own speech and on others' depend much more on the socio-linguistic judgments they make than on the objective characteristics of speech as it is actually used. 'One general principle is apparent throughout our work; the people who use one particular stigmatised trait in their speech are the most sensitive to that trait in others. We note, for example, that workers of Italian origin, who are the most frequent users of the occlusive for 'th', can immediately pick out the presence of this trait in other people's speech.' (W Labov, 1976, p 198). It is very likely that teachers, linguists and students also fall into this evaluative blindness, and that those who confidently denounce non-authentic texts are also those who, among their class, use the most artificial speech.

We must therefore support our distinction between authentic and non-authentic texts with more substantial grounds than the impression of naturalness or artificiality that they give. Besides this, many of the texts which are recognised as authentic presuppose a very conscious construction and elaboration of their effects, whether they be advertising posters or radio news-bulletins.

The limitations of some proposed definitions

When the idea of authenticity is not taken as manifest, it is most frequently defined in ways which have no reference to the teaching practices which make use of it; it is defined either in terms of the status of the producer and the receiver of the text, or in terms of the function — the intention — which is assigned to it within the communication.

1 The first criterion is used, for example, by D Coste, who defines authenticity in French as 'everything which is included in the vast corpus of written and oral messages produced by French-speakers for French-speakers' (1970, p 88).

We should observe first of all that the authors of textbook dialogues, considered non-authentic, are almost always native speakers; and, if we are discussing French, they are no less French-speakers when they write these exercises than when they are writing for other French-speakers — and also that these dialogues are intended as much for language teachers (whom we must suppose to be French-speaking by birth or by training) as for students.

The differentiation should therefore be concerned more with these receivers/students, who cannot be called complete French-speakers, since they are in the process of learning the language. Obviously their cultural and linguistic competence differs in various important ways from that of native speakers — differences which are all the more important when the students are not advanced. It is the effort of adaptation to the limited knowledge of students which renders the text non-authentic. But this effort of adaptation to the assumed capacity for comprehension of the listener is a practice which is used constantly in all speech communities. A journalist will take into account the comprehension ability of his usual readership, and will not write in the same way for *Le Monde* and *Le Parisien Libéré*. Some newspapers have specialist sub-editors who re-write articles, using a limiting grammatical and lexical index. A mother instinctively adjusts her speech to her child's ability to understand — she avoids certain subjects, takes into account what her child knows, and does not use certain words or phrases, uses gesture and mime, etc. A specialist addressing a wide audience — for example, on television — does not use the same vocabulary, syntax or references as when he is talking to colleagues. A farmworker talking to his MP abandons the precise and concrete

words which he uses in his daily work, and tries rather to achieve the 'generality' of speech of his listener. And yet all these are authentic communications. Students learning French are not complete French-speakers, but it appears to be particularly difficult to establish the threshold of knowledge beyond which we can say that a listener is French-speaking. The difference in communication levels between the author of a class and his potential students is a very widespread phenomenon which is not exclusive to the language class.

2 This is no doubt the reason why others have tried to base their definition of authenticity upon the speaker's intention in speaking.

The authentic has been defined as 'any text not composed for pedagogical ends . . . whose author was not intending its use in "teaching the language"' (M Callamand and others, 1974, p 13). We talk of the **originally apedagogical text**, meaning by this that the text when it is produced is intended for functions other than pedagogical; it is not by nature non-pedagogical, but simply does not have a pedagogical function' (A Coiantiz, 1979, p 37). According to others, 'The only acceptable solution must be . . . the use of texts **not specifically designed for teaching** . . . since the functioning of language is too little known (ie analysed and described) to allow systematic construction of communications which are not in some way distorted' (H Holec, 1976, p 178).

Let us leave aside this last argument: it seems to me that if writers of language courses produce artificial texts, this is precisely because they are too conscious of the lexico-syntactic functioning of the language. A temporary forgetfulness of the rules which govern this functioning would seem to be implicit in every authentic communication. We are left with a para-synonymous equivalence which is almost tautologous: that which is not pedagogical or didactic *is* authentic: that which is pedagogical and didactic is *not* authentic. And this definition excludes a large number of texts from the category of the authentic — texts which do, however, have all the appurtenances of authenticity. Road safety posters or television films, posters or radio announcements promoting anti-smoking campaigns, or encouraging energy saving — all these are obviously intended to inform or teach, they are means to well-defined pedagogical ends; but this does not prevent them being authentic communications. Articles on language in the press, television language programmes, dictionaries, grammars, specialised lexicons, etiquette guides etc are explicitly designed for teaching language and its conventions of usage.

Pedagogical intention, whether original or applied to the producer of the text, turns out to be just as fragile a criterion as the relative competence of potential receivers. These two criteria may well be necessary in a definition of what we mean by the authenticity of a text, but they are certainly not sufficient in themselves for a workable definition.

3 Some of those concerned with the science of teaching emphasise that the authenticity of a pedagogical text also depends on the authenticity of its reception by students in a language class.

'Is it more authentic,' asks A Maley, 'to ask someone to read or to use an authentic text to perform a task — eg to follow instructions or build something, following a given text? Is this a more authentic exercise than a purely pedagogical exercise?' (1978, p 3). In most cases, I doubt this; all too often, introducing so-called authentic texts into the classroom is only a pretext for explanations and exercises to cope with the difficulties of the text; explanations and exercises which are hardly more artificial than the 'invented' dialogues of audio-oral and audio-visual courses! And since most of the student's attention and time is given over to these, he will probably be learning more from these explanations and manipulations than from the basic text (see H Besse, 1980, a).

Since the students are in a foreign language class, they will always tend to interpret the use of a text in the class as a means or a goal of learning this language. The originally intended function of the text — to amuse, inform, question, etc — is always more or less affected by the function of learning, which is necessarily added to the original function.

It was with the intention of avoiding this distortion that S Moirand advised 'trying to recreate, within a teaching/learning situation, conditions of reception and interpretation and/or 'conditions of production' as near as possible to the conditions of an authentic communication situation' by choosing the texts to present according to the 'students' aims, outside the teaching/learning situation' (1978, p 133).

But is there not some sort of pedagogical artificiality in asking students to use a foreign language in situations and on subjects which they usually deal with in their native language? Is there not a risk that they will come to think of the foreign language as a code which stands second to the language they normally use? And far from teaching them competence in foreign language communication, will we not rather be teaching them a purely linguistic competence in the foreign language, which will always be structured by the communication competence which they habitually use in these situations? In order that the authentic necessity of using a little-known language should be truly felt, should we not introduce an element of the incongruous and unexpected which will serve to overturn all the habitual conditions of production and reception? (cf H Besse, 1980, b).

Elements for a definition of authenticity

The concept of authenticity as applied to the foreign language class is a synthesis of three concepts, related to one another but with sharply different implications.

First of all, it includes the concept of **the integrality of the text**: to be called authentic, the text should not be cut, nor re-worked, nor modified in any way in its written or oral form; it should include all the internal characteristics of the text itself, whether it be simple or highly elaborated, natural or mannered.

The integrality of a text can obviously be transferred to the classroom without difficulty, thanks to photo-copying, tape-recording, video-recording. But this transfer does not necessarily assure the transfer of what we may call (by a sort of etymological pleonasm) the **original authenticity of the text**, since this depends less on the integrality of the text than on the linguistic and non-linguistic conditions of its original production and reception.

These conditions include the moment (the time) and the place in time (the date) of the exchange, the characteristics of the place of production and the place of reception of the text, the immediate situation of events (what has been happening, what has been talked about during the preceding days), the interwoven fabric of language in which the text is written, the socio-ideological context of the society in which the text is produced and received. The total of these characteristics, which, as we shall see later, are essential for the transmission of most texts broadcast by the **media**, is not easily transferred into the classroom; and yet it is these characteristics which assure the quality of reception of the text.

The distinction we are making here between integrality and original authenticity is similar to the distinction made by some English and American writers between genuineness and authenticity: 'Genuineness is a characteristic of the passage itself and is an absolute quality: authenticity is a characteristic of the relationship between the passage and the reader, and it has to do with appropriate response' (H G Widdowson, 1978, p 80).

But I think that it would be valuable to make a distinction between the appropriate response of the original receivers, the response which determines the authenticity of the original transmission, and the response — appropriate or not — of students in the classroom. Let us call this quality of the student's response to a text **pedagogical authenticity**. The further this reception is from that of the original receivers, the less it can be called authentic.

But this pedagogical authenticity itself is composed of two different elements — firstly, the use which is made of the text in teaching, and secondly, the

quality of its actual reception by the students. The classroom use of a text can, as A Maley noted, be more or less authentic according to how far the proposed activities are similar to those which would have been suggested to the original receivers. Native speakers are not usually given to describing wordless cartoon strips, nor to inventing dialogues to go with advertisements. But on the other hand, the authenticity of a student's reception of a text could never exactly coincide with that of a native receiver; so that, in order that students should authentically respond to a text, they must interpret it for themselves — not only from their own personal experience but also from their experience of their different, foreign culture; one could not ask an American to 'read' a French newspaper article in the same way that a Frenchman could. And yet the student should know within what limits (linguistic, socio-cultural, referential) a native speaker might interpret the text, at least if he is to see something of what the native speaker understands in the text. Obviously, there is a link between the type of teaching activity involved in the exploitation of the text and the authenticity of its reception by students, but it can happen that a text is made more accessible through the use of an artificial (unauthentic) exercise.

Methodologically, it is not the integrality of a text which counts but the down-grading of the quality of interpretation which is or is not produced by its introduction into the foreign language class. The difference of levels can be defined as the distance, however great or small, which separates the original authenticity from the pedagogical authenticity of the text.

From this point of view, let us consider a textbook lesson and a text which was not primarily intended for use in a language class. The distinction between these is not based on the impression of naturalness or artificiality which the texts give to a native speaker, but rather on the respective conditions of production and reception of each, since these are the conditions which determine their characteristics. The first of these texts is written with regard to conditions of reception which will actually be found in the classroom, the second with regard to reception conditions which no longer exist when the text is used in the classroom. The distance between the original and the pedagogical authenticity, which is minimal in the first case, might well be very great in the second; and it is this distance which determines the authenticity of the students' reception of the text.

Let us take the example of a radio news bulletin broadcast in France. The journalists who write this bulletin share with their usual audience not only the language in which it is written (to a great extent) but also a whole world of knowledge and understanding, both linguistic and cultural; these do not need to be made explicit, but they form the substratum on which the communication is built. Journalists and their audience share a considerable amount of knowledge of their actual mutual environment (matters of geographical, historical, socio-economic or institutional fact); they have in common a whole popular fabric of language (catchphrases, proverbs, literary or political

quotations etc); they belong to the same system of socio-ideological beliefs proper to their community. And to this basic shared citizenship, which includes more or less all the French people, must be added a more immediate complicity, particular to the place and moment (time and date) of listening; a complicity which is made up of yesterday's news broadcasts, today's newspapers, conversations with colleagues, etc. More than sixty per cent of news broadcasts each day is made up of information recalling or alluding to facts which are already known, or to events which members of that community know are liable to recur (in November in France, for example, buying a new road-tax disc, or Remembrance Sunday). Completely new events, which demand an effort of integration, make up barely a third of the information content. It is from this that listeners derive their sense of 'contact with the "real-and-familiar"' to use E Veron's expression (1978, p 121), the impression "which guarantees" their fidelity to one radio station; and for this reason it is possible to listen to the radio news while having breakfast or making the dinner; continued attention is not needed, since it is always possible to reconstitute to some extent the parts that have been missed. Journalists all know how to exploit this quality of shared implicit knowledge in their methods of communication; it is this that determines the place and the length of each item — 'The first law of the organisation of a radio news bulletin is that first place is given to the event which either finishes off or opens up a news story' (P Masselot, 1979, p 92) — news-stories which we already know in part at least and listen to rather in the way that we listened to familiar fairy-stories in childhood.

The original authenticity of a radio news bulletin is provided by all this complicity of knowledge shared by journalists and their listeners at the time and place of its broadcasting. What then becomes of this authenticity when the bulletin is recorded and replayed — sometimes months later — to students who have a different language and different culture, in a classroom in a foreign country? The greater part of this shared knowledge which supports the communication is unknown to the students, the intertextuality in which it is based is reduced to a few expressions learned, the narrow context of events no longer exists, and no one is able to follow the thread of stories begun in previous bulletins. What then can be the authenticity of its reception by foreign students? If the teacher cannot manage to restore something of the linguistic and cultural background which support the communication, he is reduced to treating it on a purely literal plane, dealing only with the 'genuineness' of the text, and so loses the essence of what made it interesting. The lowering of the interpretative level which arises from using the text in the classroom, deprives the text of all its original authenticity.

The reason for the artificiality of most dialogues composed by textbook writers is that these writers compose them according to this lowering of communication level. The banality of their subjects and the avoidance of

precise details are forced on them by the fact that they can only write with reference to facts, values and ways of behaviour which are sufficiently general to have some chance of being part of the experience of the students who will be trying to understand them, sometimes many years later, in very different countries from those where they were written. In other words, the artificiality of the classroom is the cause of the relative artificiality of the dialogues.

But it is clear that using the integrality of the text cannot by itself make any difference to this artificiality; and this is why, as I have noted, this artificiality is only made greater by the teaching use of the text and the student's reception of it.

Must we then conclude that originally apedagogical texts should not be used in foreign language teaching? Of course not. But it seems to me that the quality of this teaching is directly linked to taking into account the lowering of interpretative level, whatever the degree of lowering, which separates the original authenticity of the text from its pedagogical authenticity.

The method which I discussed earlier in section 3, which consists of using texts whose referential basis is familiar to learners, seems to me to be an apt solution to this problem. Some of the original reception conditions are restored merely by the selection of texts. The foundations of current events and socio-cultural factors being already familiar to the students, we can reduce the task of appropriate reception to a purely linguistic plane. But this reduction, though it can be useful and give motivation at the early stages of learning, carries the risk of making students see the foreign language as a set of reformulations which can be applied to methods of communication and the references of the student's own culture. In any case, it is impossible to limit the teaching of a language to the comprehension of texts which refer only to the student's experience; and therefore we must deal with the lowering of interpretative level, which the classroom use of a text brings about, by careful choice of teaching method. Perhaps the most coherent solution would be to prepare the class linguistically and culturally before presenting them with a text which was not originally intended for them. (There is no space within this article for developing this; see H Besse, 1980, a.) In this way, we are able to restore something of the conditions which supported the original authenticity of the text, and allow learners to receive it in something of the way it was intended to be received — that is to say, to amuse or to inform and not to teach the language.

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A TEAM TEACHING APPROACH TO LECTURE COMPREHENSION FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS[1]

A Dudley-Evans and T F Johns, University of Birmingham

Introduction

The language classes run by the English for Overseas Students Unit at Birmingham University have concentrated since 1971 on common-core language appropriate for students from a wide range of subject areas. Our experience is that most of the formal features of English and also the communicative uses to which it is put are remarkably consistent across different disciplines, and that one can introduce students from a variety of disciplines — from Medieval History to Thermodynamics — to these features in one group without the need to divide them into subject-specific groups. Some of the courses run by the unit are concerned with the **formal** features of the language while others are concerned with the **functional** uses to which English is put.

The functionally defined classes aim to help overseas students to develop strategies from the various tasks involved in following an academic course in a British university, listening to lecturers and/or seminars, taking notes from these, writing essays or reports etc. The problem with such a programme is that the appropriate language has to be introduced and practised in contexts readily understandable to students of various subjects. The classes are inevitably based on generalisations about the problems the student is likely to face in following his course; they cannot tackle the actual problems the student faces in his own department on a moment to moment basis, or adjust readily to those problems. It was therefore decided that the common-core programme needed to be supplemented with specific classes for those departments with a high proportion of overseas students. The purpose of these classes is to help students with the specific problems faced in following their academic course, and thereby to assess the validity of the generalisations made about language use in the common-core classes.

Thus in 1977/8 an experiment in team teaching was started in the Department of Transportation and Environmental Planning. The experiment proved popular with both staff and students and the work was extended to the course in Conservation and Utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources in Plant Biology in 1978/9 and to Minerals Engineering in 1979/80.

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[1]Editor's note: A closely related paper by the same authors appeared in ELT Documents 106: *Team Teaching in ESP* © The British Council 1980

Departments

The courses in Transportation and Plant Biology are one year M Sc programmes, consisting of an eight month academic course followed by three to four months' project work carried out during the summer. Minerals Engineering run a two year M Sc programme, with project work carried out during the summer between the first year and the second year. The courses are very specialised and designed for a world wide market. The courses in Highway Engineering for Developing Countries and Minerals Engineering are specifically designed for overseas students, while on the courses in Highway and Traffic Engineering and Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources up to 80% of the students are from overseas. Most of these students have worked in their field for a number of years before coming to do the course, and, therefore, face the problem of returning to academic life and of embarking on subjects such as computers, economics or statistics which they may not have studied before.

Lectures play a very important role in the courses; in both courses in Transportation students attend between fifteen and twenty hours of lectures a week, compared with four hours of laboratory work, three hours of tutorials and two or three hours of group work. In Plant Biology the course is divided equally between lectures and practical work; students attend 100 hours of lectures, and do 100 hours of practicals in a ten-week term. In Minerals Engineering students have a lighter programme in the first year, doing seven hours of lectures and five hours of tutorials.

Features of lectures

In general the style of the lectures varies remarkably little between the three departments. Morrison (1974) divided lectures into two kinds: formal lectures, which are 'in formal register, and close to spoken prose' and informal lectures, which are 'high in informational content but not necessarily in highly formal register'. Using evidence from a questionnaire, he suggested that overseas students find informal lectures more difficult to understand than formal lectures. In Morrison's terms, most of the lectures recorded as part of the team teaching programme have been informal. Certain distinguishing lexical and phonological features may be worth mentioning at this point.

Lexical features

While a minority of lecturers tend to 'speak as they write', most use a greater or lesser proportion of colloquial expressions which are likely to be unfamiliar to the overseas student who has, before arriving in the UK, been exposed only to the formal written English of his subject in the textbook or the research part. In analysing lectures for pedagogic purposes we pay particular attention to the

colloquial language used by lecturers: our data suggests that such language is fairly predictable in terms of its formal features and its semantic reference. As far as the first of these are concerned, we have noted a tendency for the majority of colloquial expressions to be verb forms, in particular verb + particle and verb + preposition collocations.

For example, a lecturer in Minerals Engineering may say:

'Part of the gas stream is **pulled out** through the cyclone, where fine solids are **picked up**.'

while he would be much more likely to write:

'Part of the gas stream is **diverted** through the cyclone, where fine solids are **recovered**.'

From the semantic point of view, there is a tendency for colloquial expressions to 'cluster' in certain areas. One such area — as in the example above — is reference to **events** and **processes** in the subject area. Some further examples:

'the particles **knock into** one another.'
'these values could be **slotted into** the equation.'
'the progeny resemble their parents unless a mutation **comes along**.'
'Variation and successful dispersal are the only ways plants have of **coping with** a changing environment.'
'this **gets rid of** the boundary layer effect.'
'By **messing around with** the hormone level it is possible to change the breeding pattern.'

The nature of the lecture situation itself determines two other areas in which the incidence of colloquial language is very high. Firstly, the lecturer is concerned on a moment-to-moment basis to evaluate the information, methods and procedures he is describing in terms of their validity, appropriacy, relevance, and so on. Some examples of the language of **evaluation:**

'In the short term the equation **holds up**, but we do not have the evidence to **back it up** for longer periods.'
'It is **out of the question** to . . .'
'The fit is **not too bad, all things considered**.'
'This method is **all very well** if **you want to fiddle around with** short-term storage.'
'Some shapes **don't lend themselves** to other techniques.'
'There are **no hidden tricks up the sleeve** of the 900 machine.'
'I expect this will **be old hat** to you.'
'Well, **you pays your money and you takes your choice**.'

Secondly, there are points at which the language of the lecture will be metalinguistic: that is to say, it will refer not to the subject, but — retrospectively and prospectively — will refer to and structure the teaching of the subject. Examples of colloquial metalanguage drawn from the lectures:

'We shall **run through** the method, using these data.'

'A lot of this lecture will be concerned with **going over ground we've covered before**.'

'This is **a point we'll pick up later on**.'

Phonological features

A thoroughgoing analysis of the phonological features of the lectures recorded in the three departments is outside the scope of this paper: such an analysis would have to cover such areas as regional accent, assimilation, vowel reduction, tempo, pausing, intonation, intensity and voice quality. One of the basic problems in making such an analysis is the relationship between the medium and the message: it is still not clear how far the phonological patterning of speech can be related to the discoursal patterning of communication.

Brazil's analysis of English intonation attempts to establish such a relationship in terms of tone, tonic prominence, the key (Brazil, 1975, 1977). Montgomery's analysis of undergraduate lectures (Montgomery, 1977) uses Brazil's framework of reference to point to some of the features which depend on that relationship — for example the ways, in which lecturers through intonation signal transitions and asides in the lecture and signal important new lexical items. He also notes certain features of lectures which seem in some sense to be aberrant in relation to language outside the lecture room. In Brazil's terms, for example, the rising tone is taken to be referring to the shared world of knowledge and assumptions shared by speaker and listener; however, it appears that certain lecturers may use referring tone from information which could not be shared by the audience.

The recordings we have collected in the three departments tend to confirm Montgomery's observations. However, their most striking feature is the very wide variation between individual lecturers on all the parameters mentioned above. Such variation argues that to talk of 'listening to lectures' or 'teaching lecture comprehension' may be misleading; it may be better to talk of 'listening to lecturers' or 'teaching lecturer comprehension' as a reminder of the idiosyncratic nature of lecturer performance. The degree of variation allows us to reach some tentative conclusions on the effect of certain phonological features on comprehension. It seems, for example, that regional accent does not noticeably hinder overseas students' comprehension. The single phonological feature which seems to correlate most strongly with comprehension is — not surprisingly — tempo: on the whole, the slower a lecturer speaks, the more likely he is to be understood. However, rather than

study phonological features in isolation, we think the most revealing approach to idiosyncratic variation among lecturers may be to investigate how those features co-occur within broadly defined 'lecturing styles'. Among lecturers we have recorded to date we would identify the following styles:

Style A — 'Reading Style'. The lecturer reads from notes, or speaks as if he was reading from notes. Characterised by short tone groups, and narrowness of intonational range. Falling tone predominates: level tone (in Brazil's terms, signal of withdrawal from interaction) may also occur.
Style B — 'Conversational Style'. The lecturer speaks informally, with or without notes. Characterised by longer tone groups and key-sequences from high to low. When the lecturer is in 'low key' at the end of a key sequence, the speaker may markedly increase tempo and vowel reduction, and reduce intensity.
Style C — 'Rhetorical Style'. The lecturer as performer. Characterised by wide intonational range. The lecturer often exploiting high key, and a 'boosted high key'. Frequent asides and digressions marked by key and tempo shift — sometimes also by voice-quantity shift.

For the student, each style presents its own particular problems of comprehension. The relative monotony of Style A may make it difficult for the listener to distinguish between what is presented as 'contrastive' and what is 'non-contrastive': without such pointing-up of the essential points, the overall structure of argument may not be perceived. With Style B, there is the danger that matter hurried-over towards the end of the key sequence, but nevertheless necessary for the understanding of the lecture as a whole, may be missed. Style C involves the difficult task of perceiving the asides and digressions, of assessing their relevance or otherwise to the main argument, and — most important — of being able to pick up the argument after the digression.

Teaching programme

The importance of lecturing in the teaching programme of the departments, and evidence from experience and research (Holes 1972) that the lecture mode of teaching presents particular difficulties to overseas students, have led us to pay particular attention to lecture comprehension in the team teaching programme. The programme in Transportation, Plant Biology and Minerals Engineering therefore concentrates on lecture comprehension in the first term; this aspect of the work will be described in this paper. The second term's work concentrates on the writing of examination answers; this and a similar programme in reading comprehension for the courses in Development Administration, have been described elsewhere (Johns and Dudley-Evans, Johns, both forthcoming). In 1977/8 nearly all overseas students on the course in Transportation attended the English class but it was found that the stronger students dominated the sessions to the detriment of the weaker students, for

whom it was planned, and now students are selected for the class on the basis of their performance in the Birmingham Assessment and Diagnostic Test. A timetable is drawn up so that each subject teacher involved in the course takes part in the team-teaching sessions once or twice during the term on a rota basis: in this way the sessions sample both the different components in the course and the different lecturing styles of the teachers. Every precaution is taken to prevent the business of recording intruding in the lecture or inhibiting the lecturer: the language teacher does not actually attend the lecture and if possible, the small cassette recorder is kept out of sight behind some piece of equipment to enable the lecturer to forget about it once he or she gets into the lecture. Most important, the tape-recording is never played during the team-teaching session: it is used, with help on occasion from the lecturer's notes and diagrams, to prepare an 'ephemeral' handout as a basis for the lesson. The purpose of the lesson prepared is to check students' comprehension of the lecture, and of the technical and semi-technical vocabulary used in it, to introduce techniques for note-taking which may be applied to later lectures, and to lead gently towards the work on writing in the second term. The general pattern of the classes is that the language teacher begins by questioning the students, with the subject teacher commenting on the answers. Later in the class students are likely to ask for clarification or amplification of points made; these are answered by the subject teacher, with the language teacher commenting on points of language. The work on vocabulary is conducted by the language teacher, with the subject teacher commenting or adding alternative forms.

This approach had developed from observations of the problems of overseas students in following an academic course in Britain. One is that an overseas student's failure to cope with his course is rarely attributable to 'knowledge of the subject' or 'knowledge of the language' alone; it is usually very difficult to separate these. It is only if the subject teacher and the language teacher work together that the interlinked problems of language and subject can be dealt with effectively. All three sides in the team-teaching triangle stand to benefit. The student needs to know how his performance is measuring up to the expectations of his teachers; we have noticed that some students in the first weeks of the academic year seem to pay attention only to information presented in handouts or on the blackboard and to be unaware initially that the lecturer will be making essential points in the lecture that will not be found in textbooks or handouts. Secondly, the student is given the opportunity to get help with his difficulties as they arise and can question the lecturer about points missed or not sufficiently explained during the lecture. The subject teacher is given feed-back on how well he is communicating with his students and whether his assumptions about students' background knowledge are correct or not. The teaching of any subject necessarily involves the teaching of how the subject is talked about, and therefore includes an element of language teaching. This side of his work can clearly be assisted by a language teacher. The language teacher is able to learn something of the conceptual structure of

a wide range of subjects, to see how language is used to represent that structure, and observe at first hand what problems students have in grasping the structure and the language involved. It is only within the framework of such a programme that one is able to tackle effectively the problem of 'authenticity'. In recent years there has been considerable discussion of the validity of 'doctoring' texts for language-teaching purposes, and there is now considerable awareness of the dangers of simplifying texts. However an 'undoctored' or 'genuine' text is not necessarily a relevant text. Only if a text is relevant in terms of its position in the sequence of the lecture programme and in terms of what is assumed to be known and what is assumed to be new information is it truly authentic. 'Authenticity of purpose' is then as important a consideration as 'genuineness of text'. Clearly a language teacher is unable to answer questions of relevance to the overall programme, or about what is given or new, without the assistance of the subject teacher.

Pattern of Activities

Global Understanding

Questions are asked to check whether the students have understood the main points of the lecture. These questions are usually answered without reference to the students' notes.

Activities include:

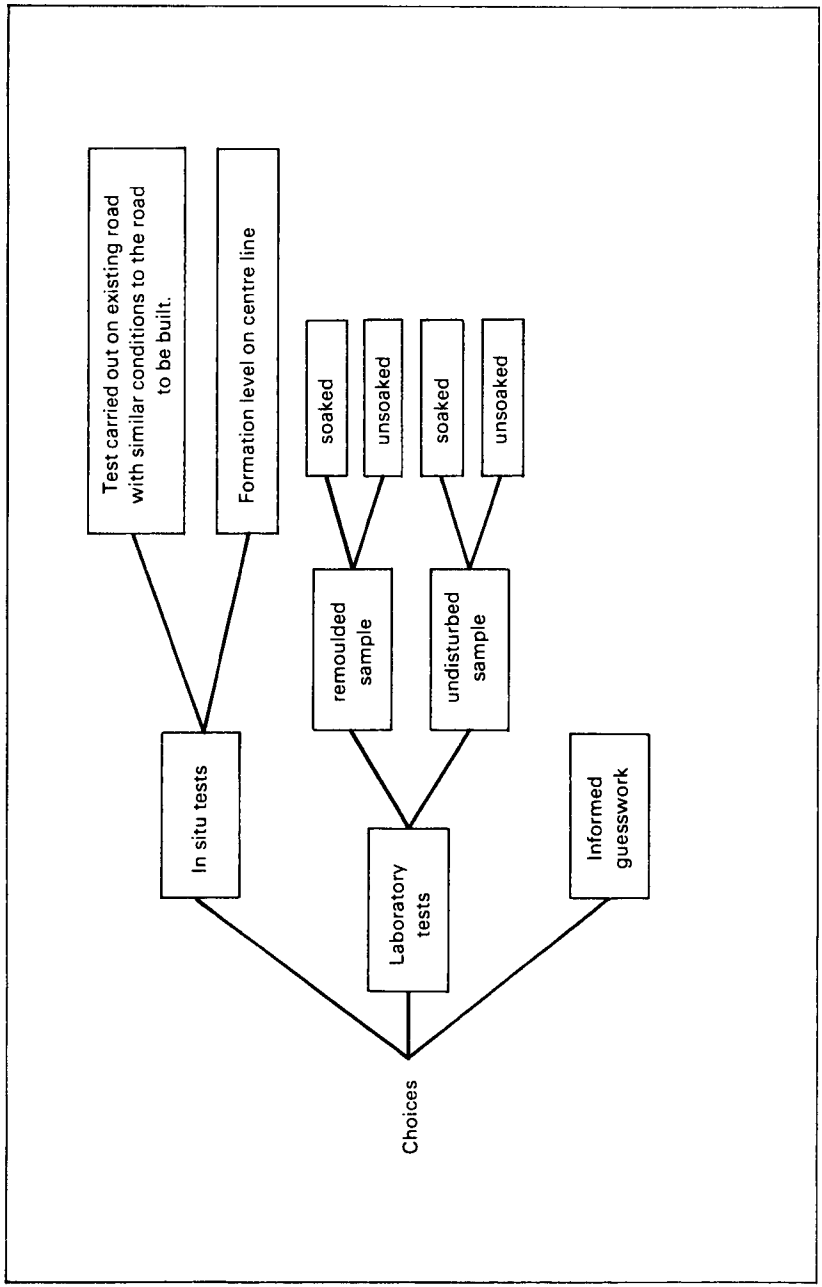
1 Re-arranging a randomised list of the points made by the lecturer into the order of presentation in the lecture. The following example is taken from a session in Plant Biology on 'Classification'.

1 Phylogenetic Systems of Classification
2 Difference between 'Character' and 'Character State'
3 The Controversy over Phylogenetic Systems
4 Natural Systems of Classification
5 General Aims of Taxonomy
6 The Various Forms of Expression of 'Character'
7 Artificial Systems of Classification
8 Definition of 'Character'
9 Definition of 'Unit Character'

2 Showing that the overall argument of the lecture has been grasped by completing a representation of it in non-linear form (eg a matrix, a tree diagram or a flow diagram). For example, students were asked to complete a simple 2 × 2 matrix to show that they could distinguish between the differences between 'orthodox' and 'recalcitrant' seeds.

	Orthodox seeds	Recalcitrant seeds
What happens to the seed in nature?		
What happens if the seed is dried?		

In the following example students were asked to summarise the various choices the engineer can make about how to carry out CBR (California Bearing Ratio) tests. The answers have been inserted to clarify the exercise.


Choices
In situ tests
Test carried out on existing road with similar conditions to the road to be built.
Formation level on centre line
Laboratory tests
remoulded sample
soaked
unsoaked
undisturbed sample
soaked
unsoaked
Informed guesswork

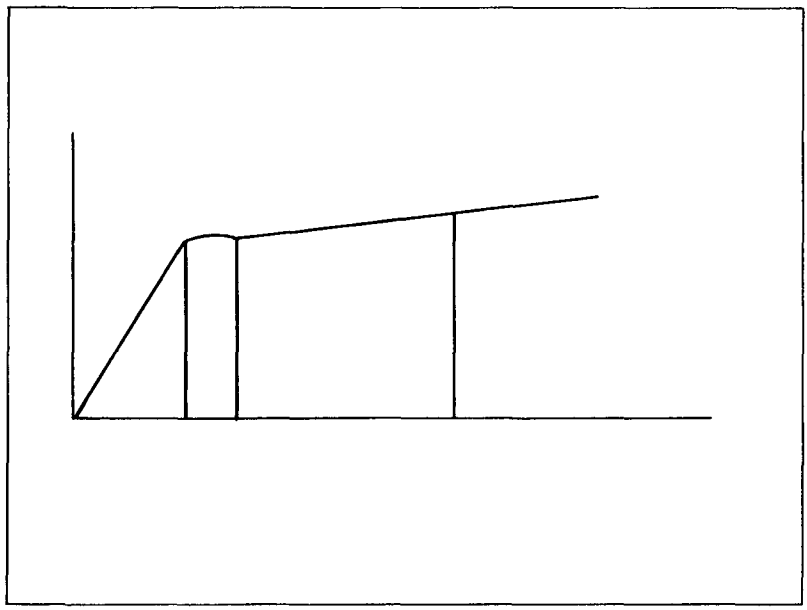
Understanding of Detail

Students answer questions on some of the subsidiary points in the lecture, including some of the lecturers' examples. In this case they are allowed to consult their notes. The purpose of this phase of the session is to discover how accurately students understand and record detailed information, and, more importantly, whether they understand its relevance to the main argument. As in the work on global understanding considerable use is made of diagramming techniques to represent information. This example is taken from a session in Plant Biology following up a lecture on the Cucurbitaceae (the cucumber family):

Nomenclature				Characters				
Botanical Name	Common Names	Leaf	Flower	Fruit				
				Shape	Size	Skin	Flesh	Seeds
Citrullus vulgaris								
Cucumis sativus								
Cucumis anguria								
Cucumis melo								
Luffa cylindrica								
Lagenaria siceraria								

Frequently reference is made to graphs and other diagrams used during the lecture: typically the graph or diagram is presented in 'skeleton' form, and the students are asked to label it and explain its significance. An example from a session in Minerals Engineering on 'Fluidised Bed Roasting':

Here is the first diagram you looked at during the lecture in 'skeleton' form:



a Label the axes and the areas under the four main sections of the graph. (You should be able to remember three different terms for the third area, and three terms for the fourth area).

b Explain what is happening in the bed in each of the four sections of the diagram.

Where the lecture is heavily mathematical in content, similar 'information transfer' work is based on the reading and explanation of equations.

Vocabulary

The teaching of vocabulary has been neglected in language teaching in recent years. The work on listening comprehension has, however, shown that students do need help in this area, and part of each session is devoted to vocabulary difficulties. The main difficulties seem to be:

1 *Technical Vocabulary*

Technical terms are often assumed by lecturers to be known by students. Where such knowledge has been assumed, students are questioned as to the

meaning and the context in which the term would be used. The following is taken from a session about 'Fluidised Bed Roasting' in Minerals Engineering:

Here are some of the technical terms used in the lecture. Explain the *meaning* of each term, and the *context* in which it was used:

a dilate
b slurry
c slugging
d cohesive
e isothermal
f exothermic
g hot spot

2 Semi-technical Vocabulary

It is important that students both understand and are able to use semi-technical vocabulary. We have found that students very often need help with the verbs used to describe processes: eg 'withstand' 'assign' 'settle' 'affect'. Another important area is the choice of verb in reporting other people's work in the field. The choice of 'propose' in the following quotation from a lecture on Clay Mineralogy gives a clear idea of whether the work is proved, or not.

'The water in that layer is **proposed** by two authors to be of a hexagonal nature.' Students often miss these indications of the lecturer's attitude, and, wherever suitable, exercises are devised to draw their attention to this feature of lectures.

In his description of the work before the sixties, Dr Ford-Lloyd gave various clues that their work was no longer completely valid.
Read through these extracts from the lecture and underline the phrases which give you these clues:

1 It was thought by early taxonomic biosystematicists in the first thirty years of this century that characters of chromosomes would be more reliable guides to evolution and taxonomy than traditional characters
2 In this book, Huxley supposed that classical and particularly herbarium-type taxonomy would in fact be replaced by something much more concrete with sound laws to follow, all based on cytology.
3 It was suggested that chemists had periodic law which made things formal in the studies of chemistry, so it was thought that biologists would have something similar via studies of chromosomes.
4 It was expected that definite laws could be formulated, using chromosomes and information from chromosomes.

Colloquial Vocabulary

We consider it important that students should be able to recognise the colloquial expressions described earlier, and often include an exercise based on 'translation' from the colloquial/informal to the written/formal. This part of the session requires a degree of tact on the part of the language teacher, since most subject teachers are unaware of their own usage, and moreover can all too easily assume that the language teacher is equating 'formal' with 'correct' and 'informal' with 'incorrect'. We believe that one effect of the team-teaching sessions is that the subject teacher becomes more sensitive to the possible problems for overseas students of colloquial expressions, and that he may even become over-careful in avoiding colloquialisms.

With one lecturer, however, we have observed the opposite reaction: it seems that when he is being recorded he increases the number and obscurity of his sporting metaphors, possibly in order to put the teacher on his mettle. Examples:

'Are you trying to **hedge your bets**?'
'What are you going to put in the filling then: **mouldy old jock straps**?

The following is a typical exercise:

Often in talking about his subject a lecturer will use a more **informal** language than the **formal** language he would use in writing about his subject. It is important that you should recognise — and be able to use — both the formal and the informal language of your subject. Here are some of the more informal verbs used by the lecturer: which of the terms on the right might replace them in the formal written context?

1	The use of fluidised bed techniques in the metallurgical industry **stems** from earlier applications in the chemical engineering industry.	reduce remove divert
2	The particles **knock into** one another.	encounter
3	It is possible to **come up against** the problem of slugging within the system.	eliminate collide with
4	The movement of particles **gets rid of** the boundary layer effect and facilitates the transfer of heat	recover derive
5	Fines are **taken away** from the roasting operation through the cyclone.	
6	The use of large freeboard area **cuts down** the amount of recycling needed.	
7	In the type 'B' roaster, part of the gas stream is **pulled out** through the second cyclone, where calcine is drawn off.	
8	Very fine solids are **picked up** in the cyclone.	

Follow-up work

In the follow-up work the emphasis moves away from comprehension of the information presented in the lecture to the application and evaluation of that information. A short activity arising from the lecture is prepared either by the language teacher or the subject teacher. These activities have included the following:

1 The application of the general principles presented in a lecture to a practical task. These have ranged from the description of the characters of different potatoes shown on slides to the design of a road surface in Transportation.

2 The reading of a short passage from one of the references given in the lecture. Students are asked to assess how far it supplements or modifies the information presented in the lecture.

3 A short writing task. This may involve:
   a the reconstruction of student's notes.

   b the drawing together of particular information into a suggested framework.

The following is example from the lecture in Transportation on the various tests of the California Bearing Ratio.

The AASHO Tests
Describe the tests using the following framework:

Method of carrying out the tests .....

.....

.....

Disadvantage .....

.....

.....

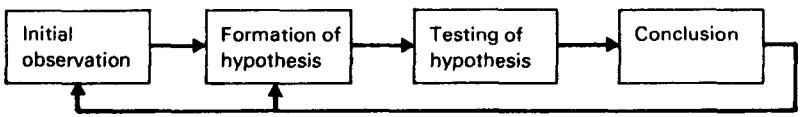
Solution .....

.....

.....

4 Use of the underlying 'conceptual structure' as exposed by diagramming in the work on comprehension as a way of developing 'creative thinking' in the subject. The following example is taken from a session in Plant Biology on Adaptation, in which students are led to form their own hypotheses and to decide how they would test them.

The procedure for a good deal of scientific research may be shown as follows:



Complete the following diagram to show how this procedure was applied in the investigation of *Eucalyptus:*

What is the important point which is still not explained in the Eucalyptus observations? Can you form a hypothesis to provide an explanation? How would you test your hypothesis?

Evaluation

It is difficult and may be inappropriate to give an objective and final evaluation of the work described in this paper. It has been welcomed by the departments concerned and in particular by the students attending the classes. Attendance at the classes has been virtually 100% throughout the year, and students seem to enjoy the sessions and benefit from them. They have told us that their listening strategies have improved as a result of the techniques suggested in the sessions, and these have helped them to get used to the lecturing style of the various lecturers. Lecturers in the department have also remarked that there has been noticeable improvement in students' understanding of their lectures and in their work overall. Lecturers have also seemed to enjoy and benefit from the sessions, and there has been none of the suspicion or hostility often mentioned when language teachers work with subject specialists. We believe that this success results from a number of factors:

Firstly a clear pattern of activities was worked out with the responsibilities of the subject teacher and the language teacher clearly defined.

Secondly we attempted to reduce intrusion on the subject teachers, and potential embarrassment for them as much as possible. Little reference is made to their actual lecturing style, and, as already mentioned, no use is made in the session of the recording of the lecture. It has not been uncommon to find

subject teachers rather anxious about the first session they contribute to, but invariably they have been surprised to find that the session is not at all painful. The language teachers have enjoyed working with subject specialists, which has enabled them to learn much of the use of language in different subject areas, and it has been stimulating to deal with students' problems in some detail without the risk of becoming out of one's depth in the subject.

The main danger of the approach is that the session may become excessively concerned with the subject matter of the lecture, little more than a subject tutorial. It is the responsibility of the language teacher to ensure that a balance is kept between the revision of the lecture and the language work. Much of the time of the course, the two are combined.

Another danger is that the stronger students will benefit rather more than weaker students. This can be avoided by ensuring that the class is attended only by those who really need it.

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BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATED LISTENING COMPREHENSION MATERIALS

R Dirven

The first stage of foreign language learning is usually devoted to mastering the basic grammatical structures of the language and to developing a first level of speaking proficiency. In the second stage the learner is expected to build up a certain degree of communicative competence, combining elements of listening comprehension and of speaking proficiency in direct face-to-face interaction. Given the complexity of this objective, the materials used in class must be such that they allow of triggering off both learning and acquisition processes (section 1). This in turn is only possible if real, spontaneously spoken language is introduced into the class (section 2). These materials cannot be found at random, but must be programmed; one possible procedure for this is the so-called 'role-played scenario' (section 3).

Language acquisition and language learning

In pre-scientific parlance only the term **language learning** is used in connection with all the skills the child or the learner is building up in his early or later developmental stages. In linguistic and psycholinguistic theory, however, the need was felt to make a distinction between **learning** and **acquisition.**

Language acquisition, on the one hand, is seen as a largely unconscious and intuitive process taking place in informal situations such as the mother-child interaction for the native language (L_1) or the group interaction between natives and immigrants for the second language (L_2); **language learning**, on the other hand, is seen as a conscious and guided process taking place in formal situations such as the school context and essentially aiming at some degree of competence in a foreign language (FL). Thus, competence in L_1 and L_2 is said to be the product of a built-in language acquisition device, by means of which those exposed to a specific language in a natural environment cannot but gradually pick up L_1 and L_2, whereas FL competence is said to be the product of systematic planning and guiding of the steps to be taken in the school's learning activity. Although this dichotomy is fairly well established by now, it seems to me to contain the potential and even the cause of some basic misinterpretations of the real issues at stake in the area of language acquisition and language learning.

In the acquisition of L_1 and L_2 there seems to be a good deal of conscious learning, and in the school context the FL is not only learnt but many aspects of it seem to be acquired. It may be useful to refer to some research facts here.

First of all, it has become clear in recent psycholinguistic research (Brown, 1973; Schlesinger, 1977, for L_1; and Lily Wong-Fillmore, 1976, for L_2) that

mere exposure to the language does not automatically lead to acquiring competence in that language. Only when the child or the learner is actively involved in the mother-child or in the peer group interaction, respectively, does he pick up the language. Even a number of parental strategies have been pointed out which facilitate the acquisition by the child of L_1. For example, parents consciously simplify their language when addressing the child (Snow, 1972, and Snow/Ferguson, 1977).[1] Also baby-talk, which means the use of words and constructions falsely supposed to be originally used by the baby for referential purposes such as '**wow-wow**' for dogs, constitutes an attempt to come down to the child's level of understanding (see Ferguson, 1964; von Raffler-Engel/Lebrun, 1976). Also language corrections form part of parental strategies to help and guide the child, although remarkably they do not concern the form of the language in the first place but rather the content of what the child says (Brown/Cazden & Bellugi, 1973). This fact suggests that parents do not give formal language instruction but rather 'knowledge of the world' instruction.[2] Also sociolinguistic norms are explicitly impressed upon the child when it grows older, eg by phrases such as 'People like us don't use such words'. Finally, at the pragmatic level instruction is abundant, eg a child entering the house and seeing a visitor can't just 'smile' a 'hello' to the visitor but is required by the mother to greet him verbally: 'You know you're supposed to greet someone' (Sachs, 1972:341). Also in the area of second language acquisition a lot of conscious and deliberate learning takes place. As Lily Wong-Fillmore (1976) has shown, a number of social strategies are developed by the L_2-learner which give him access to the peer group so that his peers accept him and adjust their language to the newcomer and occasionally help and correct him.

However, in both of these types of what Wode (1976) and Felix (1977) call 'naturalistic' language acquisition, the greater amount of language acquisition is unconscious and non-guided. Even a remarkable parallelism between L_1 and L_2 in the order of acquisition of morphemes and constructions has been

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[1]Although this would require further investigation, the observations made by Snow seem to be one important reason why also in the first stage of FL learning a simplified input of the FL is called for.

[2]Here the learning of L_1 or L_2 and FL-learning seem to be completely different. In L_1 the child is learning to represent his cognitive experience in linguistic categories (Piaget, 1952; Sinclair de Zwart, 1969); or as Bruner (1964: 4) puts it: 'In effect, language provides a means not only for representing experience, but for transforming it'. This controversy does not seem to hold for the learning of FL, so that corrections of the forms used by the pupils seem to be strongly required. The only area of correction of the content of what the pupil says in the FL is, of course, the area of cross-culturally different cognitive categories. Indeed, in the light of a mild 'linguistic relativity hypothesis' (see Dirven *et al*, 1976:7ff), such cross-cultural differences are more numerous than is commonly accepted.

observed by several researchers, eg Dulay/Burt (1974), Bailey/Madden & Krashen (1974). Because of the dominance of unconscious acquisition processes we can rightfully associate the mastering of L_1 and L_2 with **naturalistic acquisition**.

Just as language acquisition is usually associated with a naturalistic context, language learning is most often associated with a classroom context. The fallacy, however, is that in the classroom context too little or no provision is made for unconscious acquisition processes to be triggered off, with the result that conscious learning seems to be the only possible way of getting hold of the foreign language. Pupils are offered few or no opportunities to hear and see communication and human interaction between the foreign speakers of the foreign language. Consequently the learner almost never experiences the foreign language as an absolutely natural and necessary instrument of social interaction. For most learners there is an enormous gap between the rigid grammatical rules they have learned and the almost incomprehensible natural conversations they may hear in films, interviews or in personal contact with the FL. Furthermore, as against the integration of listening and speaking skills in the acquisition of L_1 and L_2, FL learning was and still often is characterised by a continued attempt to separate these skills and to highlight one skill, especially grammatical competence or speaking proficiency or the reading skill only and exclusively. Especially the combination of verbal and non-verbal communication typical of the foreign language community is in almost all cases totally excluded from classroom learning. Finally, whereas the learner of L_1 and L_2 experiences the language acquisition process as a step towards cultural integration in the language community, the classroom learner is left alone with a grammatical system without being enabled to experience the natural cultural context in which all human interaction takes place. Although cultural integration, up to a point, is now increasingly recognised as one of the objectives of FL learning (Nostrand, 1956; Lado, 1957; Valette/Disick, 1972; Schumann, 1974; Dirven, 1976), extremely few learning materials, especially visual ones, are available and consequently little direct contact with the foreign culture is offered to the pupil.

In such a classroom context there is indeed very little opportunity for the acquisition process to work. As Krashen (1976:165) says

> 'realistically used language' is required: while classwork is directly aimed at increasing conscious linguistic knowledge of the target language, to the extent that the target language is used realistically, to that extent will acquisition occur.

That's why I believe, with Krashen, that the classroom can accomplish both learning and acquisition simultaneously. What Krashen and most other authors, however, do not discuss is how the foreign language can be used realistically in the classroom and what specific elements or areas of FL can be learned and what can be supposed to be acquired.

In order to answer such questions, it is absolutely necessary to get an idea of what is to be understood by *'realistically used language'*. I take this to be the equivalent of 'natural, spontaneously spoken language', some aspects of which are listed below.

Aspects of natural, spontaneously spoken language

I start from the assumption that spontaneously spoken language is too complex to be introduced in the classroom in the first stage of FL learning. In the second or intermediate stage of FL learning all the factors that constitute the real character of spontaneously spoken language come into action. Whereas in the first stage mainly the referential meaning of language was central, now in the second stage — to speak in terms of Bühler's semiotic Organon-model — also the expressive and social meanings become part of the learning objectives. In Bühler's model the three components of the speech act are integrated: the speaker, the hearer and the external situation to which reference is or may be made. Each of these three components is associated with a specific type of meaning, ie the speaker with expressive meaning, the hearer with social meaning[3] and the external situation with referential meaning. Expressive meaning is present when the speaker shows the mood in which he is, eg excitedness, nervousness, calmness, etc. Social meaning is present when the regional or social role relationship between speaker and hearer is taken into account or shown. Referential meaning consists in making reference to the external situation, to the world.

Now what makes the second stage of FL so intriguing and demanding is that the referential meanings concentrated upon so far in the first stage of FL learning are extended and combined with expressive and social meanings. Normal everyday use of language is a continuous mixture of these three meanings. Moreover, they are expressed not just by verbal signs but also by non-verbal vocal and body signs. Verbal signs include the use of words, non-verbal vocal signs are here limited to qualities of the human voice other than stress and intonation, and non-verbal body signs are facial expression, gestures, posture of the body.[4] According to von Raffler-Engel (1977) non-verbal communication can occur in three different areas:

1 **body-language**, ie 'bodily movements in general as they express the mood of the individual', eg nervously walking up and down; clearly this is the expressive meaning of communication;

[3]This is not Bühler's but Labov's term (oral communication at the Linguistic Symposium with Prof Labov, Trier and Hasselt/Belgium, 1979).

[4]These distinctions follow, but also slightly deviate from, Lyons (1977:57ff).

2 **social movements**, ie 'those movements that are obligatory in social interaction', eg bowing in Japanese culture to greet someone; this belongs to the social meaning of communication;

3 **kinesics**, ie 'message-related body movement which can substitute for a verbal expression or accompany a verbalisation, reinforcing it', eg touching one's forehead with the index finger to show that the addressee is a fool; this is the referential meaning of communication.

It may not be out of place to emphasise that the same meanings can also be expressed by non-verbal vocal signs, ie the so-called 'tone of voice', which according to Abercrombie (1967: 95ff) involves pitch fluctuation, variation in loudness, tempo, continuity, and modulation. Thus a high pitch may have expressive meaning and indicate excitedness or anger, a loud voice may express social role meaning, eg a teacher addressing a group of pupils usually speaks louder and more slowly, not just to make sure he is understood but also by doing so he affirms his social role of being a teacher in command. Referential meaning can be expressed by modulation, which is 'the superimposing upon the utterance of a particular attitudinal colouring, indicative of the speaker's involvement in what he is saying and his desire to impress or convince the hearer' (Lyons, 1977: 65).

Alongside the above non-verbal body and vocal signs, also verbal signs can express the three types of meaning. Expressive meaning can be rendered by the use of words with 'connotative meaning', eg the neutral word **father** vs the more personal and affectionate word **dad**, by the use of diminutives, by the use of slang, eg **policeman** vs **cop**, etc.

Social meaning is found in the use of a specific regional standard, eg American English vs British English, or in the use of a regional or social dialect, or in the use of social role varieties.

Referential meaning is, of course, the main though far from the only use of verbal signs and is expressed by the whole grammatical system of the language, ie its phonology, lexis, syntax, and semantics.

All these meanings and signs together constitute the complex phenomenon of human communication and interaction. Abercrombie puts it thus: 'We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies' (1968: 55). Summarising these possibilities, we obtain the following scheme:

Types of signs and meanings

signs	*non-verbal signs*		*verbal signs*
meanings	body signs	vocal signs	
expressive	*body language*	*tone of voice, ie pitch, loudness, etc*	*connotatively laden words, etc*
social	social movements		dialect and role varieties
referential	kinesics	modulation	grammatical system

This table may well serve the purpose of illustrating the complex transition from the first stage in FL learning which concentrates mainly on the grammatical system of a language, including some pragmatic functions, to the second stage, in which all types of meanings and all types of signs are involved.

The texts used in this second stage of FL teaching must consequently satisfy all the conditions constituting 'a rich linguistic environment', by means of which both the learning and the acquisition processes can be triggered off in the pupil.

Analysis of a role-played spontaneously spoken text

Realising that most materials for the training of listening comprehension offer an isolated approach to this skill and do not try to integrate it with the development of speaking proficiency, the working-group *COM-ENG (Communicative English)*[5] devised a procedure for producing materials, specifically combining the requirements for listening and speaking and, over and beyond that, activating both learning and acquisition processes.

Briefly summarised,[6] the procedure consists of setting up a scenario for a role-play, which is next acted, or better extemporised by a group of native speakers. The scenario is built up round a natural situation, eg a party of students arriving in Dover and desperately trying to find their coach. All appropriate emotions

[5]I wish to thank my friends of the working group **COM-ENG** for their active contributions to the elaboration of the procedure referred to here. The present members are: Jos Hendrick (author of the scenario 'Arrival in Dover'), David James, Raymond Janssens, Frans Rombouts, Louis van Gaal, Magda Vorlat and the author.

[6]A fuller description of this procedure is offered in my paper *'The Integration of Foreign Language Skills by Means of Role-Played Scenarios'*, in which especially the function of these materials for activating speaking proficiency is explored.

and pragmatic intentions are programmed in the scenario, but it is left to the native speakers to verbalise them or express them in a non-verbal way. The video-recording of such a role-play shows a very rich interaction between the participants and a remarkable intertwining of verbal and non-verbal communication.

Thus the following fragment of a role-played text may look fairly simple when read, but when it is presented aurally to the pupils, they will probably face enormous difficulties. It is only when the pupils hear and see the interaction between the participants that they can be expected to begin to make sense of it.

Role-play: ARRIVAL IN DOVER

Scene: Dover.
Characters: A: Alice Young, leader of a group of American students
B: Brian, one of the students
C: an Automobile Association official.

(Alice Young standing with Brian at the entrance to the harbour transit hall addresses the group of students behind her.)

A: Alright, students! Will you gather here and wait a moment while Brian and I go outside and look for the bus?

(Alice looking outside as Brian steps past her.)

B: Oh, well. Dover at last!
A: Finally in England. It's about time!
B: Those cliffs were really impressive, weren't they? It's the first time I'm here.

A: It's four. The bus should be here. Shouldn't it — er — be waiting outside — er — I don't know?
B: Yes. I don't see any bus.

(Alice pointing in the direction of an A A official.)

A: Maybe we should ask this man here where it is. He's bound to know. (Going up to him.) Sir?
C: Yes? Can I help you?
A: Well, you see, I've got a party of students here and we were supposed to have a bus here for us at four o'clock. It should be here already. Is this where we ought to be waiting?

C: A private coach you've ordered, you mean, to pick you up?
A: Yes.
C: Well, they all always have to wait along the side of the building, so if you look round the corner you should certainly see it there.

B: I'll go and check, okay?
A: Yeah, that'll certainly be a really good idea.
B: Okay, I'll be back.

(Brian disappears round the corner.)

The following analysis tries to point out some characteristics of spontaneously spoken language, mentioned in section 2.

In the opening (lines 3–5) the teacher speaks louder and more slowly, which, together with the visual image of someone addressing a group, clearly marks her social role variety. The visual element of gathering pupils can also contribute to making the meaning of the probably unknown word **gather** clear and consequently also the whole utterance by the teacher as the pragmatic

category of 'directive',[7] here a polite order, and also the carrying out of the teacher's intention in line 4.

The following interaction between the teacher and the student (lines 6–12) is spoken much more quickly and becomes far more difficult to understand. The references to their arrival in Dover in lines 6–9 become also more complex because they contain expressive elements which by means of the tone of voice betray tiredness and impatience (lines 6–7) or admiration (line 8). But whereas the student Brian can forget about the organisational aspects of the trip for a moment, the teacher Miss Young confirms her teacher role by the matter of fact reference to the coach (line 10). She says **bus**, which together with their American accent betrays them as speakers of the American standard variety of English. In line 10 we also notice a completely new structural intonation pattern: the question intonation does not coincide with the grammatical question but with the phrase **I don't know**. So what she expresses is not an information question but simply doubt. The student's reply **yes** has the same rising intonation and thus confirms the doubt. Simultaneously, he expresses his subordinate role relationship by his **yes**: he falls in line with his teacher's doubt and uncertainty. Then the visual element can show his eye movements looking for a coach and show that there isn't any, which makes his statement intelligible.

Lines 13–14 illustrate the combination of kinesics, modulation and grammatical system to express referential meaning: Alice points to the A A official, modulates her voice so as to make a proposal and verbalises her intention to ask that man for information. Again the visual element of the two of them going to the A A official helps to understand the global situation.

In line 15 Alice Young addresses the A A official as 'Sir' with a rising intonation and a modulation which betrays she has a serious problem. The social meaning of this address formula again shows that she recognises the A A official as superior in social role, since she feels uncertain in a foreign country. So in fact the meaning of this one-word utterance is an appeal for help.

The reaction of the A A official in line 16 is completely in line with this appeal for help. Difficulty from a listening comprehension point of view may be that this reaction is almost inaudible and that it is so quickly spoken that it hardly interrupts the tone unit used by Alice whose utterance of 'Sir' and of lines 17–19 form one functional or pragmatic unit: this is our situation; can you please help us?

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[7]This term is one of five of Searle's (1978) categories of speech acts, ie (i) representatives, (ii) directives, (iii) commissives, (iv) expressives, (v) declaratives (eg declaration of war). In fact, these five categories could be correlated with the three functions of Bühler's model; thus (i) and (v) correspond to the referential function, (ii) and (iii) to the social function, and (iv) to the expressive function.

The reaction of the A A official in line 20 is spoken discontinuously, ie with four phrases: '**A private coach // you've ordered // you mean // to pick you up**?' and with question intonation. Thus in restating the teacher's problem in this way he confirms his social role relationship — though due to his upper class accent things are more complex — and by his using of the lexical term **private coach** he checks the congruence of the terms **bus** and **private coach**. He doesn't even expect an answer, which is nevertheless given by Alice, because he continues his utterance, so that Alice's **yes** coincides with his continuing explanation. Although he still makes pauses now, they only occur after longer stretches of very quickly spoken fragments, which are sometimes interrupted by unexpected pauses and which have special emphasis on one informationally prominent word or syllable: '**Well, they all álways have to wait // along the (aɪ:) síde of the building // // so if you look round the córner // you should cértainly see it there //**'. The official's tone of voice expresses reassurance, which is also denoted by the various references he makes to the external situation. The student's proposal in line 25 is in accordance with this reassuring tone and simultaneously by *means of using a new grammatical structure, using* **okay** *instead of the tag* **shall I**? indicates an American English way of suggesting his subordinate role to his teacher. The teacher's use of the informal **yeah** instead of the more formal **yes** in line 26 conveys her solidarity with the helpful student, who in turn expresses his solidarity with his teacher by means of his **okay**, which wants to re-assure her. This quietening tone of voice is continued in his utterance **I'll be back**, which as a matter of fact means **I'll be back in a minute**, in other words **We'll be certain about the bus soon**.

Conclusions

This short analysis may suffice to show that what makes listening comprehension of natural or spontaneously spoken language so extremely difficult are the following factors:

the **phonetic compression** of what is being said; this leads to vowel and consonant reduction, so that the listener must have a very subtle representation of the phonemes of the FL in his receptive phonological competence.[8] The building up of a very flexible phoneme representation of the FL is thus one of the learning objectives of training listening comprehension;

the **sociolinguistic variation** within language. This betrays the ethnic status, the social class and the social role of the participants. A receptive competence of this sociolinguistic variation is a second learning objective of listening comprehension;

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[8]See John Oakeshott-Taylor (1978:219ff) for a concrete analysis of the recognition of the phoneme values that are realised either in isolated contexts or in natural speech.

the **pragmatic intentions** implied by the speakers. These result from the interaction between the grammatical structures used by them and the various non-verbal signs superimposed on the grammatical structures. Coming to grips with the complex pragmatic functions implied in communication is a third learning objective of listening comprehension.

Finally, we can ask the question again how, or more correctly in what areas, the processes of language learning and language acquisition can be stimulated by the materials described here.

Learning can take place in the area of grammatical competence, especially in syntax and lexis and partially in phonology. In the area of sociolinguistic variation, especially role variation can to a certain extent be taught and learned. Finally a number of pragmatic intentions, also called 'communicative functions' by Wilkins (1972), can be exploited by learning activities.

Acquisition can take place in the global area of listening comprehension and in the various areas or components constituting the comprehension process: (i) a refined phonetic competence (flexible representation of the phonemes of the FL); (ii) a sociolinguistic competence which comes to grips with regional standard and dialect variation and with the intricate network of role variation; and (iii) a pragmatic competence which presupposes the interaction of verbal and non-verbal elements (see table p 7) and which covers the innumerable set of pragmatic functions and attitudes or emotions.

Given the refined nature of the rules just mentioned, or given their complexity and vastness, it seems even to be impossible to learn all of them systematically. The most important thing to learn may consequently not be the rules themselves but an attitude which gives acquisition processes free play. This is also what Joan Rubin (1975) seems to mean in her paper, *What the 'Good Language Learner' Can Teach Us.* She sums up seven strategies, the first of which is that

> the good language learner is a willing and accurate guesser . . . The good guesser uses all the clues which the setting offers him and thus is able to narrow down what the meaning and the intent of the communication might be (1975:45).

For Rubin guessing is based on what we know about the social relationship between the speakers, the event, the mood, the channel, on what we know about the rules of speaking, on factual probability, on what we know about grammar and lexicon. It seems to me that the basic requirements for acquisition and learning summed up here can be adequately realised in the use of video-recorded role-plays.

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APPROACHES TO THE SYSTEMATIC CONSTRUCTION OF AN APTITUDE FOR LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Maurice Vandermaelen, College Saint Gilles, Brussels
(Translation by Elizabeth White, St Cross College, Oxford)

The approaches with which I will be concerned here are essentially derived from my day-to-day experience of teaching Dutch in a secondary school in Brussels, which uses French as its main language. The majority of my students come from immigrant families, and are between 14 and 20 years old; to begin with, they have little incentive to learn a language which they cannot imagine ever having occasion to use. Apart from the lessons and the homework they are given, they have no supplementary lessons, and they do not attend holiday language courses.

These details are intended to show to what extent the observations made on this group can be interpreted strictly in terms of the positive or negative results of these lessons. They also define the teacher's problems; throughout his work he must be at least as anxious as the students to achieve the desired end, and therefore must continually re-assess the effectiveness of his contributions to the class — and to do this, he cannot do without a theoretical principle. I have used the term 'a model' in this article; I wish to make it clear that this is no more than a convenient metaphor to express the way in which the 'model' works in the classroom — that is to say, how it allows me to structure my contributions, in terms of precise objectives on the one hand and of analysis of the student's performance on the other.

The Objectives of the Lesson

I have defined the aim of this course as 'the systematic construction of an aptitude', the aptitude to **live** in the language; in other words, to express or perceive the referent in terms of the student's own experience. We are therefore concerned with the acquisition of conditioning comparable to that which we have in a native language. In particular, with regard to listening comprehension, the student must learn to listen to what is said to him, and to produce a reaction in terms of his experience — an act, an emotion, the perception of a feeling — before considering the form of the message. Thus a message which is intended to inform must be received as information — an order or a recipe should lead to action, a joke should raise a laugh. The stimulus given can be considered authentic if it was originally intended to inform, amuse, or move a native speaker. In this sense, it belongs to the corpus of messages which a native speaker is given to understand; it was created as one moment in a process of authentic communication.

It should be noted that the student's attitude is most likely to be the opposite of that outlined above. He is much more anxious to pick out the words that he does not know than to grasp the total meaning of what is said to him. The

teacher's conscientious intervention is necessary if we are to change this.

These considerations on the holistic nature of comprehension should not obscure the fact that language is composed of elements, and the holistic comprehension really means the integration of all these elements into a meaningful synthesis. When we aim successfully to build up an aptitude for comprehension, we are therefore trying to make the student learn and use the greatest number of these elements, by integrating them progressively.

It would certainly be pleasant to be able to describe here a structured process based on a finished theory of language learning whose programme would include the acquisition of each of these elements, all of them well understood and 'orchestrated' by a science of language which had completed the analysis of its object. Fortunately, no one expects quite so much, and with good reason. The rest of this article attempts more modestly to describe a method which tries, in an empirical way, and with encouraging results, to approach the ideal given above.

Foundation Work: the Basic Acquisition

The first phase of work consists of giving the students the training in listening comprehension which is afforded by audio-visual structuro-holistic classes.[1] From the very beginning, an integrated comprehension is called for, but at the same time the teacher should pay particular attention to developing in his students the correct way of listening to rhythms, intonations and sounds, a feeling for the meaning of words and for the syntactical structures used, and also to enlarging their capacity for echoic memory.[2] From then on he should carefully observe the quality of the students' performance with regard to these various considerations and should give them more complex stimuli to deal with, according to the progress they make.

Miller[3] has shown us that any person can correctly repeat a phrase of five to nine syllables in any language whatsoever, without understanding a word of it, and therefore without the help of any reference to the signified. From the moment that the student begins to be able correctly to repeat phrases or parts of phrases which are longer than this, we can rightly assume that his repetition

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[1]M J De Vriendt-De Man, S De Vriendt, J Eggermont, M Wambach, C Wuilmart, H Schutte: *Méthode audiovisuelle de néerlandais,* Didier.

[2]Pimeleur: *Some Aspects of Listening Comprehension.* Etudes. *Language Laboratory Learning: New Directions,* Bordas-Aquila, pp. 106–114. The author deals with the importance of echoic memory in comprehension.

[3]Miller: *The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two.*

involves something of the logic of the language which he is learning, that the constituent elements of the language being learned are beginning to function. Systematic observation of a student's ability to repeat phrases of increasing length is a simple and relevant method of measuring progress.[4] This fundamental work is therefore not an attempt to teach a subject; its aim is to use the linguistic content of audio-visual lessons in operations of increasing complexity, which operations constitute the basic acquisition; it is continued for some length of time, parallel to the other class activities, to which it contributes basic complements.

Expected Progress

The systematic construction of an aptitude can only be attempted with reference to some definition of the expected progress to be made by the student, according to the various tasks he is set.

This progress is frequently defined in terms of vocabulary, of structures, and even of non-segmental constituents. But we must note that the vocabulary which a student has learned at any given moment of the course very often disappears a few weeks later, replaced by other words which will be lost in their turn; the same applies to particular structures. Both teacher and student have the discouraging impression that they are pouring water through a sieve.

Surely this is sufficient reason for looking closely at other definitions of progress, which take into account the phenomena of forgetfulness that I have described above, and which base their evaluation of progress on criteria which give a better account of the changes which occur during the development of an aptitude for comprehension; and these other definitions can be used to greater effect to structure the objectives of a systematic programme.

My discovery by Bloom's taxonomy was a rewarding stage in this research.[5] This taxonomy contains a description of the various levels of performance which can be produced, displaying, in increasing stages of completeness, a capacity for the utilisation of any basic acquisition; this can therefore be extended to any linguistic type.[6] This taxonomy gave me the first axis for my definition of progress in communication ability, and allowed me to distinguish

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[4]J-P Gailliez, M Vandermaelen: *Teacher's Guide: Nederlands? Graag!,* (Glossa, 1974), pp 29–30.

[5]*Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals.* Handbook I: *Cognitive Domain,* by A Committee of College and University Examiners. David McKay Company, Inc., (New York, 1956).

[6]J-P Gailliez, M Vandermaelen: op. cit., pp 6–11.

the following stages in the construction of a capacity for comprehension. The numbers correspond to the six levels distinguished by Bloom.

1 Being capable of recognising the basic acquisition.

2 Being capable of recognising other elements (phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical) as identical to or belonging to the same class as those acquired in 1, and this recognition being contained in a communication which is essentially composed of elements of this type.

3 Being capable of recognising the way in which different elements belong respectively to the various classes identified in the preceding stage, this being contained in a more diversified communication.

4 Becoming capable of grasping the internal coherence of a group of elements which constitute a communication.

5 Becoming capable of grasping the total content of a communication, and reacting to it spontaneously.

6 Becoming capable of judging the rightness of the language used in a communication. This is the capacity to listen to the message, consciously considering the form in which it is transmitted, just as is possible in a native language. It is totally different from the beginner's attention to the form of the message, which prevents him from considering the content of the message.

The second axis for the definition of progress is provided by the major functions of language, as described by Jakobson. It seems to me that the progression is as follows:

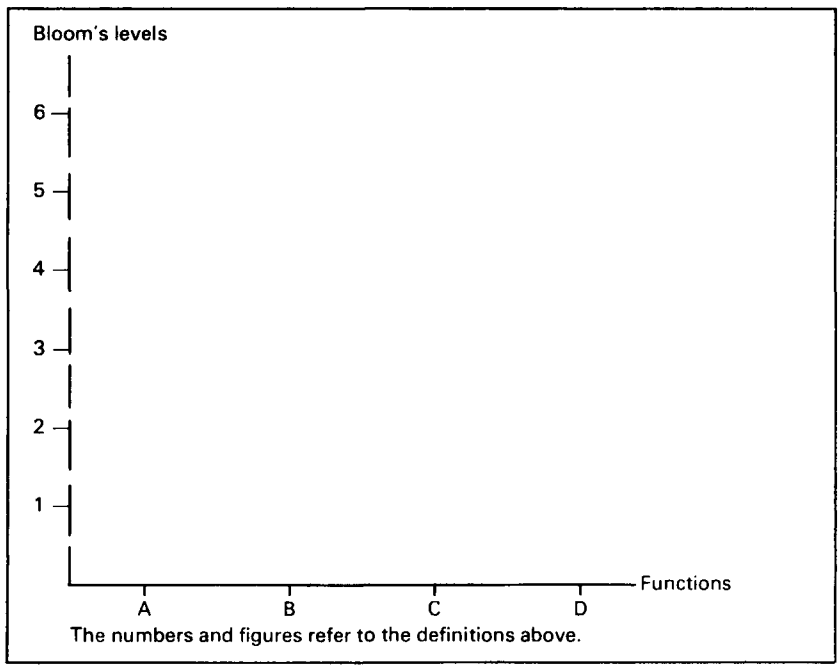
1 The denotative function: a communication made in an audio-visual class is first of all perceived as an external reality, the manifestation of a world where the student is a spectator. Speech makes its first impression in its denotative or referential function.

2 The social function: becoming aware of the phatic function of speech is an important stage of progress, since in this way the language becomes a means of contact.

3 The expressive function: becoming sensitive to this function, being able to understand the revelation of character in speech, is the next stage of learning.

4 The poetic function: a feeling for the poetic function of speech must be the highest level of achievement.

By combining these two axes, we obtain the following model:



The numbers and figures refer to the definitions above.

One example will demonstrate the use of the model.

To take a particular element: 'The use of the comparative of superiority with the twenty adjectives known at this stage of the course, and also with several others which will be introduced during the lesson.' This element can be used in short phrases during the lesson, to express a comparison of quality between two objects. This operation corresponds to (A,2). The same phrases used in a dialogue can be understood by the listener as revealing some quality of the person who is speaking; this time, the level is (C,2). Varied and graduated exercises in the basic work aim to make the student use this operation of comparison successively through levels (A,1) to (A,5); without, however, forgoing opportunities for incursions into the other functions. The possibility that (B,2) can be acquired before (A,3) is not excluded — everyone knows that it happens. The worth of this model rests in the fact that it allows the formulation of positive hypotheses concerning every new phenomenon observed during the learning process, even though that phenomenon might at first seem to show regression.

We can use as illustration a situation which will be recognised by all teachers; it arises frequently. A student is able to manage an (A,5) operation successfully. He is capable of understanding or producing, by himself, a communication on a neutral subject, using objective terms; but when he tries to give a more personal view of the subject, bringing into use the expressive function of the language, he is suddenly much less brilliant. This performance, which at first seems disappointing, is in fact level (C,3), and so might well be more difficult than (A,5). Such analyses stimulate creativeness in the search for exercises which really fill the student's needs at any moment of their progress, and they make it easier for the teacher to maintain a positive attitude, which is in itself a source of incentive for the student.

Training in Holistic Comprehension

Regularly, and from the very beginning of the programme, the student is given authentic messages to deal with — authentic in the sense that this term was defined above. The linguistic elements which constitute these messages obviously go beyond the elements acquired in the foundation work which is continued at the same time.

At first, these messages are mainly short sequences taken from television programmes. In the next phase, the students may be given extracts from television or radio series, or from variety programmes. Later, they are given documents on various cultural matters which may be relevant to their examination subjects — interviews with authors, documentaries on economics, politics, social subjects, tourism and the like — subjects which can be developed in brief talks by the teacher, or in conversation with other people, as well as in the textbooks and articles read in class.

These extracts help to form an attitude of receptiveness in the student, making him receptive in particular to:

— interest in the message carried by the words, whether it be information, advice or a source of amusement, rather than in the 'comprehension text'

— listening with his whole mind, calling on all his faculties, including sensitivity and imagination.

— acceptance of the frustration inherent in language learning, due to the fact that he cannot easily understand everything, whether this is because of the complexity of the language, the rapid delivery, the speaker's accent, or because of his lack of cultural references.

If this attitude is not developed intensively enough, any exercise in comprehension risks being turned into the most worthless type of vocabulary lesson — the translation of long lists of words. From another point of view,

these extracts help the student's purely linguistic progress. They complete the basic work by calling on all the mysterious mechanisms of competence, in the way in which Chomsky sees it acting in a 'rich linguistic environment'. Their diversity of voices, regional accents, pitch, and subjects gives rise to a sort of suppleness, an adaptability, which without doubt constitutes an excellent means of making the student more able to cope with other voices, other accents — that is, to continue the process of learning on his own throughout his experience.

I will conclude by emphasising once more that my article is not intended to be anything more than an account of personal experience, and that I do not mean to attribute any universal value to it, except in one point which has been at the foundation of my whole contribution to this colloquium: it is my profound belief that the successful acquisition of an aptitude for understanding a foreign language can only be achieved if every teacher is provided with the means to analyse his method of teaching, and to re-adjust it day by day according to the development of each of the groups with which he is working.

THE DESIGN OF MATERIALS TO FOSTER PARTICULAR LISTENING STRATEGIES

Shelagh Rixon, ELTI, The British Council, London

This paper is based on practical observation and some introspection rather than on theory. We, or certainly I, do not know what goes on inside a learner when he tackles a piece of listening, but we can specify what we want to happen on the outside — what the learner needs to be able to do with the language. The teacher's job is to provide him with practical means to help him reach these objectives.

We can take two approaches, neither of which excludes the other; the language skills route, and the listening strategies route. Approaching listening comprehension through improving language skills is of course a necessary and familiar approach, and work like that of Munby (1978)[1] allows us to specify the language skills needed for a particular task so much more closely and accurately than before. A very limited selection of Munby language skills relevant to listening appears below.

Some skills necessary to successful listening and note-taking — after Munby 1978 (his numbering for his taxonomy of language skills).

11–16 Recognising how intonation is used:
- for structuring discourse
- for underlining important information.

19 Guessing/deducing meaning for use of contextual clues.

35 Recognising markers for:
- introducing an idea
- transition to another idea
- concluding an idea.

37 Identifying the main point by:
- vocal underlining (decreased speed, increased volume)
- verbal cues ('The point I want to make is . . .).

41 Selective extraction of points involving:
- coordination of related information
- rearranging contrasted items
- tabulation of information for comparison and contrast.

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[1] John Munby Communicative Syllabus Design — a sociolinguistic model for defining the content of purpose-specific language programmes. Cambridge University Press 1978.

Such a list may appear daunting at first sight, but it is useful because the detailed requirements listed are very suggestive of the sort of exercise types that will develop each micro skill.

The main focus of this paper, however, is not so much on how to write or conduct appropriate listening exercises at the language skills level, essential though this is in any programme, but on how to help students cope with a realistic listening task that is beyond their level if language skills alone are taken into account — how to survive on a minimum of language skill, in other words.

ELTI's main task on the language-teaching side is to provide highly intensive short courses for adult students who come to Britain for professional or Postgraduate training. Senior French Civil Servants and Third World students with scholarships from the Overseas Development Administration are among the students we take. Although much of our teaching is directed towards improving their overall competence in the language, it also seems wise to put them through an 'assault course' of materials that may seem to be beyond their current language capacities in a number of ways — complexity of information and language, speed of delivery, noise in the system, for example. These materials are used to train students in procedures and strategies that they can adopt to help them get as much information as possible out of what they hear. We do not approach the exercises by 'teaching' the unfamiliar language features that appear in a passage, but by suggesting means by which students themselves by using what they **do** already know may come closer to an understanding of the content of a passage.

This paper is in three sections:

1 The strategies that an efficient listener applies.

2 The implications this has for materials and pedagogy when training learners in these strategies.

3 Examples of actual materials with comments on their use.

The strategies that an efficient listener applies

FIGURE ONE is a very simple model of the steps an efficient listener, whether language learner, or native speaker, goes through when trying to get what he wants out of what he hears. It accords with my own view at least of what I do when listening and with that of a number of my colleagues in ELTI.

Anyone approaching a listening task in the real world — whether it be a formal lecture, the weather forecast on the radio, or instructions on how to get to the railway station — probably (consciously or unconsciously) does the following

things: The processes are not of course carried out in chronological order, many of them are absolutely simultaneous, or the listener may jump backward and forward as necessary.

A He sorts out **why** he is listening. Basically what does he want to know?

then

B 1 *He predicts some of the information he expects to be included in the* utterance.

2 He assesses how much of that information he expects to be new to him and how much, and what, he thinks he already knows about the subject.

These steps allow him to reduce some of his listening to a monitoring task — matching and finding discrepancies in the actual content of the listening text against the framework he has already set up.

3 Referring back to A, his reason for listening, he decides how much of the message is likely to be relevant to that purpose. This tells him what to **ignore** and what to **select**.

How many of these steps are consciously applied and to what degree varies *according to the familiarity or the unfamiliarity of (a) the subject-matter and* (b) the language. For example, when the subject-matter is well-known but the grasp of the language is weak, **prediction** of the probable content reduces the student's load to the task of understanding just enough of the language to enable him to **match** what he thinks the message is against what he already knows. Only when there appears to be some discrepancy will the danger lights begin to flash. When new information comes in, the listener will probably be able to decode it by partial reference to the framework of knowledge he already has.

The converse case is that of a native speaker about to hear something on a subject with which he is not familiar. He has very little possibility of accurate prediction or matching of the apparent message against his own knowledge, but on the other hand the language will be more transparent to him on the whole. He may have to cope with unknown lexis, perhaps, or derive new concepts from the message, but the basic tools for this are there in his superior grasp of the language. From the language he does understand he can construct a series of hypotheses about context into which he can try to fit the parts of the message that at first his lack of specialist knowledge prevents him from understanding conceptually.

The students we deal with are probably in the middle ground between these two extremes. They have enough English to take in some new information at first hearing, and they have enough knowledge of the world and of their own subjects to provide them with a framework that will support them when their linguistic understanding is not complete, and may even help them to decode the probable meaning of unfamiliar utterances. Our aim is to make the interaction between **linguistic competence** and **knowledge** — of the world and of specialised fact — much stronger than it already is. The struggle to resolve uncertainty that results is exploited to the full in pedagogic terms in classroom management that allows a transition from individual grappling with a listening task to group discussion and sharing of different strategies and amounts of linguistic and factual knowledge.

So, having determined one's objective and set up a framework of knowledge already possessed (which varies from person to person of course) and of new information needed, against which the content of the listening passage can be matched, the listener actually hears the passage. A listener who is confident in understanding every word and every implication contained in the passage will simultaneously be applying the next process; **filtering the message for its relevance** to his purpose in listening. However it is unlikely that things will go so smoothly. In any piece of listening, some of the language will be understood immediately, but a certain proportion will be doubtfully understood and remain in a kind of 'comprehension limbo' until the listener can confirm or reject the various hypotheses he may have about its meaning. Some of the language will not be understood at all. Therefore until the two areas of uncertainty — the half-understood parts and the parts that are not understood at all — have been dealt with, they cannot be filtered for relevance. So the listener must apply other strategies to the doubtful proportion of the content simultaneously with his handling of the content that he **has** understood. The doubtful proportion is likely to be high for a non-native listener, which is what makes his task so much more complex. Our training aims to help him, not so much by telling him what strategies that he needs to apply — since these are fairly simply arrived at by any moderately intelligent person — but by increasing his flexibility and his facility in applying more than one strategy simultaneously.

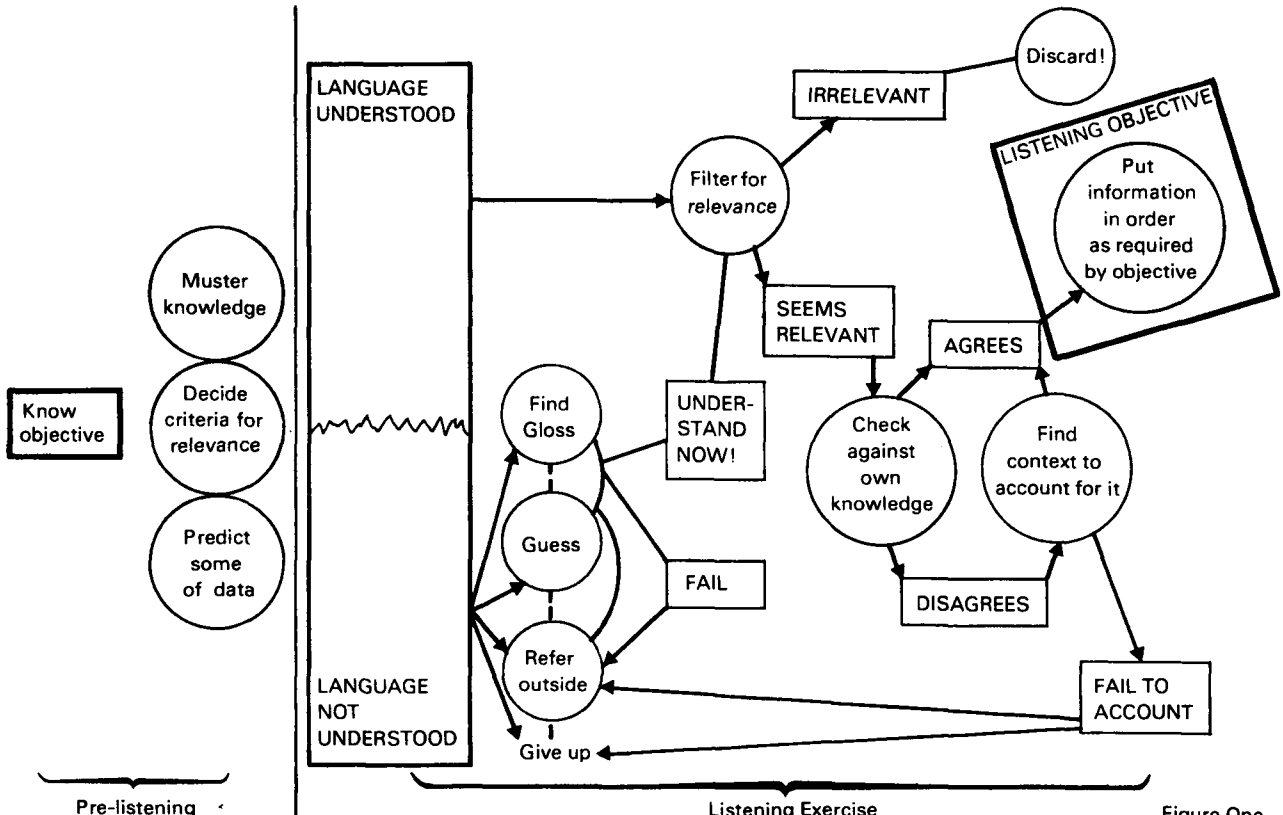

Know objective
Muster knowledge
Decide criteria for relevance
Predict some of data
LANGUAGE UNDERSTOOD
LANGUAGE NOT UNDERSTOOD
Filter for relevance
IRRELEVANT
Discard!
LISTENING OBJECTIVE
Put information in order as required by objective
SEEMS RELEVANT
AGREES
Check against own knowledge
Find context to account for it
DISAGREES
FAIL TO ACCOUNT
UNDER-STAND NOW!
Find Gloss
Guess
FAIL
Refer outside
Give up
Pre-listening
Listening Exercise

Figure One

The strategies that the student can apply to the imperfectly understood sections of the listening text are four, in roughly descending order of desirability.

1 He can remain alert for a gloss or a rewording of any element in the text that he does not understand, coming either fairly immediately, or one that appears by implication, or only somewhat later in the text. This, as will be seen later, has implications for the type of text we should offer and for ways of grading texts for difficulty.

2 In the meantime, or instead, he can make a **guess** at its likely meaning — to be confirmed or denied later.

Both of these strategies utilise that proportion of the language that has been understood, and, as they succeed and more is added to the balance of 'things understood', so the student is cumulatively helped.

3 **Referring** outside, to a dictionary or other reference work, or verbally to one of one's colleagues or tutors, is not often seen as an option in the classroom, but it is often a realistic option in real life, provided that enough of the passage has been retained or noted down to make identification of the doubtful elements possible. Our teaching encourages students to develop the skills (reasonable guessing at spellings of unknown words etc) that will make this strategy possible.

4 The final possibility is simply to **give up**. Teachers are often recommended to encourage students to leave aside what they cannot understand, to avoid becoming bogged down over a single word, for example, but in our experience this recommendation is not often accompanied by any guidance about the stages students should go through **before** deciding to leave a part of a passage aside — students need to be prevented from giving up too soon, in other words. I have put GIVE UP on to the model only because it is a realistic representation of what must happen with some of the content of most passages, but it is an acceptance of reality rather than a first recommendation as a strategy.

Let us assume that the listener has tried all these strategies, finding glosses, guessing and referring, on the language he initially did not understand. With some of it he will still have failed, and he will have given up, but with some he will have understood enough to put it through the **filter for relevance** box. Frustratingly, some of this hard-won understanding will now be unused because it will fail the relevance test and will thus have to be **discarded**. Some students have a tendency to hang on proudly to anything that they have managed to decode, relevant or not. Our exercises aim to promote a slightly more ruthless attitude in the interests of efficiency.

Now the listener applies another check. He matches the surviving content of the passage against his own knowledge. If there are no contradictions or puzzling discrepancies he is able to pass to the final stage. This is the **organisation** of the information in a form that allows him to achieve his original listening objective. The layout of the worksheets that we provide with our listening materials provides guidelines on how to organise information in the most efficient way for the particular task.

If, however, there are discrepancies between what the listener thinks he has gathered from the passage and what he thinks he knows about the subject he must do one of two things. He must either **find a context** that would account for the apparent anomaly — or he must go back to the language and check whether his apparent understanding could have been at fault. Anomalies of this kind are more likely to be revealed if students compare their results with each other at this stage. This encourages them to look critically at what they cannot account for. This has implications for the content of the passages we use, in that content which does not have any outside reference to the world of fact or which cannot be checked by cross-references within the passage itself is not capable of setting up a critical tension at this stage, and will not encourage students to look for logical coherence in the results of their listening.

A failure to account for anomalies in understanding may end up with the student **giving up** for the time being, but at least he will have tried and although he may have to give up on certain aspects of the task during the listening exercise itself, when he reaches the class feedback stage of the lesson he will be very well aware of the areas that he needs help with and will thus be much more receptive to any elucidation that the teacher can offer.

Implications for materials and pedagogy

One of the assumptions that lies behind our materials design and the way in which the materials are exploited in class is that, since we are training students, a certain amount of distortion of verisimilitude is justifiable to allow us to emphasise the strategies and approaches that we feel are necessary. Training need not equal precise simulation of reality. Thus we do not feel apologetic about the fact that in some types of listening exercise the students can work at their own pace, listening privately in a language laboratory booth with control of their own machines. Other types of exercise are more suitably presented at a pace decided by the teacher controlling the size of the chunks of information that students have to deal with at any one time and the amount of repetition there is during the listening part of the exercise. The appropriate uses for each technique will become clearer when we come to look at actual materials in detail.

The importance of group work to many of our listening exercises has been mentioned before. It is not just a question of trying to increase the amount of communication within every class but is much more intimately connected with our aim to improve listening strategies. Many listening comprehension lessons have the following structure:

Posing a problem.
Class listens and answers as individuals.
Almost immediate feedback on correctness.

Since most of our training in listening comprehension is concerned with the progressive resolution of uncertainty, an approach which provides immediate feed-back, even if it is done through the medium of class discussion, seems to waste the learning opportunities that uncertainty can bring. Students have different amounts of linguistic knowledge and different amounts of background knowledge, and they may come to very different conclusions about the content of a listening passage. By discussing the relative merits of their conclusions before they know the right answers, they are encouraged to go back to the tape with a specific purpose in mind — to check that they heard a disputed word correctly, for example, or to listen again for an item they may have missed but which their colleagues seem to have picked up.

Our preferred sequencing of most listening lessons is therefore something like this:

Posing of problem (pre-questioning or discussion of worksheet).
Class listen and give individual answers on worksheet.
Class discuss their results in pairs or small groups. Teacher withholds 'correct' answers at this stage.
Class listen again as necessary to resolve anomalies or settle disputes as far as possible.
Whole-class discussion of results, elicited by teacher.
Teacher plays back tape to whole class. Final discussion of language points that lead to dispute or misunderstanding.

Here, although the task is pre-set, the whole emphasis is on what the students make of the listening task, and the needs that are revealed by failures to cope adequately with parts of it. By the time the class reaches the final stage many problems that students can settle for themselves will have been dealt with by the closely directed re-listening that disputes and uncertainties cause. Self-criticism and self-reliance are among the attitudes we hope to further by this stage of discussion and uncertainty. Only the sort of problem that really needs the teacher as a language informant should remain by the time the final stage is reached. Problems diagnosed at this stage are usually those which are really worth settling, and students can be given appropriate remedial work as a result of a lesson like this, whereas the previously described lesson procedure tends

to stop at the 'Did you get the right answer? Oh dear, too bad, here is the right answer' level.

The texts with which the students are required to work are all-important. One cannot perform authentic operations upon a jejune text — one with no real information in it. Equally the authenticity of one's operation is disturbed if the information load does not at least reflect that of a real-life text. In real life there *is usually more than one opportunity to grasp a point — repetition, hesitation,* rephrasing, glossing are all features that are commonly present in 'authentic' speech of whatever kind. So are digressions and loose ends, which if recognised and ignored in time dilute the information load rather than add to it.

Most of our texts are 'Simulated Authentic'. That is, no script as such is written before the recording, but the informational content and ordering of information is laid down in a set of notes. The speaker is asked to express this content in his own way. The result is something that comes very close to, if it is not indistinguishable from, real speech. The same thing is possible with dialogues. An extract from notes for the speakers of 'An Anthropologist Talks' are given below with a transcript of the resulting 'interview'.

Script notes for 'An anthropologist talks about primitive man'

Interviewer: Introduce speaker. Anthropologist George Parker. Been living in Brazil with one of least known Indian tribes. Just back in UK. Was **part** of community, not studying them as outsider.

Ask him about difference between our society and Indians'.

George: Self-sufficiency. Not dependent on others.

Interviewer: Ask for an example.

George: Tools, house-building, grow own food. Completely **self-reliant**.

Interviewer: Goad him! Isn't Western man self-reliant?

An anthropologist talks about primitive man

LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW AND DECIDE WHETHER THE STATEMENTS ON WORKSHEET 1 ARE TRUE OR FALSE. TRY NOT TO STOP THE TAPE DURING THIS EXERCISE.

Interviewer: George Parker has just come back to the UK after two years living in the jungle with (er) one of the shyest and least known of the Brazilian Indian tribes there, (er) living with them as part of

the community and also studying them from the point of view of an anthropologist.

GP Mr Parker, what is the greatest difference between ourselves and the Indians you lived with?

Well, I suppose that the greatest difference is that they are self-sufficient. They're almost totally self-reliant. They can rely on their own ingenuity and on their own skills, for almost everything in life. And they're not dependent on others in the way that . . .

Int Could you give us an example of this?

GP Well yes. (Er) they make their own tools. They can build their own houses and they can produce their own food. They were completely self-reliant.

Int But wouldn't you call civilised man self-reliant?

GP Well, from an Indian point of view, no. For example, while taking my notes, when my biro ran out of ink, I couldn't make ink for myself. (Er) on one occasion I ran out of paper and I couldn't make paper. Now they thought that this was incredible and they said: 'But you told us that paper was made from trees; and here we are in the Amazon forest surrounded by trees. Make paper.' And I couldn't. And they were amazed that I was unable to make the things that I required. They identified aeroplanes with my tribe and yet I couldn't make them. And the only explanation that they had was that my father had not taught me well enough.

Int But surely you must have found some areas in which civilised man was superior — (er) take art, for instance.

GP Well, no. You see art exists in far more than a rudimentary form amongst them. The average man — any man in the group that I lived with — could play a musical instrument. For example I recorded about 250 flute pieces and most of them I assure you were of great beauty.

Int Yes, well, that's . . . that's music. What about other forms of art?

GP Oh, they had many others. (Er) they showed their artistic ability in things like dancing, in body painting, in pottery, just to mention a few.

Int Well, you were obviously impressed by the Indians' way of life.

Surely they must have been equally impressed by ours — or at least by our . . . our technology?

GP Well, of course they were fascinated by my ability to reproduce their voices and faces with my tape recorder and camera. But, on the other hand, I had a very strange experience when I had to take an Indian to Sao Paolo for medical treatment. And he was totally shocked by what he saw. And he said to me, very simply: 'How can you breathe this air? How can you drink this water? How can you eat this food? How can you choose to live in this world when you could live in ours?'

Int That's amazing. But how was the tribe affected by your own presence amongst them? After all you were there for two years as a member of the community.

GP Well, naturally I did affect them. (Er) I suppose that's inevitable. But I did my best not to change their culture — by speaking their language, by eating their food and by living in an Indian hut. In the end, my conclusions would be this: I think that they have things to teach us which will make our lives more significant. But I can honestly say that after two years of living with them, I felt that I had nothing to teach them.

NOW REWIND YOUR TAPE AND GO ON TO WORKSHEET 2. LISTEN TO THE INTERVIEW AGAIN AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON YOUR WORKSHEET. STOP YOUR TAPE WHEN NECESSARY.

Source: Freely adapted from an extract from BBC Radio 4 *Pick of the Week*, broadcast on 4 August 1976.

Group 7 ELTI Lab Course
June 1978

One way of grading an information extraction task is by adjusting the distribution of the information in the text. This is easily done by producing note-form information-outlines like the one above. Broadly our lower-level exercises have texts whose information comes in a similar order to the questions or sections to be filled in on the worksheets. More difficult exercises are those in which the information is not presented in such a convenient order but is scattered around the text to be retrieved and ordered by the student.

The format of the accompanying worksheet is crucial, both to the way in which the student approaches his listening task and to the ways in which he can interact with his colleagues during the 'uncertainty and discussion' phase of the lesson.

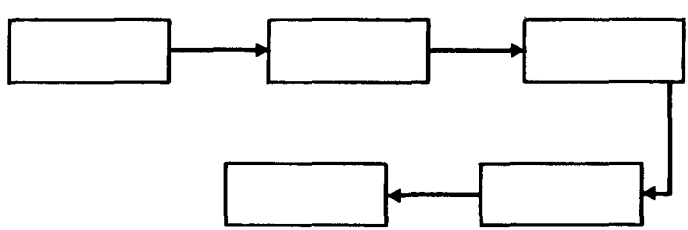
We favour a simple diagrammatic or table format, partly because it cuts down the reading and writing onus on the student and therefore allows him to concentrate on listening itself. This format allows him to do the task more or less simultaneously with his listening, which is what he should be doing in real life.

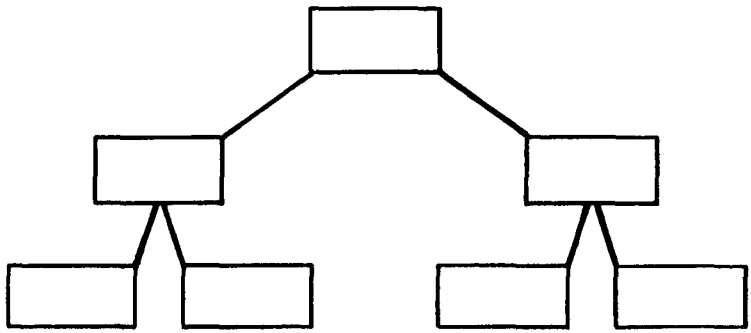
When he has listened and attempted his answers on the worksheet, a diagrammatically expressed or simple note-form answer is much more productive of talk at the discussion phase than the sort of mechanically read question and answer that can result from a list of questions alone. Students have to reformulate the information they have taken down and are therefore much more likely to take notice of the message of what they are saying to one another and to query it if it does not fit in with their own ideas.

Diagrammatic worksheets are useful also from the point of view that they can often symbolise the essence of a task or the content of a text. Binary distinctions, for example, can easily be focussed on by a simple two-column arrangement. A passage comparing and contrasting the characteristics of plants and animals could have a worksheet in this form, with or without prompts to the student in the form of side-headings such as 'feeding mechanisms' or 'reproduction systems'.

Descriptions of processes are neatly diagrammatised as flow charts into which the students can write their notes.

Passages dealing with categorisation can have branching or tree diagrams to be filled in.





More examples will be seen in the section on materials.

Materials

What follows is a selection of ELTI listening exercises, transcripts and worksheets. A few notes on each one are added, but it is hoped that the overall explanation in the previous two parts of this paper will enable them to speak for themselves.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Purpose

1 To make students aware that their ability to select essential information when listening to their L1 can be applied when they listen to L2.

2 To give students a simple note-taking task and initial guidance in note-taking.

NOTE. You may wish to put the main emphasis of the lesson on **either** 1 **or** 2 above.

Suggestions for exploitation

Advanced Level

1 *Explain to the class that they are going to hear a short talk given by a* course organiser at the beginning of a course. Ask questions to arouse expectations

eg What do you think he will say?
What other information would you expect to be told in such a situation?

Remind students that they rarely listen to anything without having **some** preconceived idea about its content.

2 Ask the students to make notes only of **useful** information as they listen to the talk.

3 Play the tape. (Class listening is preferable to laboratory listening as the tape is so short.)

4 Elicit notes from the class and write them on the blackboard, or else ask a student to do so.

5 Ask the class to consider how the order and layout of the blackboard version could be improved, using columns, abbreviations, re-ordering certain items.

6 Show a model version on an OHP plate to illustrate these points:

eg

	TIME	PLACE
breakfast coffee lunch tea	9.00 am 10.45 am 12.30 pm 4.15 pm	refectory lounge refectory refectory
lectures	— Wed only	lecture theatre library
last post door locked	6.30 pm 24.00 hrs	— —

7 Replay the tape in sections helping students to identify the following characteristics of spoken language

7.1 markers that indicate ordering of points:
eg **first of all, secondly, lastly, that's just about it.**
What do they signal? What alternative expression could have been used?

7.2 markers that signal an afterthought (as here) or change of direction
eg **by the way.**

7.3 markers for highlighting information: eg **there's just one thing**.

7.4 characteristic delivery of important information ie loudness, stronger stress, slower speech, rephrasing and repetition: eg **morning coffee . . . here in the lounge . . . quarter to evelen . . . coffee in the lounge at 10.45 etc**.

7.5 characteristic delivery of unimportant information ie greater speed, lighter stresses, shift to lower intonation key etc eg **it's rather a nuisance, we've tried to change it but we can't avoid it** and other examples.

7.6 redundancy in various forms: phatic language eg **we need a good breakfast inside us, don't we**?; hesitation features and repetitions of phrases eg **at a — er — at a quarter to seven**.

7.7 back-tracking: eg the coffee break is out of sequence with the other meal times.

7.8 grammatical patterns which do not fulfil their usual semantic function; eg the rhetorical question in the final sentence of the talk.

Intermediate Level

1 Students at this level may need more guidance from the teacher in the initial stages. After asking focusing questions as in Advanced Level 1, play the tape in sections, directing their attention both to the context and to at least some of the important information; eg

Who is speaking?
Whom is he talking to?
What is the speaker trying to do in his talk?
What subjects is he giving information about? etc

At the same time difficult lexis, eg *refectory, tedious,* can be deduced or explained.

2 Otherwise follow the same procedure as for Advanced Level.

COMMENTS. The material may be followed soon afterwards in the course by M 911 Section 2 *The Prizewinning Car*, which provides a similar exercise but with more complex information.

J Y K Kerr
February 1977

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

1 Well ladies and gentlemen, my colleague has welcomed you to the course and now if I may I should like to make one or two points and I hope you won't find it too tedious.

2 First of all I think I should mention your meals (er) you have them in the refectory. I think you all know where it is.

3 Breakfast will be at nine o'clock. Try not to miss it. I shall try not to, (er) we need a good breakfast inside us, don't we?

4 (Er) lunch will be at half past twelve, tea at a quarter past four and dinner at seven-thirty and I do hope you'll enjoy your meals, the kitchen staff put a great deal of time and trouble into providing for us and I know you'll appreciate their efforts.

5 Oh by the way there will of course be a coffee break every day. Yes, morning coffee won't be in the refectory it will be here in the lounge, at a (er) at a quarter to eleven. That's coffee in the lounge at ten forty-five, in the lounge (er) not the refectory that is.

6 Secondly, I think I should mention lectures. They'll be held in the Lecture Theatre. Do you know where it is? Yes? Except on Wednesday. On Wednesday, it's rather a nuisance we've tried to change it but we can't avoid it, the lectures will have to be in the (er) in the library. I think you've already been given all the other relevant details about the lectures.

7 Lastly, I think I should say just one word or two about (um) oh no I think I can leave that till later. But there is just one thing, remember that the last post goes at 6.30 pm and we lock the door at midnight.

8 And that's just about it, (er) of course if there's any questions I'd be very glad to try to answer them now. Though I think it's almost time for tea isn't it?

C Mortimer
1968

Cars

This is an example of an information-matrix type task. The information in the text is in roughly the same order as suggested by the matrix, and the student knows the limits of his task in that it is clear that there will be only three main points to listen for about each car. The exercise could be upgraded for difficulty by making the information appear more scatteredly (eg by turning the text into

an interview or a conversation rather than the fairly 'tight' radio script that it is at the moment) and by making the nature and number of points to be picked up by the student less predictable.

RECOGNISING THE MAIN POINTS: CARS

ON THIS TAPE YOU WILL HEAR A RADIO COMMENTATOR TALKING ABOUT 6 DIFFERENT MAKES OF CAR. LOOK AT YOUR WORKSHEET AND READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. FILL IN THE MAIN POINTS ABOUT EACH CAR. STOP YOUR TAPE WHEN NECESSARY.

In the next few minutes I'd like to talk to you about some new cars which have been on display at the Motor Show and explain some of their advantages and disadvantages, just in case you might be thinking of buying one.

1 The first car I want to mention is the new *CLASSIC* manufactured by Simca. This car has two main advantages: firstly, it's very economical in its use of petrol and secondly it has a great many safety devices that other cars don't have. The big disadvantage about the Classic, in my opinion, is that it doesn't start easily in cold weather.

2 The second car I'm going to talk about is the *VENDETTA* produced by Fiat. The good feature of this model is that it has so much storage space. The bad things about it are that first of all it's very expensive for a car of this size and secondly that the driving seat isn't at all comfortable — at least not in my experience, perhaps because I'm one of those people who's got very long legs.

3 The third car on my list is the new Ford *FAVOURITE*. What I like most about this car is that it's remarkably good value for money and also that you can easily seat five adults without any real discomfort. The main drawback is that the engine isn't powerful enough when it's fully loaded, and this is very noticeable when you're going uphill.

4 Car Number Four — that's the *DART* made by Rover — is one that will certainly appeal to the younger drivers because it has such an exciting shape — in fact it's one of the most elegantly designed cars that I've seen for years. However, the high price is likely to discourage a great many people and one also has to remember that there's only enough room for two people inside — you couldn't even find additional space for a large dog, let alone a child.

5 The next model — that's number Five on our list — the next car is the new model from Toyota: their *BRONCO 800*. The principal merit of this car is that it's extremely strong and will stand up to very rough motoring conditions. It can be used across fields, on rough mountain tracks, it does

well in sandy conditions and so forth. But if you decide to buy one, be prepared for a very bumpy ride as the springs don't seem to be very good. Another problem is that its petrol consumption is high, which makes it rather an expensive car to maintain. Nevertheless, as I've already said, it is a very solid car — very solid and strong.

6 Finally I want to draw attention to a new model by Opel called the *SCOUT.* This car will probably be popular with people who live in cities because it's very small and neat and is easy to park. In addition it's a very easy car to drive with a good simple steering system and so forth. The one feature which has been widely criticised is that the driver's vision to the rear is too restricted. It really is difficult to see what traffic is coming up behind you when you're in the driving seat and this means that wing mirrors are absolutely essential.

So that's our list of six interesting new cars for this week. Next week I plan to concentrate on new estate cars — or what the Americans call station wagons. So, if you happen to be thinking of buying an estate car, listen in again at the same time next Tuesday.

J Y K Kerr
May 1976

Instructions

On the tape recording, you will hear the speaker talking about six different makes of car. As you listen, write in the framework below notes on each of the cars mentioned giving the name, manufacturer and the *three* main points about each.

Some of the answers have been provided for you.

No.	Model	Manufacturer	Advantages	Disadvantages
1	CLASSIC	Simca	a v. economical with petrol. b	Difficult to start when cold.
2	VENDETTA			a .... b driving seat uncomfortable.
3				
4				
5				
6				

MRS COOK AND THE SALES (2 levels)

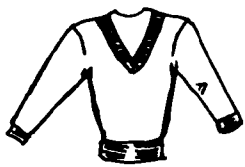
A comparison of the elementary and advanced versions of this exercise will show how both text and information matrix can be adjusted to make an exercise more or less,difficult. Ordering and amount of information are the main variables, along with speed and complexity of language. The advanced version has a background of traffic noise to add to the difficulty.

MRS COOK AND THE SALES
(ELEMENTARY)

Mrs Williams	Hello Mrs Cook. I haven't seen you recently. What have you been doing?
Mrs Cook	Oh I've been to the sales. I went yesterday, I've been today and I'm going again tomorrow—
Mrs Williams	Are you?
Mrs Cook	— and my husband Albert went last Saturday too. I've never seen such low prices.
Mrs Williams	Do tell me what you've bought.
Mrs Cook	Well, first I bought a sweater — that cost only £2.
Mrs Williams	Really? That is cheap, isn't it?
Mrs Cook	That was for me, but I got a very nice scarf for Albert for 95p. (Did you?) Yes, 95 pence. What do you think of that?
Mrs Williams	Fancy that? Was that all you bought?
Mrs Cook	Oh no! Look at this lovely little umbrella.
Mrs Williams	What a pretty colour! How much did you pay for that?
Mrs Cook	£2.35 . . . No, I'm wrong. It was £1.63, I think . . . yes £1.63 was what I paid. (Gosh!) Yes I remember now, because I had . . . I had to give her a £10 note. Then there was a pair of shoes to go with my brown dress (Oh!) — £3.76 they were.
Mrs Williams	Well, you have done well Mrs Cook.
Mrs Cook	But that was only yesterday's shopping. Today I bought this gorgeous little teapot for my early morning tea.
Mrs Williams	Oh that is nice.
Mrs Cook	Isn't it? Only £1.05 because it's slightly imperfect — but you can hardly see the flaw. (No) They'd reduced it from £3.99.
Mrs Williams	What a bargain! You were lucky.
Mrs Cook	Oh is that the time? I must go and get Albert's tea. Lovely to see you again dear and hear all your news. Goodbye.
Mrs Williams	Goodbye Mrs Cook.

J Y K KERR, D A HERBERT
July 1976

Complete this worksheet with information from the tape

Article		Price Paid
	SWEATER	
	SCARF	
	UMBRELLA	
		
		

MRS COOK AND THE SALES
(ADVANCED VERSION)

Mrs Williams	Hello Mrs Cook. I haven't seen you for days. What have you been doing with yourself?
Mrs Cook	Oh my dear, I've been to the sales. (Mm) I went yesterday, I've been today and I'm going again tomorrow, and Albert — that's my husband — went too last Saturday. We've bought such a lot of things. You really must go yourself before it's too late (Yes, I will) I've never seen so many bargains and I kept saying to myself, just wait till I tell Mrs Williams about this.
Mrs Williams	Do tell me what you bought.
Mrs Cook	Well, first I bought a sweater and that cost only £2.20. (Oh!) That was for myself of course but I got a very nice woollen scarf for Albert and how much do you think that was? (How much?) Only 95 pence! (Goodness!) Then I bought 3 pairs of stockings at 25p each and I bought a lovely little folding umbrella — a red one.
Mrs Williams	How much was that ?
Mrs Cook	The umbrella? I think I paid £1.63 for it.
Mrs Williams	Mm. My! Well you have done well, Mrs Cook.
Mrs Cook	But that was only yesterday's shopping. Today I bought this china teapot.
Mrs Williams	Oh that is nice.
Mrs Cook	Isn't It? Only £1.05 pence because it's slightly imperfect. Then I bought a little camera to take with us on our summer holiday (good) — look, isn't it sweet? (Oh, it's lovely!) It was £6.75 — it was reduced from 9, you know.
Mrs Williams	I hope it works.
Mrs Cook	Oh I didn't think of that. Anyway I bought $3\frac{1}{2}$ yards of cotton to make a dress with which cost £4.15. Oh and these earrings because I just couldn't resist them. They were only 58p. Incredibly cheap, don't you think?
Mrs Williams	Yes — and they look just like gold. What did Albert buy?
Mrs Cook	Oh he did very well too. He bought a new carpet for our dining-room which was reduced to £35.50 from £93, I think it was. (Mm.) And he also bought me a birthday present but I'm not supposed to know what it is yet.
Mrs Williams	A birthday present? What is it?

Mrs Cook	I'll whisper to you. It's a . . . wig.
Mrs Williams	A wig?
Mrs Cook	Ssh! It's a wig of real hair and do you know how much it cost? £8.40. (Oh!) It's an absolute bargain, I think. (Yes) They say a wig completely changes your personality, don't they? (Yes, they do) Now I really must get home and see about the meal. Lovely to see you and hear all your news. Bye-bye.
Mrs Williams	Goodbye, Mrs Cook.

J Y K K
July 1976

Taking notes with figures

LISTEN AGAIN TO THE CONVERSATION AND WRITE DOWN THE INFORMATION REQUIRED ON YOUR WORKSHEET.

List the items which Mr and Mrs Cook bought at the sales, together with the price of each. Where possible, note down the original price of the item.

	ITEM	SALE PRICE	ORIGINAL PRICE
1 sweater			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

CORNFLAKES

This is an example of a low-level task in that the process is described clearly in chronological order. The student's main task is to recognise simple lexical markers that indicate the next step in the process 'then, next, etc' and to try to deduce the meaning of some lexis that would be unfamiliar even to native speakers. Here hypothesis and discussion really come into their own. An exercise of this type cries out to be exploited for written follow-up with students expanding their notes back into a description of another process, using all the lexical markers they had previously noted.

CORNFLAKES ARE MADE FROM MAIZE. LISTEN AND WRITE DOWN ON YOUR WORKSHEET WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MAIZE AT THE CORNFLAKES FACTORY.

At the cornflakes factory (er) first the maize is milled. (Er) that means that the useless parts of the maize (um) are removed, (er) the parts that would spoil the taste, and only the good parts are left. (Er) the good parts are called grits, that's G-R-I-T-S.

(Er) next (er) sugar (er) malt and a little salt are added to the grits and this gives a special cornflakes flavour.

Then (er) this mixture (er) is cooked in giant cookers and these giant cookers (er) rotate and (er) the mixture is cooked under steam pressure.

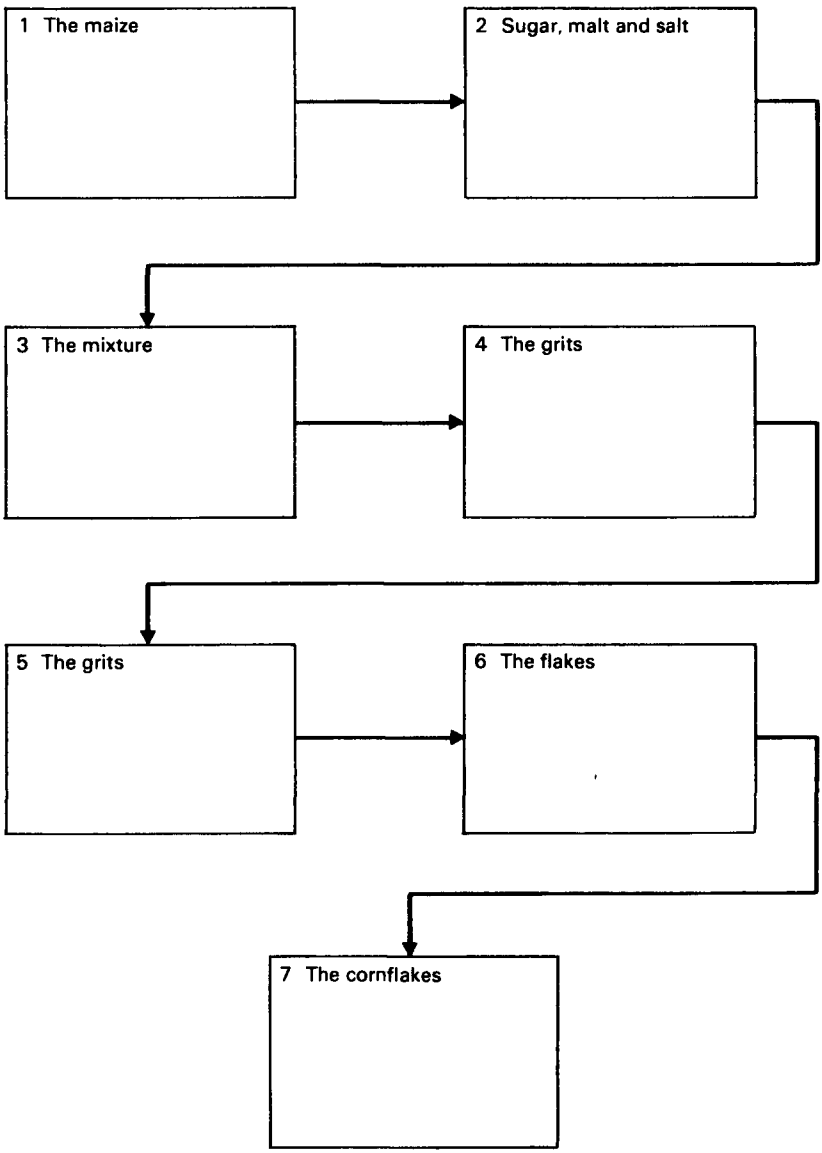
Then (er) the steaming gra . . ., grits, (er) they're, they're fairly wet now, (er) the grits are dried (er) by (er) exposing them to warm air, to, well, to hot air for several hours (er) to reduce the water content.

Next the grits are pressed by heavy rollers (er) in the flaking mill and (er) they're, the grits are pressed into flakes.

Finally (er) these flakes are cooked again, (er) the flakes are cooked in rotary ovens and they are toasted. Then the cornflakes are ready to be boxed. And that's how cornflakes are made.

Gill Sturtridge
1977

CORNFLAKES ARE MADE FROM MAIZE. LISTEN AND WRITE DOWN ON YOUR WORKSHEET WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MAIZE AT THE CORNFLAKES FACTORY.



CROSSED LINES

These exercises are most fun to do with the teacher controlling the tape recorder and stopping as students volunteer new hypotheses about exactly what is going on in these one-sided telephone conversations. They can also be used for individual listening and group discussion of student's conjectures and the justifications they can give for their ideas.

Crossed Lines

Purpose

1 To give practice in inferring social situations and personal attitudes from contextual clues.

2 To give practice in deducing the meaning of unknown lexis from the context.

3 Optionally, to give students opportunities of producing suitable oral language for a given social situation.

Materials

Tape and tapescript.

Suggestions for exploitation

Classwork: listening.

Note: not all the dialogues should be attempted in a single class session. Select any of the dialogues which are appropriate to the level of the class.

1 Explain that the recording consists of a number of telephone conversations in each of which only **one** of the speakers is overheard. Divide the class into two or more teams and ask the students to deduce as precisely as possible what the situation is.

2 **Either** play the dialogue selected straight through as many times as is necessary **or**, if the students find the material difficult, play it in short sections, making use of the pause button. Encourage the students to make suppositions about what they hear, but do not tell them immediately if they are right or wrong. The type and number of guiding questions you ask will depend on the level of the class.

3 Award points to the team which is most successful in explaining each situation and, once the correct solution has been arrived at, focus attention on unknown lexis or idiomatic usage. Guide the students in deducing the

meaning of such items. Lead the students to recognise also that attitudes are often conveyed by stress and intonation.

4 Repeat the same procedure with another dialogue.

5 An alternative possibility using the language laboratory is to divide the class into two or four groups and pre-record a different dialogue for each group on the student machines. Students first listen individually, then each group consults within itself to check facts and interpretations. The class unites again and each group relates to the other the content of its dialogue. (This activity can also be done in pairs or by otherwise splitting up the original groups.) Finally the tape is played to the whole class, tapescripts can be given out, and language points are discussed.

Further classwork or homework (optional)

1 After a number of dialogues have been dealt with, ask the class to form pairs and distribute the dialogues among the pairs, issuing the relevant scripts.

2 Ask the pairs to write the other (unheard) half of the dialogue they have been given, using the blank spaces on their scripts. Check that they identify the speaker correctly as male or female (eg Marge, Les) and that they use language appropriate to speech and the social relationship implied.

3 Later, or in a subsequent lesson, ask one member of each pair (after rehearsal with his partner) to speak the part he has composed in conversation with the speaker on the recording while you operate the pause button on the machine as necessary. It may prove interesting to observe how the realisations of several pairs who have prepared the same part differ from one another. Invite critical comment from the rest of the class.

J Y K Kerr
February 1977

CROSSED LINES:

Inferring meaning from the context

YOU ARE GOING TO HEAR EIGHT DIFFERENT PEOPLE TALKING ON THE TELEPHONE BUT YOU WILL HEAR ONLY THEIR PART OF THE CONVERSATION, NOT THE PART OF THE PERSON THEY ARE TALKING TO.

LISTEN AND TRY TO GUESS QUICKLY AND PRECISELY WHAT EACH CONVERSATION IS ABOUT.

No 1

B
A No, I've already been.
B

A Yes, I've had it out. The appointment was at 3.15 — this afternoon, actually.

B

A No, not at all sore, just a bit numb, you know. And of course it's left the most enormous hole.

B

A Yes, I thought I'd take the afternoon off; but I should be all right by tomorrow.

B

A Yes.

B

A Oh yes.

B

A Would I recommend him? Yes, I think I would. He's got very good hands, very skilful, and he has a nice manner. You know, gentle. And his assistant's awfully nice, especially with children. They give them each a new toothbrush when it's over.

B

A Oh. Well see you tomorrow then, Jill. 'Bye for now.

B

No 2

D

C What?

D

C What do you mean, you've changed your mind? At this stage?

D

C But we're already in the middle of moving out.

D

C What's that?

D

C Your solicitor doesn't think the title deeds are in order? But that's ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous. I think you'd better come around as soon as you can and we'll talk it over.

D

C If you pull out now, you'll leave us in a most embarrassing position.

D

C We've . . . we've already made the down payment on the other one . . . And the packers started work this morning.

D

C Yes.

D

C My wife's going to have a fit when I tell her, an absolute fit.

D

C What? The surveyor's report isn't satisfactory either? In what way, may I ask?

D

C I see. Well, we've been living here for the past five years and . . . that's, that's the first time I ever heard anything about it's being unsound. Perhaps you'd come round and point out what's wrong?

D

C Yes.

D

C No.

D

C Yes.

D

C About 6.15 then. Goodbye Mr Scott.

No 3

F

E Oh yes, he was really nice. I have to work Saturdays of course, but only till 12.00.

F

E Oh no, just asking people what they want and that sort of thing.

F

E Oh no, no cleaning. But they did say I might have to stand by on the switchboard if the other girl's away. Oh, and they lay great stress on your personal appearance.

F

E Yes. So it's just as well I had my hair done, isn't it?

F

E Yes. Shall I tell you something? I think he took a bit of a fancy to me.

F

E Yes. So it's much better than the last one, isn't it? I mean, it's much more refined, isn't it?

F

E And he said: 'Can you be firm, because you'll have to be firm with the difficult ones.' But you could say I was firm, couldn't you? I mean, you know, when it's necessary.

F

E Yes, three weeks off once you've done twelve months with them. And you get four weeks after you've done two years' service. It's all right, really.

F

E Monday next.

F

E Yes, I start on Monday. That's all then, Marge. I just want to tell you how it went, that's all.

F

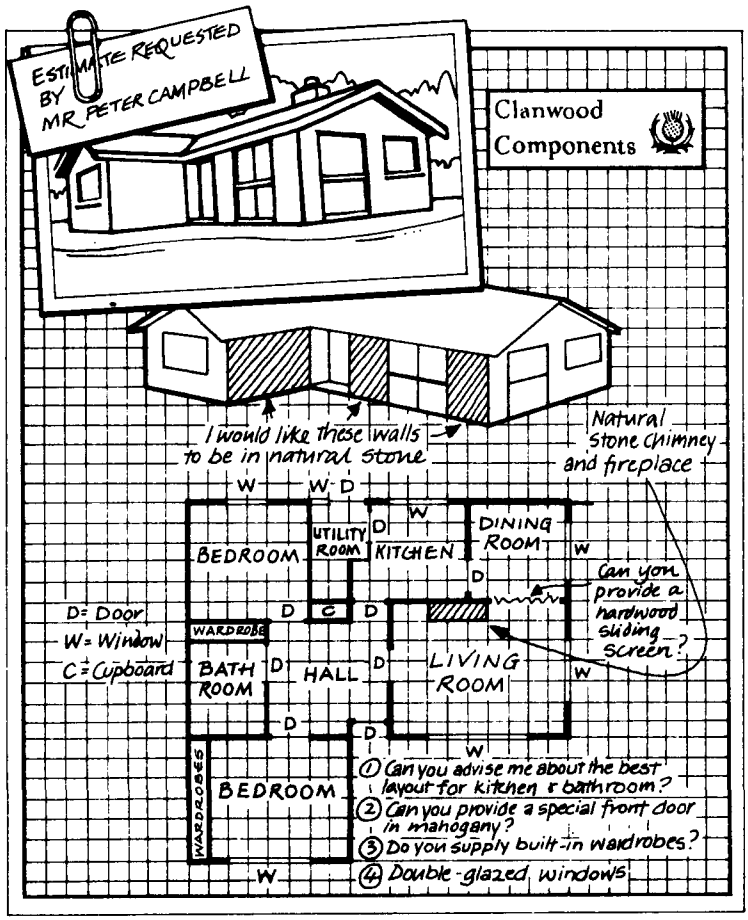
E 'Bye then.

WHAT A BUSINESS!

This type of exercise depends on students being given a set of data before the listening begins. In this case we provide them with the same knowledge of the subject matter and their task is to listen for discrepancies — a light-hearted way of giving them practice in matching the apparent message of any text against their own knowledge.

What a business!

LISTEN TO THIS CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO BUSINESSMEN WHOSE FIRM SELLS PREFABRICATED HOUSES. THEN STUDY YOUR WORKSHEET AND LISTEN TO THE CONVERSATION AGAIN. THIS TIME MAKE A NOTE OF ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS IN THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO TED.



Errors and omissions

The following details were given incorrectly in the conversation:

1 .....

2 .....

The following information was omitted:

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

J Y K Kerr
November 1978

What a business!

FX (phone rings)

Ted: Clanwood Components.

Roger: Hallo Ted, Roger here. I've just had a request from a new customer for a bungalow he wants us to build. He's sent us a plan of what he wants and it all seems quite clear. We need an estimate right away.

T: OK. What's his name?

R: Peter Campbell. Now he wants two bedrooms, living room, diningroom, bathroom and kitchen with the usual central hall area.

T: Yes.

R: And then he wants built-in wardrobes in both bedrooms. That's easy enough, isn't it?

T: Yes, we can manage that.

R: And a sliding hardwood door between the kitchen and the diningroom.

T: Yes, that's no problem either. Anything else?

R: Well he wants a special front door made of . . . made of mahogany, I think it was. Yes, that's right. (Er) and then the outside walls are to be built in natural stone.

T: No other special features?

R: No — that's the lot. Except that he wants advice on the best layout for the kitchen and the bathroom. But I think we'll have to discuss that with him face to face.

T: Yes, I agree.

R: Right, Ted, will you make up an estimate then, based on all this information, and I'll get a copy of the customer's ground plan in the post to you straight away?

T: OK. Will do. 'Bye now.

R: 'Bye, Ted.

FX (receiver replaced)

J Y K Kerr
November 1978

THE INJURY — Jigsaw Listening

This technique, first developed by Marion Geddes and Gill Sturtridge and available in published form in 'Listening Links' (Heinemann) utilises uncertainty and group-discussion to the fullest.

The class is split into three groups, each of which hears only one of the conversations given here. From this they have to fill in as much of the worksheet as possible. Of course each conversation only has part of the story so that no student can answer all the questions. Students are then grouped so that there is one representative for each conversation in each group, and they have to piece together the whole story by exchanging the information they have each managed to glean. It is important when designing materials of this sort to make sure that each tape carries some information that overlaps with other tapes, some that is unique, and perhaps some that seems to conflict with that on other tapes. Students then have a real reason for discussing and listening again.

The injury

Part X

Doctor: Oh dear, oh dear, what have you been up to?

Student: Well . . . Doctor . . . I was on my way to the university and . . .

Dr: Let's take a look at you. Oh, it's quite swollen, isn't it? Does it feel stiff?

Stud: Yes.

Dr: How long ago did you do this?

Stud: Oh, about half an hour ago. About ten o'clock.

Dr: Now, does it hurt when I move it like this?

Stud: Ow.

Dr: I think the best thing is to send you down for an X-ray. Then we can see exactly what needs doing. Wait and I'll send the nurse with you. Can you walk? Do you feel faint?

Stud: No, it's OK.

Dr: Right, I'll see you in half an hour or so. Nurse! Could you look after Mr Aranda . . .

Part Q

Radiographer: Oh dear, oh dear, how did you do this?

Student: I was running for the bus and I slipped on the ice and fell . . .

Rad: Well, if you'll just come over here and put it behind this plate . . . so, I'll just do a few X-rays.

Stud: Do you think it's broken?

Rad: That's not my job to say. The doctor will be able to tell you when he sees the plates. Could you just bend it a bit more this way?

Stud: Ouch.

Rad: Sorry, but I have to do it from several different angles . . . Right. If you'll just go and sit down over there till they're ready . . .

Stud: Thanks.

The injury

Landlady: Well, Carlos! What have you been doing to yourself? You're all bandaged up.

Student: Yes, well I fell down this morning . . . and had to go to the Casualty Department.

Landlady: Up at the Royal? Oh dear, oh dear, the streets are so slippery at this time of the year. Is it broken?

Student: No, just sprained, I think the word was. They did some X-rays, and the doctor said it would probably be all right in a week or so. I have to go back and see him again in ten days.

Landlady: But what about your studies? Will you be able to write with your wrist all bandaged like that?

Student: No, that's OK. Fortunately I'm left-handed.

Landlady: Well that's a bit of luck. Never mind, dear, just you sit down and I'll make you a nice cup of tea.

Shelagh Rixon
ELTI
1979

The injury

YOU ARE GOING TO HEAR JUST ONE PART OF A STORY. THE STORY IS IN THREE PARTS. AS YOU LISTEN, MAKE NOTES TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. STOP AND REWIND YOUR TAPE AS NECESSARY.

Listening Stage

Answer as many of these questions as you can. You will not be able to answer them all because not all the information will be on your tape. You will find out all the answers at the DISCUSSION STAGE.

1 What is the name of the injured person?.....

2 Who was he talking to on your tape?.....

3 What part of himself do you think he has injured? .....

4 What type of injury was it? .....

5 Where was he when he hurt himself? .....

6 Where did he go for the treatment? .....

7 What time of the year is it? .....

8 How exactly did he have the accident? .....

9 What time of day did he hurt himself? .....

10 How long will it take him to get better? .....

Discussion Stage One

1 Compare your answers to the questions with people who heard the *same* tape as you. Make sure you have as much information as you can, and that you agree about it. Go and listen again if you disagree about anything.

Discussion Stage Two

Discuss your notes with two people who heard the other two parts of the story: don't look at each other's notes!

1 Find the answers to all ten questions by exchanging information.

2 Try to decide the correct order of the three parts of the story.

3 Discuss what might have happened when the man saw the doctor for the second time.

Discussion Stage Three

Class discussion of what each group decided about the answers to each section.

Follow-up Work

Construct the dialogue between the man and the doctor when they met for the second time.

Shelagh Rixon
ELTI 1979

PROFESSOR FLAKE

Here the information the students seek is on the speaker's attitudes. Having made their own binary choices between Favourable and Unfavourable, the students can discuss the linguistic features that led them to their choice when the tape is played again.

PROFESSOR FLAKE

LOOK AT YOUR WORKSHEET. YOU ARE GOING TO HEAR TWELVE STATEMENTS OF OPINION. AFTER EACH STATEMENT STOP YOUR MACHINE AND INDICATE ON THE WORKSHEET WHETHER THE SPEAKER IS **MAINLY APPROVING** OR **MAINLY DISAPPROVING** IN HIS OPINION.

1 Roger Flake is a truly outstanding figure in the academic world, even if one doesn't share his opinions on every single aspect of his subject.

2 Personally, I consider that Flake's claim to be a leader in his own academic field is totally unjustified and I'm not the only person of that opinion, I can tell you.

3 Roger Flake? Oh yes, he's undoubtedly an extremely controversial figure though in my view that's simply because his work is so brilliant that a lot of other scholars are madly jealous of his success.

4 Well, if you ask me, he's one of those people who simply loves publicity, always appearing on television, turning up at all the international conferences and that sort of thing. But if you read what he's actually written on his own subject, it strikes me as being quite old-fashioned and not particularly original.

5 As for Roger Flake, I really have no time for him at all.

6 That man Flake is absolutely the end!

7 Flake has often been accused of intellectual arrogance and I must say there's a grain of truth in the accusation. Nevertheless his professional standing, both nationally and internationally, is quite undeniable — or so it seems to me.

8 Well frankly, everyone knows, whether they admit it openly or not, that Professor Flake is in no way the genius that he claims to be. And I can't be franker than that, can I?

9 Flake's work has dominated the field for long enough. His theories are certainly most attractive but they're hardly substantiated by proper evidence and this is gradually being recognised by some of the younger generation of scholars, I'm glad to say.

10 Some people think that Professor Flake's a very difficult man — he's certainly very intolerant of criticism, as I'm sure you must have noticed. All the same I don't think anyone would disagree with me when I say that he is by far the most eminent living scholar in his field.

11 Well, the one person who has really impressed me by his imaginative range and sheer intellectual energy is of course old Rog Flake. He's really astonishing, don't you agree?

12 Professor Flake is one of those people who tends to provoke very strong feelings. He is either worshipped by his admirers or completely dismissed by his opponents. I count myself among the latter, actually.

J Y K Kerr
revised December 1976

INSTRUCTIONS

YOU ARE GOING TO HEAR TWELVE STATEMENTS OF OPINION ABOUT A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR CALLED ROGER FLAKE. AFTER EACH STATEMENT STOP YOUR MACHINE AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

IS THE SPEAKER MAINLY APPROVING OR MAINLY DISAPPROVING IN HIS OPINION?

PUT A TICK IN ONE OF THE COLUMNS TO INDICATE YOUR ANSWER.

STATEMENT	APPROVING	DISAPPROVING
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

INTENSIFIERS

NOW REWIND YOUR TAPE TO THE BEGINNING AND LISTEN AGAIN. THIS TIME WRITE DOWN IN THE BLANK SPACES THE WORDS OR PHRASES MISSING IN THE SENTENCES BELOW.

1 Flake is a ..... outstanding figure.

2 Flake's claim to be a leader in his own academic field is ..... unjustified.

3 He's undoubtedly an ..... controversial figure.

4 It strikes me as being ..... old-fashioned and ..... original.

5 I really have ..... time for him .....

6 That man Flake is ..... the end.

7 His professional standing, both nationally and internationally, is

..... undeniable.

8 Professor Flake is ..... the genius that he claims to be.

9 His theories are certainly ..... attractive.

10 I say that he is ..... the most eminent living scholar in his field.

11 He's ..... astonishing, don't you agree?

12 He is either worshipped by his admirers or ..... dismissed by his opponents.

GRADED ACTIVITIES AND AUTHENTIC MATERIALS FOR LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Harold Fish The British Council, Tel Aviv

The materials presented here stem from an interest in trying to reduce the problems of foreign language teaching in compulsory secondary education. Language teaching in schools suffers from a series of handicaps. Many students fail to see the relevance of foreign language to their lives or, perhaps worse, they fail to see the relevance of the kind of language they are trying to learn at school compared with 'real language' as they experience it outside in the real world. This can be in part caused by inappropriate learning materials and methods or, possibly, by an understandable failure on the part of the students to see how the objectives set can be achieved given the circumstances in which they have to learn.

Whilst it is not the case that the materials discussed here will be the answer to listening comprehension problems, I do feel that they take into account some of the reasons why foreign languages are relatively unpopular at school and, therefore, help to reduce the size of the problem in some small way.

For too long, language learning has been seen merely as the acquisition of an amount of linguistic data. In many cases as another content subject like history or chemistry. It has been assumed that a student comes to class rather like a 'tabula rasa' into which linguistic bits have to be chipped. We have tended to assume that the student comes to class without any relevant experience and has in fact little to contribute to the language-learning process. (This of course has been a common feature in many areas of education, not just language teaching.) In the days when language learning was considered to be for the 'good of your mind', such attitudes might just be understandable, but, given the general agreement today about communicative objectives for language learning, we must abandon attitudes that see language as purely abstract and an academic exercise and integrate into our teaching meaningful content about the world around our students as well as linguistic forms. In other words, we must strive to give our students something to communicate, a desire to communicate, and the conditions in which they can communicate. At first this sounds like a pretty tall order, but, bearing in mind what a student brings to the classroom, the size of the task is reduced somewhat. A student comes to class with two vital assets: his own knowledge and experience of the world around him and a well developed set of language skills of his own. He has his own highly developed language strategies in his mother tongue, which are rarely tapped in the foreign language class.

The following materials were presented to a group of practising teachers as part of a one-week in-service course. The aim was to provide the teachers with a framework within which they could develop their own materials for classroom use. In other words, what we have here is a demonstration of a

principle rather than a set of materials for universal use. The materials reflect the belief that authentic language has a real place in the language-learning process almost 'from the word "go"'. By authentic language material I mean, quite simply, material that was not initially designed for language-learning purposes. This means that in the narrow linguistic sense there is no grading on a purely structural or lexical basis. Authentic material could be a newspaper article, an advertisement, a visiting card, a road sign, or, as is the case here, a radio broadcast. There are of course many other sources of authentic material.

I am aware of the argument that any language material ceases to be authentic when used for a purpose other than the one it was intended for. In other words, if we use road signs in class to teach 'right' and 'left', then the material is no longer authentic. This is an interesting argument which, however, in no way detracts from the value of authentic material being used in the classroom **as soon as possible**. It is possible in my view to use authentic material to show students what they **do know** or **can** understand rather than what they do not know or cannot understand. What I am saying is that materials carefully chosen can develop the student's confidence in his own ability to do something with what he knows to be real language rather than what he knows to be heavily contrived language such as is found in most foreign-language teaching material.

If we are to show a student what he can rather than cannot do with some authentic language, then it is, of course, essential that we only ask the student to do what we know he can do. It would be foolish to give a class for beginners the task of showing how political bias is expressed in a newspaper editorial, but it would not be too difficult for a near beginner to ring or underline the names of countries or of famous people that figure in the front-page headlines of that same newspaper. That is to say, the activities the student is engaged in have to be 'graded' according to the student's knowledge of the language, and indeed of the world around him. 'Grading' is important still, but instead of grading the language we are now grading the activity the student has to do in connection with a piece of real language.

Before looking at the materials themselves, there are two other points to be made. The first is that in the case to be illustrated there is no question of testing listening. Most teachers today recognise the fact that almost all materials designed to teach receptive skills only, in fact, serve to test listening or reading and do so in conditions which the student knows to be totally artificial. The second point relates to the need for 'support' in the teaching of listening and is of course closely connected to the first. A lot of listening material has the following format: first listen, second answer the questions. Most students know that listening of this kind is a school rather than a 'life' activity. We usually listen to something for a particular purpose and, what is more, we more often than not know a lot about what we are about to hear (or indeed to read). A support for listening, often in the form of a worksheet, can

do three things. It can tell the student something about what he is about to hear, give him some idea of the structure of the material he is to listen to, and, finally, give the student a reason for listening to it other than the usual one of having to answer questions at the end. In short, support of some kind can help to reduce the size of the gap between 'classroom' language activity and what the student intuitively knows to be the highly complex language activity he has mastered in 'real life'.

The problem I have tried to tackle is that of grading the activities. In the case of the newspaper mentioned above, it is easy to see what the extremes are. At the 'easy' end of the cline there is the recognition of items that might be similar if not common between languages and, at the other end, the problems, say, of political bias in an editorial. The real difficulty is what goes on between these extremes. In what follows I do not claim to have devised a 'scientific, watertight' set of graded activities. What I have done is to show how the same piece of authentic language can be used with students who are at different stages in the language-learning process.

In preparing graded activities there is in fact a two-dimensional grading problem. The first is the format of the support given to the student to help him listen, and the second is the nature of the task that a particular support suggests to a student. It seems to me that materials produced till now have, so far as the first problem is concerned, followed similar lines which are best illustrated with examples related to what most practitioners will accept as the first 'stage' in listening comprehension, namely recognition. The authentic language I have based my materials on comes from the headlines of the BBC World Service news bulletin, the text of which is as follows:

> "BBC World Service. The news read by Robin Jackson.
>
> The Saudi Arabian oil minister has given a warning about a world oil crisis within the next few years dwarfing anything experienced up to now.
>
> Iraq and Syria have taken another step towards political unity.
>
> The Governor of Hong Kong is seeking American support for attempts to stage an international conference on refugees from Vietnam.
>
> There has been some critical reaction in the United States to resumption of flights by DC10 aircraft in Europe."

The lowest grade activity using this material involves the support of worksheet A.

WORKSHEET A *(Level 1 Type I)*

SAUDI ARABIA IRAQ SYRIA HONGKONG
AMERICA VIETNAM UNITED STATES EUROPE

The lesson sequence would have the following pattern:

1	General orientation stage:	a play chimes of Big Ben or the time signal bleeps and ask students (in mother tongue if necessary) to tell you what is coming next . . . a news bulletin should emerge.
		b ask students what items of news they might expect to hear mentioned.
		c ask students what countries might be mentioned in the bulletin. Accept all suggestions.
2	Task settings:	Distribute worksheet and explain to students the nature of the task . . . eg, tick off, underline or cross through, countries heard.
3	Listening:	Play the news headlines right through.
4	Checking:	Students can check in groups or have the teacher check from the front.

(A teaching sequence with the above pattern differs from most current practices in that it helps the student to listen by using a support that tells the student something about what he is to hear and also gives him a reason for listening other than being tested with comprehension questions afterwards).

This is probably the easiest of activities since the information on the worksheet given to the student is complete in terms of the task in hand. All the countries appear on the sheet and what is more, they occur in the order in which they are heard on the tape. The simplest format therefore that can be offered to the student must be **complete** in terms of the task in hand and in order in terms of the sequence in which information is given.

The next level of difficulty would be to have the *complete* information on a worksheet but have the same information *scrambled.* So the second level in terms of format would have a worksheet as follows:

WORKSHEET B *(Level 1 Type II)*

SYRIA VIETNAM UNITED STATES IRAQ
SAUDI ARABIA HONG KONG AMERICA EUROPE

Although I have identified two levels here, I do not mean to suggest that there is nothing in between. A teacher could, of course, rather than scramble the countries mentioned here, just insert a few distractors. In this case, however, I feel that the student is having to call upon selection and reference strategies that in themselves constitute a more difficult exercise than one of straightforward recognition.

The overall task of simple recognition can be made slightly more difficult by a worksheet which is in order but incomplete. In the case of our news bulletin, such a worksheet would look as follows:

WORKSHEET C *(Level 1 Type III)*

SAUDI ARABIA IRAQ ..... HONG KONG

AMERICA ..... UNITED STATES EUROPE

Here the student fills in the gaps, in his mother tongue if necessary. The fourth and final difficulty in terms of format could be a worksheet which is both *incomplete* and *scrambled.* Worksheet D is an example:

WORKSHEET D *(Level 1 Type IV)*

IRAQ UNITED STATES EUROPE VIETNAM

It seems to me then that as far as the format of support given to the students is concerned, there are four types, each one slightly more difficult than the other.

Type 1 complete — ordered
Type 2 complete — scrambled
Type 3 incomplete — ordered
Type 4 incomplete — scrambled

These four types of format can be used whatever the nature of the task might be.

The first level of activity involved the recognition of one-word items which may be similar if not identical to items in the student's mother tongue. A more complex level of activity would still involve the recognition of words, but not necessarily words that are familiar to the student. Furthermore, the words we

are asking the student to recognise are the key words in terms of the topics mentioned in the new headlines. For this second level of activity, the related worksheets would follow the complete ordered pattern and would look like this:

LEVEL 2

WORKSHEET E	*(Level 2 Type I)*
	OIL POLITICAL UNITY REFUGEES AIRCRAFT

WORKSHEET F	*(Level 2 Type II)*
	AIRCRAFT OIL REFUGEES POLITICAL UNITY

WORKSHEET G	*(Level 2 Type III)*
	OIL POLITICAL UNITY ..... AIRCRAFT

WORKSHEET H	*(Level 2 Type IV)*
	POLITICAL UNITY REFUGEES ....

The activity at the third level combines the elements from the two previous levels in that it aims to have the students relate the various geographical references to the relevant news item. Since two elements are involved, we move from a simple checklist type of worksheet to one which has the characteristics of a grid. The worksheets for Level 3 are as follows:

LEVEL 3

WORKSHEET I	(Level 3 Type I)
Topic	Geographic Reference
OIL	SAUDI ARABI
POLITICAL UNITY	SYRIA
REFUGEES	HONG KONG
AIRCRAFT	UNITED STATES

WORKSHEET J	(Level 3 Type II)
Topic	Geographical Reference
OIL	HONG KONG
POLITICAL UNITY	SAUDI ARABIA
REFUGEES	UNITED STATES
AIRCRAFT	SYRIA

WORKSHEET K	(Level 3 Type III)
Topic	Geographical Reference
OIL	HONG KONG
POLITICAL UNITY	SAUDI ARABIA
REFUGEES	
AIRCRAFT	

WORKSHEET L	(Level 3 Type IV)
Topic	Geographical Reference
POLITICAL UNITY	UNITED STATES
REFUGEES	IRAQ
AIRCRAFT	
OIL	

The activity at Level 4 closely resembles that of Level 3, but, instead of relating the topic to something relatively concrete like a country, the students are asked to link the topic to the appropriate comment. The worksheets are as follows:

LEVEL 4

WORKSHEET M	(Level 4 Type I)
Topic	Comment
OIL	CRISIS
POLITICAL UNITY	PROGRESS
REFUGEES	CONFERENCE
AIRCRAFT	CRITICISM

WORKSHEET N	(Level 4 Type II)
Topic	Comment
OIL	CONFERENCE
POLITICAL UNITY	CRITICISM
REFUGEES	CRISIS
AIRCRAFT	.....

WORKSHEET P	(Level 4 Type III)
Topic	Comment
OIL	CRISIS
POLITICAL UNITY	PROGRESS
REFUGEES	.....
AIRCRAFT	CRITICISM

WORKSHEET Q	(Level 4 Type IV)
Topic	Comment
OIL	PROGRESS
POLITICAL UNITY	CRITICISM
REFUGEES	CRISIS
AIRCRAFT	.....

It is only when we get to Level 5 that the shape of the worksheet changes drastically, for it is at this level that we are combining the three elements mentioned so far. The grid outline has of course many possibilities and permutations. In sample worksheet 'R' the topics are complete and in order. The geographical references are in order but incomplete, and there is nothing at all in the comment column.

LEVEL 5

WORKSHEET R		
Topic	Country (ies)	Comment
OIL	SAUDI ARABIA	
POLITICAL UNITY	SYRIA IRAQ	
REFUGEES		
AIRCRAFT		

Depending on what the teacher's specific objectives are, the grid can be added to or taken away from. The almost complete 'picture' could be given with only a few comments left out or, at the other extreme, the students could be given a worksheet with three empty columns labelled Topic, Country, and Comment and be asked to fill them in.

The levels 1–5 are only guides. They are based on the fundamental principle of recognition but do, of course, draw upon the student's capacity to select, appropriately, the information relevant to the task in hand. I must insist that these levels, based in the main on lexical difficulties, are not the only ways of defining the level of an activity, and they certainly are not clearcut levels in themselves. What I have shown here, I hope, is that carefully selected authentic material can be used at a range of levels of learning, including that of the near beginner. The key factor is not so much the material itself but the nature of the task the student is asked to perform in conjunction with the material.

The types of activity demonstrated here and the suggested format of the worksheets provide a useful tool which can help the ever-harried teacher ensure that lively, real language is introduced into language learning from the very earliest stages. As the task of a teacher is ultimately to help a learner cope with the real world, then the real world should be brought into the language-learning process as early as possible.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF ACHIEVEMENT IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION?

Marcel Urbain
(Translation by Elizabeth White, St Cross College, Oxford)

In attempting a definition of the limits of achievement in listening comprehension, I think we should be careful to avoid seeing this frontier as a single line, a well-defined threshold beyond which the student can assume that he has perfect listening comprehension. The impression should rather be that of a wide band, representing an advanced category of listening comprehension; and the minimum level of competence for reaching this category would be the comprehension of a **news bulletin** in a foreign language. In my opinion, this is a very important step; it is a criterion which cannot be faulted. The student who crosses this threshold is equal to following a lecture or a discussion on any unspecialised subject.

Among the techniques which allow the student to make sure that he has correctly understood the news bulletin, guided listening gives him the opportunity to make fairly rapid progress, if it is followed (in the language laboratory for example) by individual comprehension exercises in some depth, or by written tests such as

dictation, with or without omissions
rapid note-taking
questions: which need a precise answer
with a choice of two answers (true or false)
with multiple choice answers

With students whose reading comprehension is more advanced that their listening comprehension, it might be worthwhile to approach the radio news bulletin by way of written news, comparing the newspapers' versions with the news broadcast the same day on television or radio — this last being the most difficult, without text, illustration or visible speaker. After this work, it can be very valuable to compare the different versions of news and comments, which are basically the same, yet different according to whether they are presented in the press, on television or on radio, (considering for example sentence structure, repetition, use of indirect speech, etc.)

If listening comprehension of a news bulletin represents the minimum level of competence in this field, I think that for the maximum level we must go beyond simple comprehension of lexis, of morpho-syntactic elements, of the structures used in a text heard or read. We should not forget to consider conversation, with its rapid exchanges, and the many important nuances involved in communication between the participants. Understanding a radio or theatre play in these details is also an achievement; and what should be said of the level of competence necessary for using a second language in the professional world?

I will take for example the objectives defined by our Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences. An active knowledge of generally used language is considered to be of primary importance, but listening comprehension is also essential to our future businessmen, graduates in economics and the social sciences. It is desirable that they should be able to express themselves correctly, even in simple phrases; but it is indispensable that they should be able to understand all the nuances of a communication. During business trips abroad, discussions or telephone conversations, they should be able to make out the reactions or the thoughts of those they are talking to; this perception is due mainly to their understanding of lexical nuances, but also to their understanding of prosodic nuances — such as intonation or rhythm — which often reveal hesitation, reticence, implicit intentions; and it is important to be able to understand these in business discussions.[1]

The truth of this necessity for our future businessmen also holds good for the students of a foreign language who want or have to develop their listening comprehension to its maximum, whether we are considering spontaneous natural speech, such as conversation or 'live' broadcasts, or the 'filtered' speech of the theatre, of radio plays or films.

The characteristics of this spontaneous and natural speech are above all the prosodic non-segmental elements which we usually group together under the term 'intonation', but which include, as well as intonation, rhythm, emphasising accent, pauses, delivery, voice quality, and other elements of prosody. Several phoneticians are conducting research into these various prosodic elements; their aim is to determine the exact nature and the physical components of these phenomena and the relation of one to another. Above all, linguists are giving their attention to the complex study of non-segmental elements, since these elements often play a concomitant part in speech and have important functions.[2]

F. Planchon (1976) has distinguished the different components of intonation as follows

the basic intonation peculiar to each language

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[1]Cf M Urbain, 'Le laboratoire de langues à la Faculté des Sciences Economiques et Sociales de l'Université de l'Etat à Mons' Act 3, 1977.

[2]Cf D Crystal, 1975, chapter 2, p 153, where the author emphasises the major role of intonation in native language acquisition: '. . . But (a) intonation is not a single feature, but a complex of features; (b) these features are not acquired simultaneously; (c) their function is complex, involving grammatical, attitudinal and social factors, the relative importance of which varies considerably with increasing complexity of the rest of the language; and while some aspects of intonation presuppose syntactic competence, others do not.'

the symptomatic functions (which allow recognition of the sex, age, etc. of the speaker)
the conversational function
the relation of intonation to the linguistic structures of expression — vocabulary, morpho-syntax, semantic and phonological structures
the textual function (linked to the text's cohesion and to the structure of information)
the 'logical' or factual function, which implies the relation of participants or circumstances.

The importance of these prosodic elements is such that they must be included in the student's acquisition of the language if he is to develop to the maximum his knowledge — conscious or intuitive — of the mechanisms of a foreign language. At all events, this is where I would fix the **limit of achievement** in the field of listening comprehension.

The language which is most often used as the material of research in the field of intonation structure and other non-segmental elements is English. What are the reasons for this?

perhaps simply by tradition;
because the functions of intonation are more important in English than, for example, in French, German or Spanish (given the relative importance of the syllable in these three languages, particularly in French and Spanish);
because the pitch range is greater in English (two octaves) than in French (one octave), and therefore results are more obvious, spectrograms more 'eloquent' and acoustical analysis more 'interesting';
because of the frequent glides from one sound level to another.

The aim of these studies in applied linguistics is not only to define the parameters of English intonation by auditory or acoustic analysis but also to determine the function of non-segmental elements and the relations which exist between the different components and different functions (v. Appendix 1, an outline of the analysis of an intonation structure, after F Planchon, 1976).

Within the framework of this research, I have devoted my time to a **study of certain extra-semantic elements of English intonation**, particularly the relation of the feelings or attitudes of the speaker to the manifestation of these attitudes or feelings in variations of non-segmental elements, especially intonation. In the first stage of research, a recorded utterance was analysed by oscillograph, pitch meter and intensity meter. In the second stage, the use of a word synthesiser (at the University of Edinburgh) made it possible to vary one parameter at a time — particularly the basic frequency — and to put the utterances thus obtained to an auditory test.[3]

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[3]M Urbain, 1969: M Urbain, 1973.

The results of this research give me reason to state that modifications of intonation alone are not enough to modify the grammatical or attitudinal meaning of a given utterance. Other non-segmental elements — rhythm, intensity, tempo, pitch-range — can have the same effect as the intonation; The concomitant nature of these non-segmental elements must be emphasised. On the other hand, it is obvious that the other constituents of the utterance can carry affectivity or 'self-involvement' — choice of words, grammatical structures (eg passive/active), the semantic structure (eg implicit/explicit) and the symbolism of sounds (especially in poetry).

To summarise: it is important that **the importance of the attitudinal elements of intonation should be considered relatively**. We should not, however, negligise their importance, as E. André reminds us in his article on 'English tone contrasts in relative clauses and in enumerative statements' (1975).[4]

Certainly, the attitudinal dimension is only one aspect of intonation; nevertheless, both students and their teachers should be conscious of the importance and rôle of non-segmental elements in listening comprehension. While they listen to a text, either in their native language or in a foreign language, they should be conscious of such elements as:

intonation
rhythm
accentuation
sound intensity
pauses
delivery
pitch-range

They should be made aware of the importance of these elements, though this should not entail making detailed and precise analyses of speech mechanisms.[5]

This is where I would fix the **limits of training** in listening comprehension. In my opinion, we must aim higher than the simple comprehension of lexis, of morpho-syntactic elements and of speech structures.

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[4]E André, 1975, p 116: 'These patterns are liable to be disturbed by the presence of important attitudinal factors. This confirms the danger of discussing tone contrasts in grammatical terms.'

[5]Cf M A K Halliday and others, 1966, p 223: 'It is part of a child's education to learn his environment, both social and natural . . .: it is part of his education to know how language works. And this has to be taught to him primarily in reference to his native language. . . .'

I should like to consider the directions that should be taken from here onwards by

1 research
2 training of language teachers and composition of lessons
3 classroom practice

these three stages being links in what M A K Halliday, A McIntosh and P Strevens call 'the chain from academic "back-room" linguistics at one end to classroom practice at the other'.[6]

If we look carefully at these three stages, we should be able to establish the existing position in the field of intonation and to suggest that it would perhaps be useful to undertake to give more incentive to language teachers to study the constituent parts and the rôle of intonation, and to teach a growing number of students to become aware of the major rôle of non-segmental elements in speech.

1 Research

Who is involved in research into intonation?

Linguists who have familiarised themselves with the experimental techniques used by phoneticians, and, on occasion, the other way round.[7]
Native speakers and foreign linguists who have reached the level of 'near-nativeness.'

How should this research be directed?

A clear answer to this question is given in D Crystal's book, *The English Tone of Voice,* in chapter 8, 'Non-segmental phonology in language acquisition', p 157: '. . . the two main tasks facing the language-acquisition scholar in this area are descriptive and methodological in character. Normative and descriptive data is needed about many matters; . . . From the methodological point of view, the primary task seems to be the development of more adequate descriptive frameworks, incorporating articulatory, acoustic and auditory dimensions of classification and transcription.'

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[6]Ibid, p 233.

[7]Cf M A K Halliday and others, 1966, p xiv: 'The specialist in this subject (= applied linguistics) is a kind of middleman who exists to bridge the gap between theory and newly acquired knowledge on the one hand, and the everyday problems of teaching a language on the other.'

What is the material of this research?

Up till now, it has mainly been the English language. See, for example, the work of D Crystal, D Davy, S Greenbaum and R Quirk on the *'Survey of English Usage'*.[7]

It would be useful if research into intonation was continued into other languages, up to the level that it has reached in English. Other necessities are;

Comparison of the prosodic systems of other languages, such as they are, and in the way that one language uses various means to fulfil the functions of the prosodic elements used in another language; for instance, a marked tendency to use modulated intonation of emphasis in one language might correspond to frequent and varied use of adverbs or particular structures in another.
Continued research into the attitudinal components of intonation, in or out of context.
Research into the relationship of non-segmental elements and syntax in the acquisition of speech.[8]
Development of research into the intonation of English as a foreign language, not only of English as a native language. This, of course, should also be studied in other languages. We should also consider how far research into L2 intonation has any chance of giving worthwhile results; I might even hope that some distinguished linguist will soon be able to write an article on 'Non-segmental phonology in L2 acquisition'!

2 The Training of Language Teachers

The continued training of teachers, some of whom are or will be giving L2 lessons; and equally, in the field which concerns us here, training in sensitivity to intonation structures.

Who is to undertake this training?

Universities, with fellowships of linguistics, phonetics, didactics — such as that at Mons.
Institutions such as the British Council and the Goethe Institute

How?

Through publications in the field of linguistics and phonetics. This may be a

[8]Cf D Crystal, 1975, p 149: 'The relationship between non-segmental phonology and syntax in language acquisition has attracted a number of scattered observations, but remains almost totally unexplored.'

convenient point to note that there are far more publications devoted to English than to any other language.
Through teacher's books to accompany certain courses (eg, Dickinson and others, *All's Well,* 1975).
Through books dealing with training and advanced instruction specially written for teachers (eg Brian Way, *Development through Drama,* 1967; A Maley and A Duff, *Drama Techniques in Language Learning,* 1978).
Through the organisation of courses and seminars. In my opinion, the British Council and the Goethe Institute and other institutions with the same objectives could organise more lessons, courses or seminars on the problem of intonation. The linguistics department of the State University of Mons organises two courses each summer on the didactics of language and phonetics. Within the framework of these courses, F Planchon gives a seminar on English intonation, intended for teachers of English. This training lasts at least ten hours.

What should the objectives of this training be?

To try to discover or reveal the mechanisms of speech and to show, if possible, 'How these work.'[9] F Planchon has suggested a programme of work, partly inspired by the work of D Crystal and M A K Halliday (see Appendix 2). I agree with F Planchon in believing that we should not take training in intonation and stress transciption too far, but that it is never too late to help a foreign-language teacher to discover the existence and the nature of different non-segmental elements. Like all teachers, the foreign-language teacher is constantly involved in his own training, and therefore progressing and perfecting his own capabilities.

3 The Students

On this subject, I will make two sets of suggestions;

a If we accept that, just as in native language acquisition, (D Crystal, 1975), intonation plays as important a part as the grammatical or other speech structures right from the beginning, then we can make use of several methods —

[9]Cf M A K Halliday and others, 1966, back cover: 'Of the many subjects that are in some way concerned with language, those most relevant to language teaching are the 'linguistic sciences', linguistics and phonetics, whose purpose is precisely to explain language and how it works. The knowledge gained from a study of linguistics and phonetics has various applications, but perhaps the most important direction in which it can be applied today is towards increasing the effectiveness of native and foreign language teaching.'

i Integrating intonation training into the lessons from the very beginning, eg the intonation programmes given in *Passport to English,* G Capelle and D Girard, 1962; or the emphasis laid on intonation and rhythm in audio-visual structuro-holistic methods — eg A Dickinson and others — *All's Well that Starts Well,* 1975.

ii Encouraging communication from the very first by gestures, mime, corporal expression (this stage should be prepared for by relaxation and concentration exercises); by listening to and reproducing the rhythm of a phrase, giving the meaning of the phrase, in order to refine auditory perception; by reproducing intonation diagrams which represent the melodic structure of a phrase (cf *All's Well,* Teacher's Book; B. Way, 1977: A Maley and A Duff, 1978)

iii In addition to L2, teaching music and rhythmical dance, to refine auditory perception and develop the sense of rhythm.

iv Using exercises of systematic assimilation of intonation outlines of the L2 (cf W S Allen, 1976).

v Exercising auditory perception by passive comprehension exercises, without preliminary explanation of their content (c.f. *All's Well; Have a Listen In)* or by exercises of perception and interpretation of rhythms or various intonation outlines (cf *All's Well; Work on Your Own).*

vi Encouraging the practice of 'dynamic listening', combining listening to speech with visual perception, with writing, reading and mime (cf *All's Well 2,* Teacher's Book, pp 22, 23.)

b If the students have reached an intermediate or advanced level without being properly aware of the nature and role of the various components of intonation, it might be asked whether it is still possible to teach them these things.

i It is enough to make them feel intuitively that these non-segmental elements do have a function, that they allow the expression of particular nuances which students should be able to distinguish. Exercises like those given by A Maley and A Duff, 1978. pp 51, 55, 61, 75, are helpful for this purpose, as are those given by A Ravensdale, 1973, pp 2–3 and 6–7, though, to be really useful, Ravensdale's exercises should be recorded.

ii Perhaps it is also possible to refine auditory perception by audio-phonetic training, by repeating out of context a series of phrases with the same intonation, so that they would be aware of the same intonation in context.

iii Should we teach these students the mechanics of the relationship of non-segmental elements and syntax, in so far as this relationship rests on proven and observable bases? (for example, affirmative or interrogative phrases, 'wh' questions, question tags, relative clauses). I am not sure of the answer to this; 'Knowledge about language is valuable for advanced learners, and especially for sophisticated adults and adolescents who already have a wide and firm command of the language concerned, and perhaps before that have learnt about other languages in the same way. But in the initial stages and especially in large classes, it rarely helps and can often hinder the attainment of practical language skills by the learner.' (M A K Halliday and others, 1966, p 255).

I think that most of these suggestions could be taken up, on condition that the exercises are arranged with some continuity, and that the teacher is competent, well-motivated, and sufficiently sensitive to intonation structures. This is one of the points that I wish to underline — the necessity of making a growing number of language teachers aware of the problems of intonation.

I believe that in listening comprehension we should go further than simply teaching comprehension of lexis, of morpho-syntactical elements, of speech structures. The student must eventually be able to grasp all the nuances of speech, all the implicit meaning of non-segmental elements, which are so important, particularly in English. This training should be given from the very beginning; the students should have an intuition for nuances either expressed or implicit. We might also be able to teach the student not only to understand but also to reproduce (in audio-phonetic training) rhythmic or intonation outlines — though we should avoid teaching these out of context.

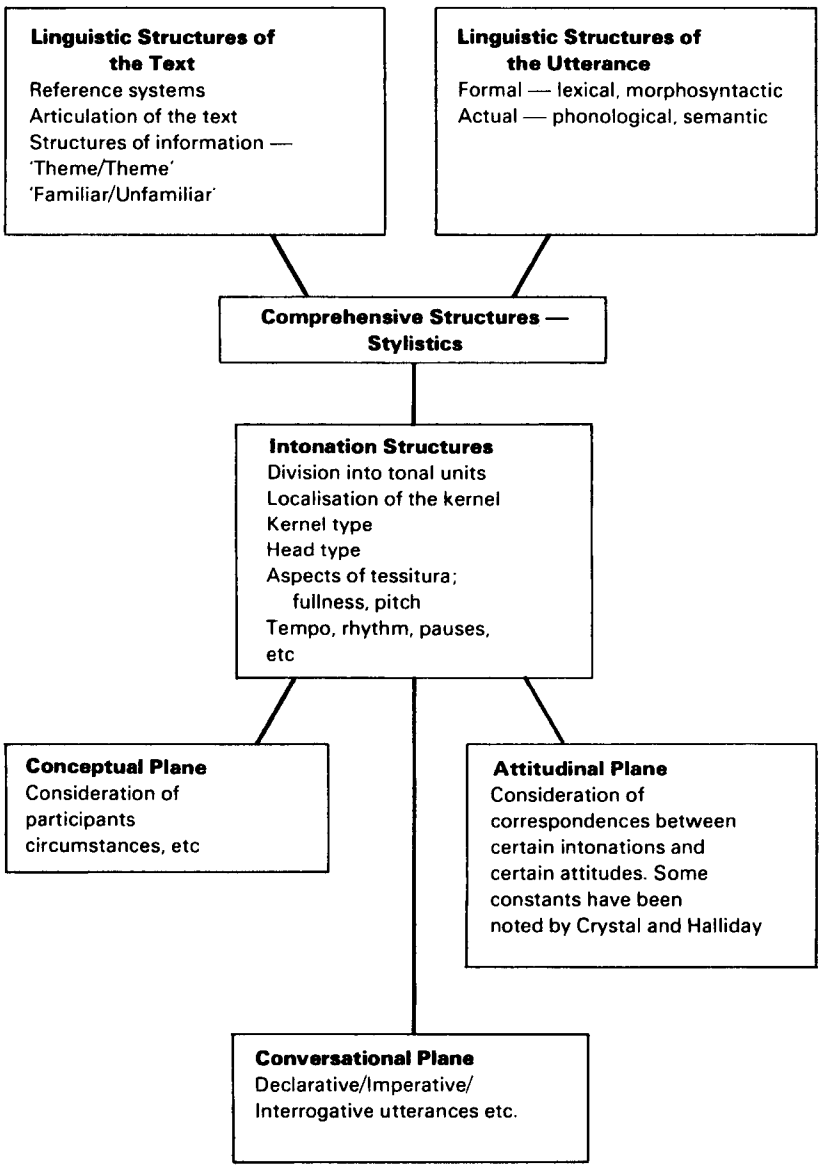
At a later stage, we might try to make advanced students understand the complexity of listening comprehension, which includes, among other things, a grasp of social relations — combined with communication aptitude, affectivity, and the nuances of age difference, social status, register etc.

These, in my opinion, are the limits of training for adequate comprehension of speech in a foreign language.

For so long as research in progress does not afford us a clear and precise picture of the complex mechanisms of speech and its components, we must be content — and this would indeed be quite a success, if it can be achieved — with giving the students the habit of learning which will last throughout their lives.

APPENDIX I

An outline for the analysis of an intonation structure, after F Planchon, 1976.



APPENDIX II

Plan of a schedule for a seminar on English intonation (minimum 15 hours), condensed from F Planchon's article, 1976.

1 **Introductory Texts**: Conversations in context, which should clearly demonstrate the advantages of understanding intonation structures. The aim is to make the participants aware of these.

2 **Practical work and Interpretation**; **Group Training**

a The Tonal Unit; explanations of the internal structure of one tonal unity learning guided listening; considering — division into tonal unities; localisation of the kernel; head type; kernel type; aspects of tessitura (voice amplitude, relative pitch etc; and the elements of tempo, rhythm and pauses).

b Stress Transcription: practical exercises in transcription, in the course of which the structural elements listed above would be elucidated.

c Interpretation; exercises of analysis following the outline given in Appendix I.

3 **Individual Work;** preferably in the language laboratory. If possible, the participants should work on audio-visual lessons which they can use in their classes.

NB Obviously, any utterances whose intonation is to be analysed should first be 'realised' in its full context.

The following exercises have been used with classes in a French secondary school, with students from fifteen to eighteen years old.

The exercises are based on the following observations and principles:

1 **Listening Comprehension must be active work**

It has been a longstanding tendency of language teaching in France to do nothing more than have students listen to a recording (too often a recording of a written text — a newspaper article or an extract from some literary work) and then to ask questions leading the students to reconstitute or reformulate the content of the recording. This sort of work is often artificial, firstly because of the choice of text, and secondly because the problem of answering a series of questions and reconstituting what one has just heard is not a situation which arises in the normal course of events. Besides which, the students' attitude is very passive during their listening, and it is rare to see them keep up their attention for more than a minute or two.

If, on the other hand, listening is accompanied by some activity, the students receive the exercise in listening comprehension in a completely different way.

The student is guided, since by explaining what he should be looking for or what problem he should be solving, the teacher is guiding his attention in a particular direction. Again, having some activity to pursue corresponds much more to reality. Whether we are listening to the news on the radio, to a conversation between friends, or to some incident told by a colleague, we cannot help wondering about what is to follow, in terms of a familiar situation — the current news, what we know of our friends, the circumstances which have led to the colleague telling his story, etc. It is often just this situation, known to both speaker and listener — shared knowledge — which is lacking in so many listening comprehension exercises; and it is this that we are trying to reinstate by giving the students a definite task to do. Lastly, the student often appreciates these exercises as a game, a problem to which he has to find the solution.

2 It is important **not to dissociate listening comprehension from other skills**. Most of the following exercises have visual written support, and give opportunity for free expression afterwards.

3 It is important to use **authentic** texts for listening comprehension ('authentic' here meaning that which truly belongs to spoken language and not to oralised written language.) — that is to say, to use, if possible, 'spontaneous' recordings, made without a script prepared in advance. Such recordings are often more difficult, since the language used has not been simplified in advance; this should not, however, pose too great a problem if we consider that students should be taught a holistic comprehension before comprehension in detail, and that it is the type of activity given to the students more than the language used in the recording which makes an exercise more or less difficult.

The exercises which follow certainly do not pretend to be original, and are far from covering all the types of exercises which can be used in conjunction with listening comprehension. They are classified according to the type of activity they demand.

1 Reordering

Texts which have chronological organisation lend themselves well to this type of exercise, where students are asked to reorder a certain number of texts according to the recording they are given to listen to. The texts can be plans, photographs, sentences, etc.

Example 1

This exercise involves reordering nine pictures, which are given out in random order.

a The students work in small groups of one or two, and each group is given photocopies of all nine pictures. They are given time to discuss and agree on a story to link all the pictures; then they put the pictures in order and each group briefly presents their version of the story. This first phase is intended to familiarise the students with the pictures and with some of the vocabulary which is needed to talk about them.

b Listening to the tape (the tape is of a person recounting the life of one of his friends). The students have to reorder the photos according to the recorded story.

It should be noted that the recording does not describe the photos; it only refers to scenes shown on the photos. In the same way, some parts of the recording have no corresponding picture, so that the exercise does not become too 'automatic'.

c Discussion between the various groups, justifying the order in which they have now put their pictures. This should lead them to explain what they have understood of the recording, then to tell the story. The fact that they have the pictures under their eyes helps them in this phase of the exercise.

Example 1

Jenny, Charlotte and Peter are planning to break into Mr and Mrs Levin's flat to steal money and valuables. Each of them has managed to get into the flat before under some pretext.

Listen to their conversation and decide:

When they plan to do this: .....

Where Jenny will hide (put a cross on the diagram)

Where the safe
the jewels
the silver
are. (Indicate them with arrows on the diagram.)

Example 2

This time the students have to reorder not pictures but words. Each group has a set of cards, which bear the following words —

Colliding	Taking	Catching
Following	Walking	Missing Something
Giving	Running	Asking
Being Sorry		

They have to arrange them so that they suggest a story (for example: Walking — Colliding . . . = A man was walking in the street and collided with somebody . . .). After this, the procedure is the same as in the first exercise, the students telling their stories and then reordering them according to the recording.

2 Solving a Problem

This type of exercise is more complex, since it involves not only listening comprehension of a recording, but also drawing conclusions from it to allow the student to solve a problem.

In fact the recording does not say where the jewels, the silver and the safe are hidden; but by adding up and comparing what we learn from each of the burglars, it is easy to find this out.

For example:

Jenny tells us that the jewels are behind a modern painting.

Peter tells us that there are only antique paintings in the living-room and the dining-area.

Lastly, Charlotte is sure that there are no paintings in the two smallest bedrooms; thus we can deduce that the jewels are hidden behind one of the paintings in the master bedroom.

Students can fill in the following grid while doing the exercise, which will make deduction easier —

	Silver	Safe	Jewels
Jenny			
Charlotte			
Peter			
Your deductions			

Example 2

This exercise is based on a quiz which is meant to show us how long we can expect to live according to the way we live.

First of all, the students should read the quiz and work it out for their own lives. This is essential, since the text of each of the fifteen points of the quiz is quite long, and should be well understood before the students listen to the recording.

Read this quiz and do it for yourself. Then listen to the recording and find out how long Jenny is going to live.

This man is 103: will you make three figures?

Dr Diana Woodruff is a psychologist who believes we all have the capacity to live to be 100. In fact, she says, biologists set the top limit for human life even higher — at 120. After years of research on longevity she has drawn up the quiz below which enables most of us to work out how long we will live. Her own view is that contented fun-lovers have the best chance of living to be 100. See how you rate.

Start by looking up your own age in the table at the foot of the next column. Against this, you will find your basic life expectancy, derived from figures produced by insurance actuaries. Then, in answering the questions below, add to or take away from this figure, according to how your life style and personality affect your habits.

Remember one thing; women can expect to live roughly three years longer than men (for whom the table below is designed). Women, therefore, should add three years to start with.

1 Add one year for each of your grandparents who lived to be 80 or more. Add half a year for each one who topped 70.

2 Add four years if your mother lived beyond 80 and two if your father did so.

3 Women who cannot have children, or plan none, subtract half a year. Women with over seven children take off one year.

4 Add two years if your intelligence is above average.

5 Take off twelve (yes, twelve) years if you smoke more than 40 cigarettes a day; 20–40, subtract seven years. Less than 20, take off two years.

6 If you sleep more than ten hours every night, or less than five, take off two years.

7 Drinking . One or two whiskies, half a litre of wine, four glasses of beer counts as moderate — add three years. Light drinkers — that is, you don't drink every day — add only one and a half years. If you don't drink at all, neither add nor subtract anything. Heavy drinkers and alcoholics — take off eight years.

8 Exercise. Three times a week — jogging, cycling, swimming, brisk walks, dancing or skating — add three years. Weekend walks etc, don't count.

9 Do you prefer simple, plain foods, vegetables and fruit to richer, meatier, fatty, foods? If you can say yes honestly *and* always stop eating before you are full, add one year.

10 Education. If you did post-graduate work at university add three years. For an ordinary bachelor's degree add two. Up to A level add one. O level and below — none.

11 Jobs. If you are a professional person, add one and a half years; technical, managerial, administrative and agricultural workers add one year; proprietors, clerks and sales staff add nothing; semi-skilled workers take off half a year; labourers subtract four years.

12 If, however, you're not a labourer but your job involves a lot of physical work add two years. If it's a desk job, take off two.

13 Unmarried women should subtract one year for each unmarried decade beyond 25 *even if* you are living with someone.

14 If you have changed careers more than once, and have changed houses and spouses, take off two years.

15 If you have one or two close friends in whom you confide everything, add a year.

If you are disappointed, don't blame us. You should by now have a clue as to how you can improve things. It probably means second thoughts about that gin and tonic you were just going to pour . . .

Arnold Legh

The long-life table

To answer the above quiz you need to know your basic life expectancy. This table has been compiled from life insurance statistics applicable to white European males. Women should add three years in each case.

Present Age	Life Expectancy	Present Age	Life Expectancy	Present Age	Life Expectancy	Present Age	Life Expectancy
15	70.7	32	71.9	49	73.6	66	78.4
16	70.8	33	72.0	50	73.8	67	78.9
17	70.8	34	72.0	51	74.0	68	79.3
18	70.9	35	72.1	52	74.2	69	79.7
19	71.0	36	72.2	53	74.4	70	80.2
20	71.1	37	72.2	54	74.7	71	80.7
21	71.1	38	72.3	55	74.9	72	81.2
22	71.2	39	72.4	56	75.1	73	81.7
23	71.3	40	72.5	57	75.4	74	82.2
24	71.3	41	72.6	58	75.7	75	82.8
25	71.4	42	72.7	59	76.0	76	83.3
26	71.5	43	72.8	60	76.3	77	83.9
27	71.6	44	72.9	61	76.6	78	84.5
28	71.6	45	73.0	62	77.0	79	85.1
29	71.7	46	73.2	63	77.3	80	85.7
30	71.8	47	73.3	64	77.7		
31	71.8	48	73.5	65	78.1		

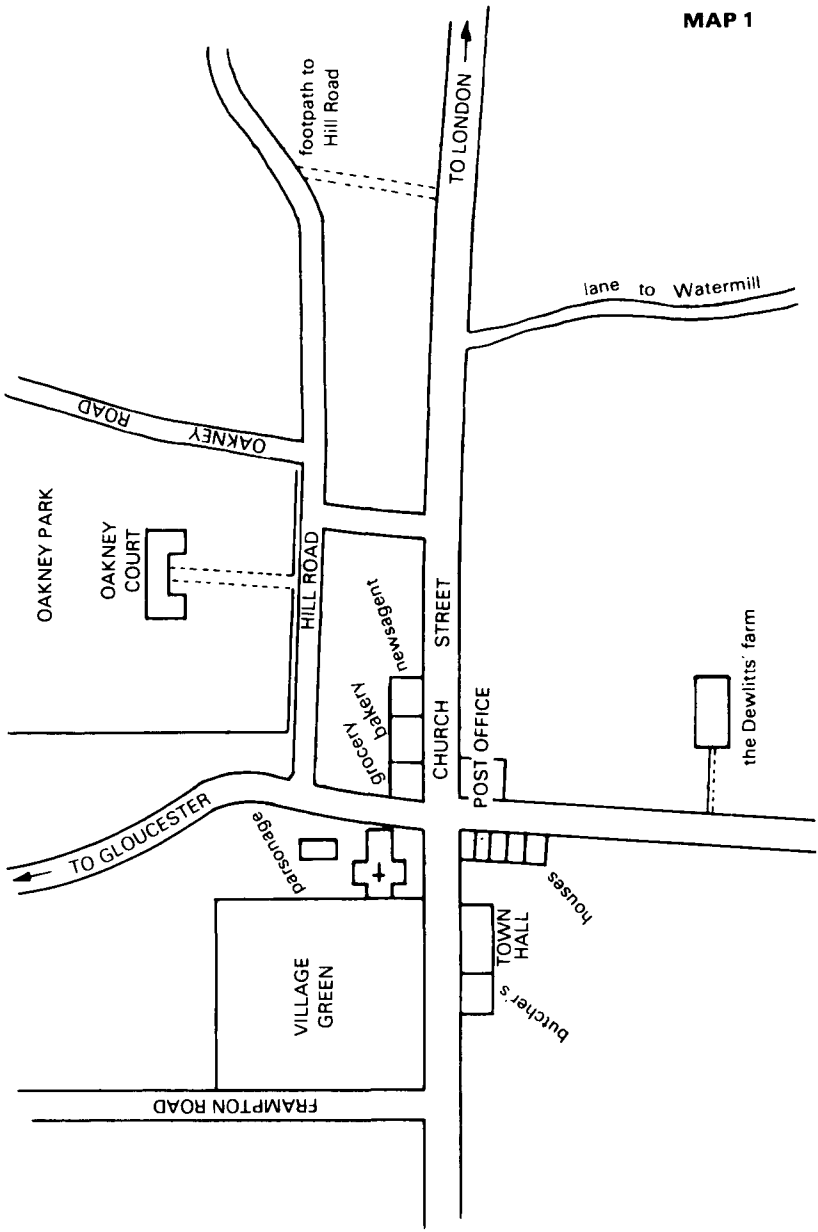
After this, the students listen to a conversation between three friends. One of them is doing the quiz for himself, and the two others are talking, trying to influence him in one way or another. The students have to make out the final decision which is made by the person doing the quiz, and add or take off the corresponding number of years. Next, the students compare the figures they have decided on, and try to work out on which points their answers differ.

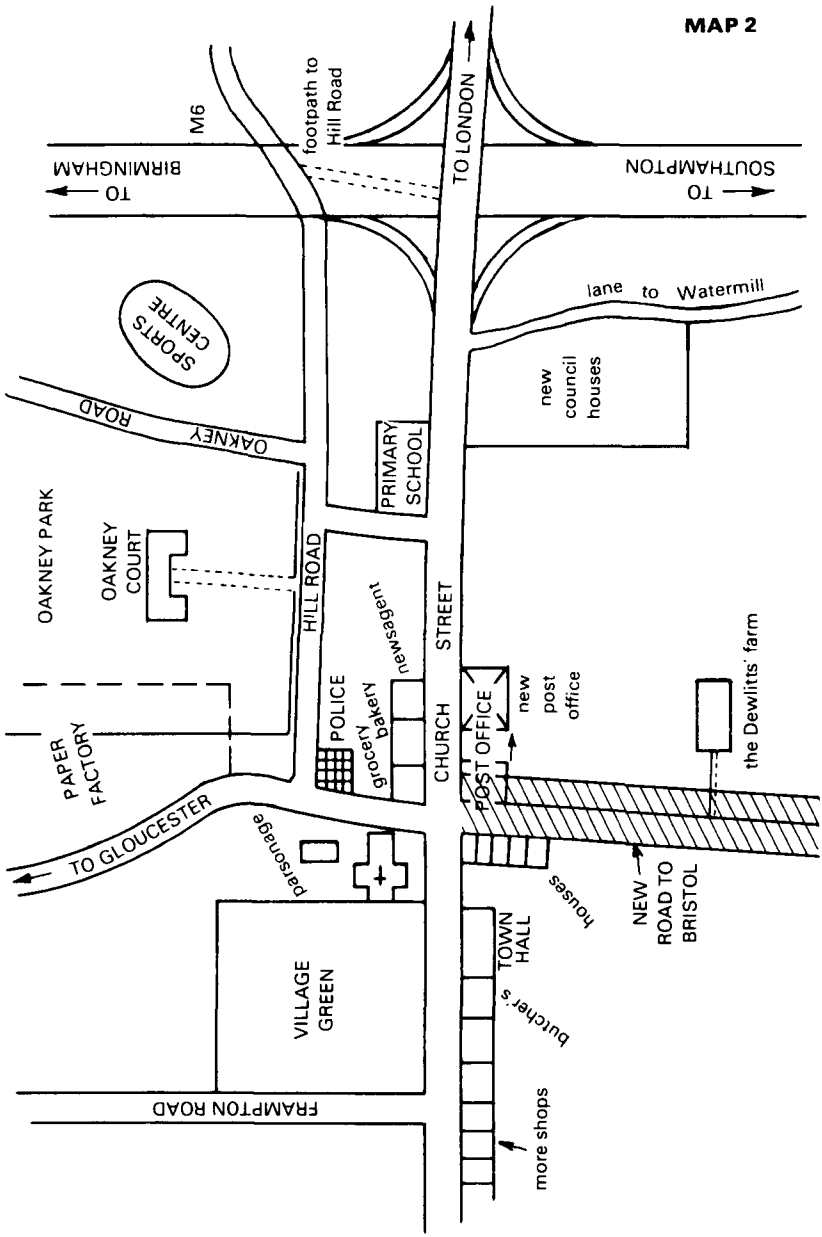
3. **Following Instructions**

For this exercise, we might ask students to draw a geometric figure following precise instructions, or to make out an itinerary on a map or town-plan, or to assemble shapes to form different images (as in the game of Tangram).

Example

The students are given the plan of a village at the beginning of this century. It is best to let them study this for several minutes, so that they can get to know the names and places of the roads, shops and main buildings (see Map 1).


MAP 1
footpath to Hill Road
TO LONDON
lane to Watermill
OAKNEY ROAD
OAKNEY PARK
OAKNEY COURT
HILL ROAD
newsagent
grocery
bakery
CHURCH STREET
POST OFFICE
the Dewlitts' farm
TO GLOUCESTER
parsonage
houses
TOWN HALL
butcher's
VILLAGE GREEN
FRAMPTON ROAD


MAP 2
M6
footpath to Hill Road
TO LONDON
TO BIRMINGHAM
TO SOUTHAMPTON
lane to Watermill
SPORTS CENTRE
OAKNEY ROAD
new council houses
PRIMARY SCHOOL
OAKNEY PARK
OAKNEY COURT
HILL ROAD
newsagent
grocery
bakery
POLICE
CHURCH STREET
POST OFFICE
new post office
the Dewlitts' farm
PAPER FACTORY
TO GLOUCESTER
parsonage
houses
NEW ROAD TO BRISTOL
VILLAGE GREEN
TOWN HALL
butcher's
more shops
FRAMPTON ROAD

Then we play a recording of a conversation between two English ladies (very Agatha Christie) who are talking about the changes in their village since the time when they were children. The students have to mark on their maps in red the changes which have taken place (see Map 2).

4 **Matching**

Recordings which consist of a series of very short passages — opinions, news items etc — can generally be adapted to 'matching' exercises, where the students have to match each part of the recording to a text which they are given — a series of photographs, drawings, plans, headlines, etc.

Example 1

You're going to hear several TV advertisements. Can you match each of them and its corresponding picture on the screen?

Under each picture write what you think the advertisement is for.

Cleaning curtains with spray can

Removing nail varnish

Child having a drink

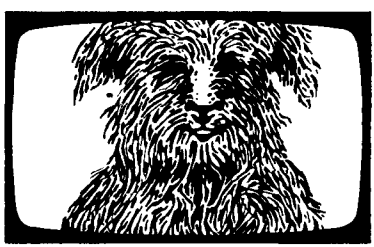
Closeup of man's face

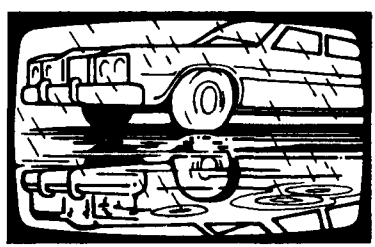
Shaggy dog

Reflection of car in water (rain)

Native's foot

Woman looking out through window





Example 2

This exercise was devised by the Lycée de Sévres, at a time when several American teachers and students were visiting the Lycée. Our students were studying American civilisation in their last year at school, and we were surprised to find how much their opinions about the country were influenced by preconceived ideas which they must have frequently heard.

For this reason, we drew up a list of the preconceived ideas which come up most often. After this, we asked ten of the Americans to give their reactions to these, each choosing one point on the list and saying what he thought about it.

So that the exercise should not become too mechanical, their opinions are not given in the order in which the corresponding points appear in the list; some of the points are not discussed, while others are discussed by two different people; and sometimes the same person gives his comments on two different points. The students have to read the text and then discuss it, listen to the recording, and decide, for each opinion given, which point is being discussed, whether the person talking is for or against the point, and what is the principal argument offered.

Here follows the list which was the basis of the recording:

Here are a few statements about America and the Americans:

1 The Americans are extremely gadget-minded people.

2 They work in a hurry, talk in a hurry, sleep in a hurry and even drink in a hurry . . .

3 American manners are somewhat informal.

4 New York is not America.

5 America is a country of unlimited possibilities.

6 Some of the States detest one another wholeheartedly.

7 All things are permitted to children.

8 American society is a matriarchal society.

9 The Americans are community-minded poeple.

10 Whether you know or don't know anything, you'll graduate anyway.

11 All Americans behave like kids.

12 All Americans have three cars, a swimming-pool and a big house.

5 Comparing

This time, a recording is compared with a text which has several points in common with the recording. The text could be a photo, a document, a plan, etc.

The following examples are all based on recordings of radio news bulletins.

a Comparing (and matching) news items and headlines.
First of all, the students read the headlines of the front page of a newspaper in order to understand any difficulties, then the students have to pick out the headlines which correspond to news items in the radio bulletin; this is therefore an exercise in holistic comprehension (see the front page of the newspaper).

b Comparing news bulletins.
The students listen to three news bulletins, recorded at intervals of several hours, and have to note the new items included at each different time of recording.

c Comparing a recorded news item and an article reporting the same events.
After reading the article, the students listen to the recording and indicate the differences, also the facts which are not mentioned in one of the two sources.

BBC RADIO NEWS — Wednesday, September, 26th

News Items	12 o'clock	2 o'clock	3 o'clock

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VIEWING COMPREHENSION: 'L'OEIL ECOUTE'

P Riley, C R A P E L Université de Nancy

Introduction

The basic question considered in this article is a very simple one — at least as far as the formulation is concerned. It is this: how can we use video equipment for the teaching of comprehension? For practical reasons — here we are referring to things as crude as the relative cost of the equipment — this question is taken as meaning 'What is specific to video?' or 'What can we do with video that we can't do with sound-only recordings?' In other words, 'Is video worth it?'

Any serious attempt to answer these questions will involve an examination of the role of the visual channel of communication in interaction, and so the first part of this article is devoted to a relatively theoretical consideration of the problem. However, it should not be thought that this is merely an exercise in armchair linguistics: the discussion is based on the experience of a number of teachers who have been using video in the classroom for the past 4–5 years as well as on the observation of learners using the video section of the sound library (cf Riley and Zoppis, 1976); to start with, that work was based on an act of faith: 'watching TV is good for your English'. This article is an attempt to describe why this might be so, by providing the teacher/learner using video with an analytic grid which should help him make better use of an extremely rich medium.

Aspects of communication in face to face interaction

Long long ago, in the days when face-to-face interaction was something adolescents did on park benches in the Spring, applied linguists worked on the comforting, the ennobling, assumption that their job was to apply Linguistics. No one knew quite **how** you applied it, that was what all the research, argument and experimentation was about, but the actual aim was clear enough: Applied Linguistics was Linguistics applied. That is, a linguistic description of a given language had to be transferred to the learners: once they had all the necessary bits and pieces — the phonemes, morphemes and syntagmemes — they would know the language. One is reminded of Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, looking for someone who 'would just slip Greek into her head'.

Whether we talk in Virginia Woolf's terms of 'slipping in it' or in Noam Chomsky's terms of 'systematic ambiguity', the belief that linguistic descriptions have psychological reality, that they are what goes on in people's

heads and that they therefore form a summary of what has to be taught, being at once the aim and the syllabus, this belief is still around. On the one hand, it allows purely theoretical linguists to pontificate about how languages should be taught (though Chomsky himself has been very careful to state that he doubts if his work has any practical application). And on the other it provides applied linguists and language teachers with a rationale for their work which is both scientific and accessible.

There is however, a major objection to this approach: it doesn't work.

Partly, of course, this is because when one starts 'applying Linguistics' one does so in real life, with real people who have real problems, on particular days in actual classrooms, in certain groups — so that a whole range of extraneous, non-linguistic factors, going from the weather to company policy, will determine what a particular individual will or will not learn, and how and when. Of all the variables in the language learning situation, only a few are 'linguistic'.

But there is a second reason and it is one which is related not so much to the applications as to the linguistics, to the descriptions themselves. The whole of the movement towards a functional or communicative approach, which we have been witnessing for the past seven years or so, is a reaction against the inadequacy of purely linguistic descriptions. The nature of that inadequacy is by now so well discussed that I feel I need do no more than summarise it by saying that 'grammar is not enough', that formal rules for the construction of sentences do not provide the ability to **use** the language which learners need to communicate. We have learnt the hard way that we can develop a model or description of great sophistication, going from phonetic and phonological contrasts, through morphological and lexical and syntactic forms and structures, we can go in great detail from the base of the pyramid to the top, and if we are lucky our learners will acquire that detail; yet they are still unable to produce or interpret utterances in context.

It is generally agreed that this is because the learner does not know the rules of use, the discourse rules of the language and/or because he does not possess the necessary situational or pragmalinguistic information. This is by no means a new observation — how many seminars have there been on topics like 'teaching communicative competence' during the last few years? However, for the moment, let us concentrate on an observation which is just as obvious — a good deal older, by some thousands of years. It is this: just as it is possible to possess all the rules in the pyramid, from perfect phonetic variation to doubly embedded clauses, and still be incapable of using them, so it is also possible to possess none of them and still be able to communicate and understand. If I am travelling by train across Poland, say, and someone leans over and offers me a cigarette and I accept it and smile my thanks, then communication has taken place.

These are not, by the way, rare cases, even if they are extreme ones: we have all met people who are linguistically perfectly competent, but who, in a particular situation, are unable to communicate, just as we have all met people who can't speak a word of the language but who, in a particular situation, manage to communicate adequately. And what is important for us as teachers, of course, is that there is an infinite number of combinations along the cline which joins these two extremes.

The point being made here, then, is that in face-to-face interaction there are a large number of non-verbal, extra-linguistic sources of information and meaning. And they are not to be despised; true, they lack the semantic or referential precision of the verbal component, but in pragmatic and relational terms they are generally far more important. We will return to the nature of their contribution to the meaning of messages later; for the moment, let us just emphasise the point that such factors as proxemics, kinesics and deictics are all part of the message. They are not just a sort of gloss on the verbal component.

We need to get out of our heads completely what we might call the 'audio-visual course' notion of the role of non-verbal features. There, the gestures, pictures, etc. are used as a gloss, as a parallel code to reiterate and explain the message being transmitted orally (Holec, 1975); a customer ordering fish in a restaurant has a little bubble containing a picture of a fish coming out of his head. This semiotic relationship — parallel coding of the same message — is totally different from the integrated and cumulative role played by non-verbal features in face-to-face interaction, where they converge to contribute to a final meaning or message of which they are an intrinsic part.

Clearly, the conceptual and descriptive problems involved in this global approach to interaction in what we might call 'non-autonomous linguistics' are immense, since human communication is a multi-channel phenomenon: we can communicate along any of the sensory channels by patterning any available substance which is capable of conventional coding and short term manipulation. Weird and wonderful examples abound of course, going from smoke, sign and whistle languages, through Braille and perfumed notepaper, to prisoners tapping on pipes.

But, of course, two of the sensory channels are especially privileged from this point of view, by which I mean that, given the physical nature of man and of the world he lives in, they are able to carry greater loads of information in more varied ways, and they have more rapid fading. These are the visual and acoustic channels.

Relatively speaking, the acoustic channel is by far the better studied, although until advant of modern phonetics it was the patterning carried by the channel — words and sentences — which was studied, rather than realisations. It is highly instructive to look at those aspects of oral messages which are absent from the written form: tone, tonicity, key, voice qualities, tempo and rhythm, for example. These vocal non-verbal features, which are highly systemic, highly linguistic, realise meanings which are discoursal, relational, interactional and pragmatic, but only very rarely semantic.

All this is even more true of the various visual components of meaning. And our ignorance of how they operate, or even what they are, is far greater. It is no coincidence that the gap between the invention of apparatus for recording sound and that for recording vision is about the same as the gap which separates phonetics and phonology from . . . from what? Optetics and Optemics? But the ability to record the data, however vital, is only the first step; what we also need is a series of categories which will help us describe the contribution of various visual messages to the overall meaning which is created in face-to-face interaction. What, that is, are the communicative functions of visual, non-verbal features?

The communicative functions of the visually perceived aspects of interaction

How does what we see relate to what we hear during an interaction and how is this information integrated into meaning? To the best of our knowledge, very little work has been done on the ways in which messages perceived visually are articulated with messages transmitted along other channels. If we turn to the field of semiotics, for example, we find studies which are of great interest to the theoretical linguist but which are far too abstract and generalised for more detailed descriptive purposes (although the integrative approach to the nature of meaning being followed here clearly owes much to modern semiotic theory). If we turn to those linguists whose interests include the non-semantic functions of language — Jakobson and Halliday come most readily to mind — we find little or no discussion of non-verbal realisations. Most disappointing of all is the work being carried out under the banner of 'Pragmatics' or 'Speech Act Theory' which, on examination, proves to be concerned with the semantic cover of artificial sentences in isolation, being completely devoid of any social or interactional dimension. Indeed, we would argue that the refusal by speech act theorists and generative semanticists to consider non-verbal communication vitiates their work, since it obliges them to attribute to the verbal element communicative functions which are largely carried non-verbally in interaction.

More rewarding by far is the work of the ethnolinguists such as Sacks, Labov and Hymes, whose approach is ably represented in France by the group working with Bourdieu at Paris XIII. (cf Bachman, 1979). Some valuable

insights are also to be found in a recent article by Eddie Roulet (1979). Even so, none of these investigations have tried to put forward a repertoire of categories specifically for the visual component of meaning.

What follows, then, is a first tentative step in that direction. It is both eclectic and based on the findings of a C R A P E L research team working on the analysis of face-to-face interaction.[1] We will try to indicate some of the most important pedagogical implications of the analysis which is outlined here, but *since the area is such a vast one it will not be possible to enter into any great* detail. This does not preclude practical, albeit tentative, suggestions. For the sake of clarity of exposition, the pedagogical aspects are discussed as each function is presented, but this is obviously an artificial procedure, since in reality it is often impossible to isolate and identify functions and their realisations in this way: a particular behaviour can realise several functions eg a gesture of 'surrender' in an argument ('OK, have it your own way!') may realise indexical modal and interactional functions simultaneously.

1 The Deictic function

The importance of deictic reference for the verbal component is already widely recognised and studied, and the term is here used in the generally accepted sense of 'pointing at' objects which are physically present in the communicative situation. We refer to them without naming them, as when we use pronouns, for example: 'he', 'this thingummy', 'the man over there', 'you' only have an effective referential value when used in a situation. But what has seldom been discussed is the way in which the reference of such elements is specified or disambiguated: in face-to-face interaction this is almost always done visually. The actual realisation may vary, of course, from a gesture ('Look at this' holding out the object in question) to gaze ('you' is very often the person I am making eye-contact with) to the simple acknowledged presence of the referent within the sight of the participants. An excellent way of appreciating the importance of this function in the construction of meaning is to take a sound-only recording of some goal-directed activity (**not** a discussion or debate): without some source of information as to who the participants were, what the activity was and where it took place, such recording can be almost totally incomprehensible:

A Give me a couple more (noises) of
B I can't . . .
A Try the next one . . . behind
B These?
A The bigger ones. Put them down with the others.

We are not saying that this type of meaning (or any of the other types we will be discussing) cannot be transmitted some other way, of course: radio plays and telephone calls would be impossible if this were the case. But this is how most deictic reference is communicated in face-to-face interaction. Indeed, the extent to which deictic reference is shifted to the acoustic channel gives us the basis for a very interesting typology of discourse. The 'sound-effects' of BBC radio dramas are not just limited to background noises — the crunch of boots on the gravel in the drive, the merry whistle, the chime of the front-door bell, 'Ah, that will be the postman!'; in the nature of things, the verbal component here carries a higher load, the message becomes more 'explicit' — but only in purely verbal terms.

There is a very important implication for language teaching here, since almost all constructed didactic materials belong to this second, verbally explicit type of discourse and therefore do little to prepare the learner for the highly allusive deictic discourse usual in face-to-face interaction. This can only be done by exposing the learner to discourse which shows rather than tells: recordings of such TV programmes as do-it-yourself lessons, or group activities for children can be highly suitable, as well as almost any recording of people participating in a goal-directed physical activity such as cooking or burglary. By asking questions such as 'What has x just seen?' 'What is y indicating?' 'Where does z want it put?' 'What person or object is he referring to?' 'Where exactly is "here" or "higher" or their non-verbal equivalents?' — the teacher can help direct the learner's attention to aspects of the interaction which would otherwise escape him far more often than one might imagine. There is no doubt about the fact that realisations of deictic reference vary from culture to culture; was it not Sapir who reported on an Indian who 'pointed' with his lips? There are also very strong grounds for believing that different cultures actually select different aspects of the situation for deictic reference. Together, these form a cogent argument for the explicit teaching/learning of this aspect of comprehension.

3 The interactional function

One of the most important characteristics of discourse in face-to-face interaction is its **reciprocity**: it is the collaborative construct of two or more participants whose contributions or **turns** combine to form interactive structure in terms of who speaks when and to whom. This structure and these behaviours are almost exclusively regulated by visually perceived non-verbal communication — gaze, above all, but also posture, orientation and gestures. These features realise the **address** system of the language, which we have shown to be of fundamental importance to discourse, see in particular Gremmo, Holec and Riley, (1978).

Address, then, is a discourse term which refers to the imposition of rights and duties (eg to take the floor or to reply) on participants in an interaction. Here,

too, it is **possible** for address to be realised verbally (eg by nomination: 'How about you, John?'): again, though, the extent to which this occurs will influence the discourse type. A clear example is the telephone call, where all the non-verbal attention signals (nods, gaze, facial expression etc) have to be replaced by verbal signals ('yes', 'uh-huh' etc.)

Now for many linguists and teachers this point is so obvious as to be trivial and it is interesting to consider why this should be so. One of the basic concepts of linguistics (**the** basic concept according to some observers) is the **interchangeability** of Speaker and Hearer. From Saussure to Chomsky this parallelism has been axiomatic. The 'Ideal Speaker-Hearer' is a simplification without which modern linguistics simply would not exist; but it is a simplification that is made at a price, since it leaves no room for variation, personal or social. Comprehension is just expression in reverse. As long as we stick to mere coding and decoding this approach is insightful. But as soon as we start to look at interaction we realise that it is painfully inadequate: it is simply not true that all participants have equal rights to the floor in all interactions — children do not have the same rights as their parents, backbenchers do not have the same rights as ministers, employees do not have the same rights as employers. Understanding these rights and the dynamic discourse roles which manifest them, that is, understanding who is communicating with whom, is comprehension in the most profound sense.

In the foreign-language classroom where the teacher is a native speaker of target language, a number of seemingly disparate difficulties related to such matters as participation, comprehension and **attitude**, appear to be due to a cross-cultural failure to identify and understand address behaviours by both teachers and learners. We are only just beginning to appreciate the size of this problem: at a recent workshop in Lyon, examples were drawn from a very wide range of situations — French for North Africans, Turks and South Americans; English for Vietnamese, Finnish and French learners; Russian and German for French learners.

The manifestations of these differences vary enormously, as is only to be expected: we are dealing here with the most fundamental aspect of interaction, the way in which contributions from different sources are fused into a single discourse. For example, there are cultures where it is impolite to meet the gaze of a teacher, or where it is regarded as extremely presumptuous to answer a superior's question, or where general address (ie the teacher throws open the floor to all the students present) is always interpreted as a rhetorical question. It is also extremely common to find address behaviours which have opposite meanings in different cultures; for example, an attention signal can be taken as a bid for the floor. For the moment, of course, most of this evidence is anecdotal, but it is now quite clear that any description of the language of the classroom must take address behaviours into account: it is pointless to expect, say, a better linguistic performance from Ali when Ali was

troubled even recognising when a question has been asked or when he is expected to speak.

Obviously, much of this holds true outside the classroom, usually with more serious results. A Frenchman participating in an international meeting or group discussion will sometimes give the impression that he is over-categorical, aggressive and continually interrupting, largely due to his turn-taking and turn-keeping procedures: for example, the French signals for 'I'm just finishing' are invariably interpreted by British participants as a blunt 'Keep quiet and don't interrupt!' — fertile ground for misunderstanding and friction which, for a businessman or a trade unionist wishing to negotiate agreements with his British opposite number, could well prove disastrous.

Sound-only recordings usually misrepresent address behaviours simply because they are limited to nomination of purely verbal address: one finds, for example, people who are supposedly in sight of one another consistently using proper names, a relatively rare occurrence (in British English, at least: there seem to be considerable differences in the standard American system of address).

For teaching comprehension, TV recordings of group discussions can be very useful, although professionally produced materials can be too 'polished', the cameraman and producer using their own knowledge of address behaviours to switch the picture from person to person in synchrony with their speaking turns, thereby often neatly editing out the very behaviours we would like our learners to see.

Teachers who doubt that their learners have any problems of this kind sometimes receive a nasty shock when they find that they are quite unable to answer questions such as: 'Is A interrupting B here, or was it his turn to speak?' Other useful questions for focusing the learners' attention include: 'Who is A speaking to?' 'When does he show that he is ready to hand over the floor?' 'How does he show that he wants B to have the next turn?' 'How do C and D show that they do or do not want to say something?' 'Who can speak next?' 'How does B know that it is his turn to speak next?' 'Does A expect a reply?'

3 The modal function

Modalisation is notoriously difficult to define, and we do not propose to try to do so now, although we believe that many of the difficulties involved are pseudo-problems resulting from the failure to recognise the importance and role of non-verbal behaviour. For the moment, it is taken as covering all the different ways which are available to an actor to signal the extent to which he is committed to the literal meaning, the propositional content, of his utterance; is he serious, joking, enthusiastic and so on. Since it is largely through modalisation that actors try to regulate their psycho-social and affective

relationships, this is obviously a crucial factor in face-to-face meaning. An 'understanding' smile, a 'dismissive' gesture or an 'aggressive' posture are all important contributions to the final meaning created in a communicative act, so important that they can actually override the surface, linguistic meaning, as is the case with irony or sarcasm, for example.

Like the other functions listed here, modalisation has already been recognised as far as the verbal component is concerned, though attention has been concentrated on the semantics of the modal verbs; but see Roulet (1979) and Roussel (1974). However, as we have already said, the realisations of these functions are not exclusive to one channel or another; modalisation often occurs simultaneously at the vocal non-verbal level (facial expression above all, in Western society, but also gesture and posture) as well as at the verbal level.

The enormous complexity of this phenomenon at the theoretical and descriptive levels should not, however, deter the language teacher or learner from trying to tackle the problem. By asking questions such as 'Is A teasing B?' 'Is A being sarcastic (ironic, formal, aggressive hypothetical, etc)?', the teacher goes directly to the heart of the matter: there is little point in waiting until we have, say, an integrated theory of the meaning of facial expression before asking ourselves why A smiles at a given moment. Again, it may be objected that to do so is trivial and unnecessary, since the learners will understand naturally. Such an argument can be refuted on a number of points: first, it is based on an unacceptably naive view of the nature of language and communicative behaviour; secondly, the balance needs to be redressed — conditioned by their previous experience, learners tend to concentrate on the verbal component at the expense of all other aspects of communication; and thirdly, experience shows that in fact learners do often make wrong judgements on the key of an act or interaction. This last point has long been familiar to teachers of literature who groan inwardly as a frothy, amusing short story is taken literally and understood as a sombre sociological statement of fact; such misjudgements seem to be at least as common in interaction, even between people from related cultures.

4 The indexical function

If modalisation, then, is generally **other-related**, if it refers to the ways in which an actor tries to influence others, then it is to be distinguished from the indexical function, which is **actor-related**, ie which provides information about the actor's self (cf. Laver and Hutcheson, (1972)).

Anatomy, size, skin, muscle and hair type and condition, cosmetics and grooming, clothing, status symbols, adaptors and tools, facial expression, gesture, posture, breathing and blinking rates — these are only some of the visual signals which can transmit indexical information. This information includes such socially vital markers as nationality, sex, age, state of health,

class, profession and emotional state; it tells us, that is, about the identity of an actor and about the probable nature of his participation and role in a given interaction. These matters are so important that often the 'business' of an interaction does not begin until participants have had a chance to size one another up; 'phatic communion' or 'small talk' plays a fundamental role in social intercourse by providing a vehicle for the exchange of indexical information.

Much of what has been said about modalisation also holds good for the indexical function. Indeed, in practice, it is often difficult to distinguish between them; when we say that someone is 'enthusiastic', for example, we are usually referring both to his attitude towards his interlocutor and to his own emotional state. But descriptive problems of this kind need not bother us in the classroom; in fact, indexical information can be tackled with complete beginners — 'Is A angry (sad, nervous, amused, etc.)?', 'What sort of a job do you think A does?' What is A's attitude to B?' 'What is the relationship between A and B — have they just met, (are they relatives, married, friends, etc)?' 'Why do you think A is dressed like that?' 'Is A a conservative type or is he rather trendy?'

Such an approach can prove a healthy antidote to the 'phlegmatic Englishman, inscrutable Chinese' sort of stereotype by providing the learner with the categories necessary for more refined judgements: how many English students of French, for example, really understand what it means when a Frenchman of a certain age wears a beret? Or when he has a small rosette in his buttonhole? And how many French students of English really understand the social implications of a bowler hat or certain kind of tie? And if this seems to belong to the realms of folklore, then consider the absolutely basic fact that the French and English misread each other's behaviour so much that they are often incapable of telling whether the other is angry: the Englishman thinks the Frenchman is angry when he is not and the Frenchman thinks the Englishman is not angry when in fact he is absolutely bloody furious.

5 The linguistic function

For many people linguistic non-verbal communication is a contradiction in terms, and it has been conceded that it is not a particularly happy phrase. Yet it can be shown that some non-verbal behaviours at least can be highly conventional, systemic and semantically precise. It is convenient to distinguish four categories of these behaviours, generically known as gestures, on the basis of their communicative function. (This is discussed at greater length in Riley (1975)):

a Emblems: these normally function as verbal surrogates and include gestures such as 'Thumbs up' or 'V-sign' cf. Scheflen (1973).

b Illustrators: gestures which are related to the propositional content of the message ('It was this sort of shape . . .').

c Enactions: gestures related to the illocutionary force of the communicative act (Beckoning to command 'Come here', for example.)

d Batons: those behaviours which are related to the prosodic characteristics of the message such as rhythm and tempo. (This does not imply that they are subsidiary to the vocal or verbal realisations.)

Until recently, almost all work on non-verbal communication was in fact restricted to the first three sub-categories listed above, gestures which are conventional, replicable, conscious and easily expressed in words. A number of gesture repertoires have been collected for different cultures which have confirmed the conventional nature of gestures: they have to be learnt, and the 'same' gesture varies in meaning from culture to culture. The use of these lists is limited but real, and it seems only reasonable to use video to teach them for comprehension purposes. This is a relatively straightforward task, rather like teaching a few new items of vocabulary, but one which always fascinates learners since it is often their first introduction to a further dimension of communication.

At a more sophisticated level, it has been shown that video-recordings of native speakers can be an excellent means of sensitising students to problems of stress, rhythm, tempo and intonation, since these prosodies are often synchronised with batons; cf Heddesheimer and Roussel (1978).

6 The situational function

'Situation' could, of course, be regarded as a macro-category subsuming everything which has been discussed so far. It is used here in the sense of the spatio-temporal setting perceived as a scene for a specific type of communicative event, ie in so far as it impinges on or is relevant to communicative behaviour. The identification of the significant features here will probably have to be left to anthropological semiotics (cf Mary Douglas's *Natural Symbols*) with off-shoots such as architecture and proxemics (Hall, (1964)) and most recent of all, chronemics, which studies the significant use and perception of time (cf Bruneau, 1979).

Much interesting work is being done here, but the area is a vast one: the problems, though, are detailed and concrete, not just airy-fairy academic abstractions. It can be amazingly difficult for, say, a new arrival in New York, to see a telephone kiosk or letter-box or underground station — he just doesn't know what to look for. Banks, churches and examination halls are all places where an Englishman's behaviour becomes formal, reverential and hushed: but when one looks at, say, banks in the Middle East, churches in Italy or

examination halls in France, it soon becomes obvious that this is not an immutable law of nature, merely a cultural choice.

This is not to say that language teachers should be experts in semiotics or anthropology but, by definition, they are involved with cross-cultural communication and should therefore, be aware that perception of setting and situation varies from culture to culture. A shop in the Middle East is a setting for situations involving negotiation and bargaining: this is not the case in most European cultures, so that North Africans in France, for example, either risk annoying the shopkeepers by trying to beat them down or accept the price as displayed and go away feeling sure they have been cheated. When Italian tennis fans recently took their 'rowdy' behaviour to Wimbledon — they cheered, shouted encouragement, stamped and so on — it was regarded by the English as absolutely shocking, a mixture of cheating and bad manners: even a game of tennis is not the same situation in two different cultures.

This awareness of social norms is not easy to acquire, since it implies close familiarity with the foreign country in question, but the observation and discussion of authentic video material does seem to be a valuable preparation for the countless situations, going from pubs and cricket matches to family reunions and business meetings, in which a learner may one day find himself.

1 Other articles produced by this group and relevant to the present topic include:

GREMMO, M J, HOLEC, H and RILEY, P
International structure: the role of role. Mélanges Pédagogiques, CRAPEL, Université de Nancy II, 1977.

GREMMO, M J, HOLEC, H and RILEY, P
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