PART FOUR

BILINGUAL INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
INTRODUCTION

This section is concerned with the development and implementation of new curricula for language teaching in bi-lingual and multi-lingual settings.

Rodolfo Jacobson describes an instructional approach for the education of bilingual children in the United States which seeks to develop, simultaneously, children’s proficiency in English whilst also, at the same time, strengthening their knowledge of the language of the home. The approach involves switching between the languages while content but not language arts is being taught. The language switching takes place as a response to certain cues identified by the teacher in the classroom as if he/she were an ethnographer exploring the setting of his/her choice. Initial objections to the approach have been invalidated as data from a federally funded research project has become available.

A bilingual methodology has been developed by language teachers in Wales which involves the use of the pupils’ mother tongue in drill type activities which are intended to lay the foundations for fluent, accurate use of the target language. The methodology has proved successful in establishing effective teaching of Welsh and has produced additional skills such as efficient language switching. Paul Tench presents a description of the methodology and suggestions for its adoption in other language teaching situations.

Graeme Cane’s paper is based on work with tertiary English as a Second Language students in the multi-lingual societies of Papua New Guinea and Brunei. It aims to show the value of incorporating non-standard texts into a language programme in order to heighten student awareness of the complex relationship between form and meaning in language. The paper argues that the use of humorous or stylistically interesting material can help to lower what Krashen calls ‘the affective filter’ and demonstrates how certain deviant dialects of English can be used in the classroom to generate student awareness of and interest in some of the more subtle workings of the language.

The raising of teachers’ awareness of the nature and function of language in the classroom is the theme of Andrew Perkins’ paper which, in particular, seeks to explore the relationship between ‘quality of interaction’ and language learning, and suggests ways in which teachers can improve the quality of interaction in their own classrooms.

John Clark describes developments in curriculum work across language and across sectors of education in two major school language teaching projects—the Graded Levels of Achievement in Foreign Language Learning (GLAFLL) project in Scotland, and the Australian Language Levels (ALL) project in Australia. The problems encountered and the overall advantages perceived in the efforts in both these projects to work towards a coherent languages-in-education policy and set of practices are discussed.

Lai Phooi Ching, Dorothy Cheung and Christine Lo describe a language course for practice-oriented engineers in Singapore which has been designed to meet the communicative needs of the workplace. A needs analysis of 650 engineers is used to justify why communicative skills are emphasised in the course.
DUAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND CULTURAL REASSURANCE

Rodolfo Jacobson

Introduction
Recent work in bilingual instructional methodology has made us focus on the various options that the teacher of bilingual students holds when instructing children whose first language is not English. These options are all basically the result of how he/she decides that the two languages, the language of the mainstream (English) and that of the child’s home should be distributed. We proposed (Jacobson, forthcoming) that we would study these distributional patterns with three major criteria in mind, i.e. language separation, language concurrence and language absorption. Language distribution by separation encompasses the options of separation by topic, person, time or place. Language concurrence includes the options of translation, flipflopping, preview-review or NCA (the New Concurrent Approach). Language absorption can either be immersion or submersion. Of these ten options, it is the New Concurrent Approach, henceforth NCA, that seems to possess those characteristics that are particularly suitable for situations where children speak an ethnic language at home and in the neighbourhood but are expected to learn academic subjects through the language of greatest prestige in the country. Research to determine the effectiveness of specific bilingual methods is still extremely rare but NCA was recently tested in San Antonio, Texas, USA and the results were very promising showing that, under certain conditions, two languages can be used concurrently in the instructional process, hereby refuting the dogmatic stand of some bilingual and second language educators to the effect that the two languages must always be strictly separated.

It is the purpose of this presentation to describe an instructional approach that seeks to simultaneously develop, among children who are speakers of languages other than English, proficiency in the language of the American mainstream while strengthening, at the same time, their knowledge of the language of the home. The results of a Federal project that gathered, over three years (1981–84), longitudinal data on the effectiveness of NCA as this approach was implemented using the conventional language separation approach with comparison groups are also discussed and some thoughts on its applicability in the Asian setting are shared with the audience.

I. The New Concurrent Approach
The NCA method was first developed by the presentor in the mid-seventies while he served as external evaluator to a bilingual education program in South Texas. The local program there had chosen for its instructional design the
‘Concurrent Approach’, a dual language method that was believed to be useful for children who spoke little English and were expected to understand what their teachers were saying. This early type of concurrent approach lacked a sound philosophical statement of its rationale and, as the professional literature of the time (1975) provided no clues whatsoever, it became the joint effort of teachers and evaluator to develop a viable rationale why two languages would jointly be used in the instruction of content. A working definition of this novel dual language approach emerged eventually in order to serve as a policy statement that participant teachers would follow. Here, the concurrent approach was defined as

a strategy through which the bilingual teacher teaches the school curriculum (except language arts) in the child’s two languages concurrently, that is switching from one to the other language as the teaching/learning situation may require. Each switching instance shall be pedagogically justifiable in light of four criteria:

1. The languages are distributed at an approximate ratio of 50–50;
2. The teaching of content is not interrupted;
3. The teacher is conscious of his/her alternation between the two languages; and
4. The alternation accomplishes a specific learning goal.

Instead of randomly switching between the two languages, the teacher now had specific guidelines telling him/her how to distribute the languages. The approach adapted itself effectively to the child’s repertoire which usually included several degrees of proficiency in the home language and some (variable) knowledge of the mainstream language. The teacher’s attitude to the language patterns brought to school by the child was always positive in the sense that both languages received—at least at school—equal prestige, subjects could be studied in either language equally well and that both languages had to be developed further.

The further development of L-1 was justified on two grounds: (1) it allows the child to reach the threshold level in his/her native language (Cummins, 1979), a goal that has been found to be a prerequisite for acquiring L-2 at a level that is academically sound and (2) it makes the child emotionally secure as he/she is no longer asked—directly or indirectly—to reject those cultural and behavioral patterns that he/she values. While the child is reaching the threshold level in his/her first language, he/she is also learning a second language to which he/she can transfer the cognitive skills that come with the acquisition of L-1. As a result, a considerable portion of the school instruction is devoted to the oral (or written) development of the two languages. This language arts component differs in its focus from the teaching of content. In the latter, the emphasis is on such school subjects as social studies, math, science and the like; and yet, some language-oriented work can be incorporated, while subject matter is taught. It is here that NCA is implemented most effectively, since both languages are used concurrently in the teaching of specific concepts. The presence of the two

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languages at an approximate ratio of 50–50 accomplishes an important objective, i.e., that of clearly demonstrating that both languages hold equal prestige and that either can be used to learn in school. Furthermore, the balanced use of English and Spanish, or any other ethnic language, develops in the child the skill of verbal interaction relative to bilingual societies. In other words, he/she learns what his/her overall strategy is going to be, that is, to communicate with some in the home language, with others, in the mainstream language and with still others, alternatively in one or the other, dependent on the specific social situation of the speech event.

There is a surprising similarity between a social situation of a more general nature and the classroom where one or two adults interact with a group of 20 or 30 children. In both, the role relationship is of great importance. In both, the correct interpretation of existing signals or cues will trigger valid responses. When such a cue-reponse system is applied to language distribution patterns, it accounts—in a bilingual setting—for the language alternation that is typical for a bilingual class where NCA is used. It is not a random alternation or a flipflopping of sorts that characterizes NCA but a purposeful, carefully planned, always justifiable strategy that shows the high degree of sociolinguistic awareness of the experienced NCA teacher. For the child in the NCA class, it is more of a game whose rules he/she has to learn. Once familiar with the rules of the game, he/she loves following the teacher’s initiative and switches to the languages that he/she has heard last or finds most appropriate at a given point. Accordingly, both languages are found to be equally appropriate for the teaching of content. As a number of concepts are taught, say, in social studies, the two languages are developed in an almost parallel fashion. At every switching point, the teacher can rationalize why she believes that a language alternation will produce a better result at this particular moment. On the other hand, the continuity of the class is never affected. The lesson goes on the same, regardless of which language is spoken.

Even though the lesson is never disrupted, the mere change from one to the other language may be felt as an interruption unless special care is taken to switch as smoothly as possible, so that the alternation remains almost unnoticed. These alternations should always be initiated by the teacher, who thereby displays her dual language leadership. She may however encounter, at times, some reluctance by a child to follow her lead. For example, at a given point in her lesson, she may have decided to switch from the home language to the school language, whereas some children might ignore her switch and continue using the home language. This then requires a high degree of resourcefulness on her part. Under no circumstances should she reject a correct answer to her question, just because the child did not use the language of her choice. Rather, she should acknowledge the correctness of the response in the language of the child, restate his/her response in the language of her choice and then proceed in the latter language until a return to the former is warranted. The child will get the message in no time.
The system of cues used in NCA consists of four broad areas, (1) classroom strategies, (2) curriculum, (3) language development and (4) interpersonal relationships. Each area is broken down into various individual components, the actual cues. In response to any one of the cues identified during the class, the teacher may wish to switch to the other language and use it long enough to avoid any impression of language mixing. As a case in point, the teacher seeks to reinforce the concept of subtraction which she has been teaching, say, in Spanish but at this point she is uncertain whether the children can handle that very concept also in English, so she continues in the latter language in order to ensure full comprehension. To give another example, the teacher has discussed the arrival of the pilgrims on the Mayflower, a typical Anglo-American experience, and now wishes to briefly refer to Christopher Columbus and the discovery of America, a typically hispanic experience. The cue language appropriateness from the area of curriculum triggers the language switch to Spanish, since it may be more meaningful to discuss hispanic events in Spanish and anglo-american events in English. The following table lists other cues to which the teacher may respond:

<table>
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<th>Table 37</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>System of Cues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) CLASSROOM STRATEGIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Conceptual Reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Capturing of attention</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Approval/Disapproval</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Variable Language Dominance</td>
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<td>b. Lexical Enrichment</td>
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<td>c. Translatability</td>
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To summarise, some of the cues have cognitive justifications whereas others are linguistically, culturally or socially oriented but all are relevant to a teacher-student verbal interaction as the one that can be expected in a bilingual classroom setting.

To perform competently in an NCA class and to feel comfortable in using the approach, the teacher undergoes some special training designed to make her aware of its affective and psychosociolinguistic perspectives. As her attitude toward the two languages becomes such that she actually believes in the equal prestige of both, the teacher acquires great skill in modeling dual language
behavior. At the same time, she becomes more self-conscious about her linguistic performance. In other words, she not only recalls what she tells the children but also, in which language she has spoken to them, an ability that bilinguals usually do not possess. Without this kind of self-consciousness or detachment, she would be unable to decide when and why to switch. Her overall performance will gradually become more analytical, as she must identify cues and respond to them without neglecting the content teaching which she has planned. As a matter of fact, the NCA teacher should have anticipated to a large extent which language alternations yield best results for each school subject and, in particular, for the lesson to be taught. She cannot anticipate everything, however, because children may react unpredictably, thus requiring that she make last minute adjustments. To self-evaluate her performance, whether planned in advance or not, the teacher may wish to listen to her own cassette recorders and video cameras are necessary tools of self or peer evaluation as well as of any more formal assessment by coordinators or supervisors. Her observance of the teaching through video replay is instrumental to continuous improvement of the NCA performance. The innovative nature of the approach requires steady refinement to achieve optimum learning conditions.

II. A Project In Bilingual Instructional Methodology

Funds from the United States Government were received during the years 1981 to 1984 to implement what was known as a demonstration project in order to test the effectiveness of the NCA method and compare the achievements of children in the treatment groups with other children who were taught conventionally using one of the language separation strategies, i.e., language separation by topic (or school subject). One of the school districts in San Antonio, Texas, had agreed to the implementation of a design where two treatment (NCA) groups operated in one school and two comparison groups (LSA-topic) in another nearby institution of the same district. It is beyond the scope of this presentation to give a detailed report on the entire project, in particular, on the comparative nature of the three-year project but its NCA component will briefly be described.

Two elementary grades, a kindergarten and a first grade, operated in the treatment school during the first year of implementation. The principal (headmaster) of the school agreed to allowing the selected pupils to stay in the program for three years, so that longitudinal data could be gathered. In other words, the kindergarteners would remain in the project until they completed the second grade and the first graders, until they completed the third grade. Some turnover due to retentions, withdrawals from the district, illness and so forth were inevitable but approximately 65% of the children remained until the end of the project. The language used in the kindergarten was 90% L-1 (Spanish) and 10% L-2 (English), in order to develop the home language further and, above all, give the children a feeling of emotional security in the sense that L-1, contrary to their previous belief, really had a place in school. The prestige
factor, referred to above, was emphasised so that children came to understand that anything could be learned either in L-1 or in L-2. The degree of bilinguality of the kindergarteners, of course, varied but as L-1 was used in class, their home language proficiency increased in most cases except for a few who had attitudinal problems against their home language resulting from early experiences or parents’ biases. In first grade, the language distribution was completely balanced as far as the teaching of content was concerned so that teachers were expected to use as much of L-1 as they used L-2. This language distribution factor was actually verified in special assessment projects rendering (a 54% of L-2 against 46% of L1 ratio.)

During the first year of implementation, NCA was the instructional method only in grade one, as the pre-elementary grade was mainly intended to prepare the children, linguistically and psychologically, for the bilingual strategy to be used the following year. From the second year of implementation on, however, both treatment groups (1982–83: grades 1 and 2; 1983–84: grades 2 and 3) used exclusively NCA in the content area school subjects and this allowed them to develop great abilities to use both languages and make their language choices dependent on the appropriateness of the language for a given speech event. As a matter of fact, at the end of the third year the teachers predicted that their students would have no difficulty in following their studies entirely in L-2 from grade 4 on as well as that they would probably maintain their L-1 level for appropriate bicultural activities at home and in the neighbourhood.

In order to achieve these bilingual skills among their students, the participating teachers would undergo appropriate training and supervision. Videotaping during classes was a common strategy to assist supervisors in detecting flaws in the implementation of the NCA approach. Initially, teachers found the recordings embarassing and children were distracted from their studies by the presence of the TV camera, the cameraman and two supervisors but the novelty of that situation soon wore off and recording became an asset for staff development. The three-year project proved to be successful in more than one way. The children developed greater proficiency and also greater pride in their home language. At the same time, they also learned the school language. Their newly acquired bilingual balance made them feel good, that is, they became more secure. They also became sociolinguistically more sophisticated as they could now decide with whom to use which language and when. As for the teachers themselves, the constant alternation between the two languages allowed them to strengthen their weaker language which for some was L-1 but for others, L-2. The academic subjects were learned well and especially math seemed to lend itself most effectively to the alternation between languages.

III. Applicability of NCA In The Asian Context

The presenter has so far attempted to discuss the philosophy and methodology of a concurrent method known as NCA and shown that this approach has been successful in at least one setting, that of some primary grades of an American
school district in the Southwest of the United States. The use of NCA in other school settings in the United States has not been explored sufficiently to assess the overall popularity of the method. Informal verbal and written communications, however, have suggested that NCA is being used widely in areas where Spanish-speaking minority children are being mainstreamed by means of innovative bilingual approaches.

In this section we would like to address the kind of applicability that NCA might have for other age groups, for different educational settings and, above all, for situations where bilinguality or even multilinguality is the order of the day much more than this is true for the United States. We propose that NCA need not be restricted to a population of the lower elementary grades and can be used whenever and wherever learners share a common home or community language and are expected to acquire a language of broader communication. An international language is often necessary for higher education, business or some aspects of social interaction when the regional everyday code is not understood outside certain geographic boundaries like city, provincial, state or other boundaries. Hence, we can see secondary or tertiary education students, urban and rural workers or immigrants wishing to upgrade their knowledge of a world language. This they can do through a dual language approach like NCA which permits them, at the same time, to acquaint themselves with specific areas of content and become proficient in a useful medium of communication as well. Because of the presence of large chunks in a familiar language in the teacher’s discourse, the learner can easily deduce from the chunks in the familiar language what the message in the unfamiliar language is about. NCA, thus, serves as a method that provides the learner with comprehensible input in Krashen’s (1983) sense.

More crucial seems to be the question of the language shared by all learners, i.e., L-1. In other words, which is the learners’ stronger language and to what extent could teachers alternate between, say, English and the language spoken regionally. We hesitate calling this latter language the native language, since the very first language is not necessarily the language of the broader community. Rather than thinking in terms of L-1 and L-2, we here propose that the language shared by all in a given community (L-Com) and that to be learned for instrumental reasons (education, work, social interaction) (L-Ins) reflect more correctly the Asian setting. Individuals for whom L-Com is a strong language, whether it is native or learned as lingua franca, and L-Ins a weak language will benefit from the NCA approach. Not only will they understand the new language fast, but they will feel so much more secure during the learning process as 50% of what is said will be expressed in a language to which they can relate culturally.

Also crucial is the question of teachers’ bilinguality, that is, their proficiency and fluency in both media, L-Com and L-Ins. Their knowledge of the target language is to be expected if they are trained L-Ins teachers but their fluency in the community language, (L-Com) may vary depending on each teacher’s
individual ethnic background. For example, English language teachers in Malaysia are very proficient in the target language but their fluency in Bahasa Malaysia, the national language, may vary. More specifically, English teachers of Cantonese, Hokkien or Tamil extraction, may feel embarrassed speaking longer stretches of B.M. when interacting with Malay-speaking students. Hence, the reluctance of switching from English to Malay on the part of the English teacher would jeopardise, by definition, the implementation of the concurrent approach. On the other hand, native-like control of the L-Com is not a prerequisite but the willingness to use it is. In our own setting, teachers for whom the ethnic language was the weaker language upgraded their knowledge in no time, merely as a result of language use and implementation of the method.

To summarise, NCA seems to be applicable also in the Asian context but with some reservations. Using it with populations of age levels above those of the American experiment is feasible for the stated reasons, i.e., comprehensible input and cultural reassurance. Its implementation would, however, require the following two conditions: (1) the presence of a common L-Com, that is, a shared community language spoken by the entire learning population and (2) the bilinguality of the instructors in L-Com and L-Ins, so that they could switch comfortably between the two varieties as they interact with the learners. It appears that enough such settings where conditions (1) and (2) are met exist in the Asian setting, so that NCA may indeed be applicable and successful also here.

Conclusion

It has been the objective of this presentation to discuss an innovative approach to language instruction and to show the extent of success that this type of concurrent instruction has met in the American setting. The applicability to the Asian setting appears feasible if certain language conditions are met, Explorations of the feasibility of NCA here and now might reveal a new road to teaching languages of wider communication.

References


A BILINGUAL METHODOLOGY FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Paul Trench

1. Introduction

There is nothing that gladdens the heart of a language teacher so much as a report of a successful language teaching programme. What I wish to report is experience with a language teaching methodology that has proved itself in Wales, and in other countries, in the teaching of foreign languages in school and in the teaching of Welsh as a second language in a variety of educational establishments.

Bilingualism and the use of a second language has always been a major concern in education in Wales, particularly in view of the steady decline in the number of Welsh speaking citizens in the Principality. That decline has been checked, however, in the past ten years, and, educationally speaking, that has been due to the establishment of many Welsh medium schools throughout the Principality and also, in no small measure, to a successful teaching methodology that has proved itself in establishing Welsh as a medium of communication in people who would otherwise not have been able to use it. Although the sociolinguistic situation in Wales is very different to that of Hong Kong, it would nevertheless be of interest to consider whether what has been effective in Wales might perhaps have something to offer in Hong Kong.

The origin of the methodology is found in the work of C. J. Dodson, himself a bilingual (German-English), who is now the Director of the Centre for Bilingual and Language Education at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. His own development as a bilingual he has recorded in Dodson, Price & Williams (1968) and as a language teacher in that volume and in Dodson (1935). I make no apology for constant references to these works and others that Dodson has published, particularly his main exposition of what he eventually called the Bilingual Method (Dodson, 1967); it was bilingual in methods, and bilingual in aim.

It is perhaps noteworthy that the Bilingual Method which was being developed in the 50s and 60s (and is still being refined, cf. Butzkamm & Dodson, 1980) was ‘communicative’ in intention, long before that term became fashionable—in the days when structural and audio-lingual methods were still very much in vogue. Yet, Dodson did not fall into the trap that many ‘communicative’ methodologists have fallen into and against which many language teaching experts now warn, with the advantage of hindsight; he emphasised the importance of establishing linguistic competence—pronunciation, spelling, grammar, lexis—as a means of effective communication. He recognised that the meaning which a learner might be wishing to convey could be distorted, sometimes beyond recognition, by a fault in linguistic competence.
He distinguished between ‘medium-orientated’ practice—what Littlewood (1981) was later to call ‘pre-communicative’—and ‘message-orientated’ communication. Medium-orientated practice was the basis for achieving success in communicating actual messages in the classroom.

The Bilingual Method comprises a series of steps which would be applied to a second-language dialogue or text; the earlier steps involve imitation and other drill-type activities for practising pronunciation, grammar, the meaning of utterances/sentences and the written form of everything that the learner can say. Dodson does not eschew the use of the learners’ mother tongue, but sees positive advantages in it, if used for specified purposes. Incidentally, it is the teacher who uses their mother tongue, not the learners. The later stages, like questions and answers and conversation, are normally conducted solely in the target language, the mother tongue being used only incidentally in the occasional breakdown of communication. Thus the methodology is bilingual only in the early stages; the mother tongue is used to quickly convey meaning, to act as a cue in certain drill-type activities and to check learner’s understanding. As learners progress, use of the mother tongue begins to decrease:

One of the important aspects of the bilingual method is that it reduces its own usefulness as the course progresses. The method is a self-destructive approach which in time develops into a foreign-language medium approach.

(Dodson, 1967:149).

The use of the learners’ mother tongue need not disturb any other methodological principles. A method making use of the mother tongue can be as oral as any oral method; it can be just as structural, situational, etc. as any. It is distinctly different from the traditional grammar-translation method by being orientated towards fluent, oral communication (as well as accurate written sentences!). (Incidentally, this is a point that Stern palpably failed to appreciate; he wrote: ‘… Dodson (1967) re-affirmed teaching techniques based on a grammar-translation strategy…’ (Stern, 1983:454). In view of Dodson’s often acerbic criticism of that strategy, one can only assume that Stern jumped to unwarranted conclusions without having taken much trouble to read Dodson’s work with any degree of thoroughness.)

2. English Teaching in Hong Kong

For a perspective on the English language teacher training policy in Hong Kong, I wish to refer to a controversial paper offered at the first international conference organised by the Institute of Language in Education in Hong Kong in 1985, namely that of Johnson (1987). His paper was primarily a critical appraisal of teacher training methods, questioning the received wisdom of applied linguistics in relation to English language teaching. Basically what he does is to appeal to applied linguists to integrate proven pedagogical principles into their own science. After all, language teaching is more than the application of linguistics; it must also involve the application of educational psychology. Applied linguists can advise on the nature and function of language; but the
teaching and learning aspect is outside their province qua linguists; the services of applied psychology are needed for that. It is a common enough complaint from trainees that their training bears little or no relevance to the practicalities of their jobs in the classroom.

Johnson (p. 18) claimed that there were three main reasons for the ‘failure of English language learning and academic achievement in Hong Kong schools:

(a) we expect far too much from the teaching of English as a subject.

(b) we expect pupils to go directly from learning English as a subject to using it as a medium of instruction (i.e. there is no bridge period of intensive language learning).

(c) we permit pupils whose level of English language proficiency is far below threshold level to enter and continue in an English medium school system."

Drawing on others’ observations (e.g. Strevens, 1977) and research (e.g. in Canada), he proposed a model for an English language teaching programme (Figure 15).

**Figure 15**

An ‘Ideal’ English Language Programme

ADVANCED ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intensive Development (4 years minimum)</th>
<th>e.g. English used as Medium of Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridging Period of Intensive ELT (6 weeks to 6 months)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extensive Development (3 years maximum)</td>
<td>e.g. English taught as a subject</td>
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Furthermore, drawing on what he called ‘educational orthodoxy’ (p. 20) and the recognised need for a great deal of contact time with the target language, he proposed a model for language strategy (Figure 16).

**Figure 16**

Components of a Language Teaching and Learning Programme

(A) Development

(1) Presentation

(Learning goal is identified)
(2) Practice + Feedback
   (Conscious ——— Unconscious Control)
(3) Application
   (Automatic Use)

(B) Consolidation
   (Massive Quantities of Exposure to and Use of the target language.)

This model is hardly revolutionary as anyone familiar with Donn Byrne's work will know. It would hardly appear revolutionary to Dodson whose bilingual methods steps deliberately involve presentation, practice and feedback, and application, and whose research recognised long ago the need for a high level of contact frequency with the target language.

The contact experiments showed that the individual primary child at the age of eight requires fifteen listening and responding contacts to consolidate a foreign language sentence of average length and complexity, the twelve-year-old child eight contacts and the adult six or fewer at the beginning of a course. It was also shown that the number of responding contacts required in the classroom is somewhat less because the learner experiences a much greater number of listening contacts spoken by the teacher and members of the class. It would be unwise for the teacher to assume, however, that the number of active responses needed by each individual child is greatly reduced in the classroom. In the total learning process it is probable that ten listening contacts might not be equivalent in value to one active speaking contact.

(Dodson, 1967:49).

Johnson goes further (p. 21–4) and reviews Oller & Richard-Amato’s Methods that Work (1983). He singles out, in particular, Suggestopedia and the Rassias Method to show that ‘exotic’ methods do not, in fact, rely on their superficially distinctive characteristics, but on a hard core of basic methodological principles. On Suggestopedia, he notes the following:

1. The course is highly intensive. It involves four contact hours per day, six days per week. There is also a great deal of work to be done out of class, and even, so the theory goes, at night while the student sleeps.

2. The course is highly organised. Each daily session consists of three stages:
   (a) a review of previous learning;
   (b) the introduction of new material;
   (c) learning the new material.

3. The teachers are highly trained in the techniques required by the programme. These include grammar-translation, mimicry and memorisation, drills, role-play and dramatisation.

Similarly, in the case of the Rassias Method, what do we find? Each day consists of four sessions which include the following components:

(a) an introductory session in which the day's work is explained, objectives are stated, grammar points explained and pronunciation modelled;
(b) a second session which consists of a drill with a language instructor, in which the emphasis is on rapid pace and dramatic presentation;

(c) a third session, which involves further practice in the language laboratory, and

(d) a final session in which students write and act out sketches using the language taught.

It will be observed how the Rassias Method likewise is highly intensive, and highly organised and requires highly trained teachers. Finally, Johnson refers to Paulston’s observations on the ‘need for well-organised and highly structured programmes with clear procedures for teachers to follow (and, of course, adapt, supplement, improvise upon, etc. as required)’ (p. 24), and comments:

Too many applied linguists, it appears, do not understand these principles, and the resultant theoretical confusion, resistance from teachers and disenchantment from students are predictable and entirely justified.


It is, obviously, Johnson’s intention to provoke applied linguists into a radical re-appraisal of their language teacher training policies, but he also provides the language teachers with reminders of basic methodological principles that have proved their worth in other language teaching situations and programmes. As an outsider, I must confess to being amazed at the low-level starting points of English language course books designed for Hong Kong Secondary Schools (e.g. New Access, Trend); is anything achieved at all in English in Hong Kong primary schools?

3. Observations on young children’s acquisition of bilingualism

It is my intention to show that Dodson’s Bilingual Method shows the three hallmarks of successful methodologies: a high degree of organisation, a high degree of intensive activity and contact frequency within the limits of a school timetable, and a set of clear procedures for teachers to follow.

However, I first want to draw attention to some observations on the procedures and tactics that young children adopt in attempting to gain a command of a second language which intrudes regularly into their experience, whether they are members of a bilingual family or members of a second-language nursery, etc.

Ruth Weir’s (1962) study of pre-sleep monologues of her monolingual child has provided a basis for many attempts to establish a theory of language acquisition. She noted that on many occasions her son seemed to communicate with imaginary people, animals and even objects, but on other occasions he seemed to play with language as if it were a toy in a game. The two types of language use could be dubbed ‘message-orientated’ and ‘medium-orientated’ in terms; indeed, Weir herself remarked on the similarity of her son’s ‘medium-orientated’ language play with pupils’ language
activities in a typical direct method foreign language lesson, where only the target language was used. Dodson (1983) noted that such language play involved four ways of generating utterances:

1. imitation and repetition of utterances heard previously;
2. re-combination of known utterance elements in order to create hitherto unexpressed utterances or even new concepts;
3. addition of new elements to known utterances in order to extend their meaning or function, and
4. concatenation of a number of known utterances into a flow of speech.

However, a young child developing bilingualism has two major additional strategies in such language play. First, the child can compare and contrast utterances from two languages in their private speech; and second, they can observe models of correct and appropriate second-language utterances and request equivalences in their first, or preferred, language, in public speech.

Dodson (1985) presents interesting examples of the first strategy from recordings of three- and four-year-old children, who muse privately on Welsh/English linguistic matters (although they were in the company of others):

‘Twyd a sand a tywod a sand’
(tywod = ‘sand’; a = ‘and’)

‘... lot o doys. Tegannau. Toys.’
(tegannau = ‘toys’; lot of doys = ‘lot of toys’, with Welsh mutation of /t/ to /d/!)

Another example of private bilingual medium-orientated communication was observed by the writer and his M. Ed. students on a visit to a British nursery class. A three-year-old Egyptian boy had joined the class two days previously without knowing a word of English. He tried to guess the meanings of the English utterances spoken by the teacher and his classmates by watching closely the activities connected with the particular English utterances that he heard. At the end of the second day, when all the toys and equipment were being put back into the cupboards, he suddenly became aware of the meaning of Put them away, spoken several times by the teacher to the class. He confidently picked up a number of blocks lying on a table in the middle of a room and, whilst carrying these to the appropriate storage cupboard, loudly said to himself Put them away, followed immediately by its Arabic equivalent.

These two language utterances, confirmed by one of the Arab students present, were repeated several times until he had reached the cupboard, whereupon he returned to the middle of the room for more equipment and started his bilingual medium-orientated speech once more, this time even more loudly than on the previous occasion, but always totally oblivious to everyone around him.

(Dodson, 1985:334).
Dodson then went on to comment:

Although many parents of developing bilingual children have overheard such bilingual medium-orientated speech, where the child takes on the role of a little interpreter, not for the benefit of others but purely to satisfy his own linguistic needs—and the writer vividly remembers using the same strategy during his own informal and untutored second-language acquisition process—reference to such an activity in the literature on bilingual development is scarce.

(Dodson, 1985:334–5).

Dodson does, however, cite a couple of instances: Burling (1971:181) and Moorfield (1984) who also cites Fantini (1976). This bilingual ‘medium-orientated’ communication is a prelude to, and part-preparation of, communicative competence in a second language.

4. Experiments in bilingual methodology

Dodson’s experience as a developing bilingual and a dissatisfaction with current language teaching methodology led him eventually to conduct a series of classroom experiments. The main experiment will be reported here, but reference needs to be made to Dodson (1967) for a fuller treatment and for the details of the other experiments.

156 pupils participated, 26 from a primary school class who had already followed a year’s language course during which they were faced with various modes of presentation, and 130 secondary school pupils in five groups, tested for equal distribution of IQ scores, who had had no previous knowledge of the experiment language (German).

The foreign-language sentences were presented in five different modes in permutations of the foreign language (FL)m, visual aids (VA), mother tongue (MT) and the printed word (PW):

1. FL + VA + PW (1a)
2. FL + VA (1b)
3. FL + VA + MT + PW (2a)
4. FL + VA + MT (2b)
5. FL + MT + PW (3)

Sentences in all five modes were presented to each of the 26 primary school pupils; but in the case of the secondary school pupils, sentences in one mode each were presented to each of the five groups. Each pupil, of both ages, was tested separately in the experiment room. Every sentence was spoken fifteen times by the tester. The pupil had to imitate each spoken stimulus. After every third response, the pupil was asked to give the meaning (in their mother tongue) of the foreign language sentence, thus making a total of five meaning checks per
sentence. For modes 2a and 2b, a correction of meaning was given (in the pupils’ mother tongue) after the third meaning check (i.e. after the ninth response). The pupils’ responses were assessed not only for their imitation proficiency but also for their success in understanding the meaning of the foreign language sentences.

Figure 17 presents the results of the experiment with primary school children in relation to their success in understanding.
Figure 17

Acquisition and Retention of Sentence-Meaning (Five Presentation)
Primary Children

For modes 1a and 1b, understanding (i.e. acquisition of sentence-meaning) was
d judged as nil at the start of the experiment; for 1a, the success rate was judged at
just over 70% (i.e. 19 of the 26 pupils) after the first meaning check (i.e. after the
third response) and gradually rose during the following twelve responses until
only one pupil failed, at the end, to understand. For 1b, the success rate was
very poor; Dodson admitted (in a private communication) that the visual aid
was deemed to be responsible for the failure. This, incidentally, illustrated
the great importance of visual aids for the young learner, and also the great
importance of devising unambiguous visuals if they are used as the primary
means of conveying meaning. (This was the subject of one of the other
experiments).

For 2a, 2b and 3, understanding was judged as 100% at the start, since in all
three modes, meaning was presented by means of a mother tongue equivalent.
For modes 2a and 2b, one, or two, children promptly forgot the meaning or, at
least, failed to give it accurately, but after the correction of meaning was given
after the third meaning check, even they succeeded. However, in mode 3, more
than half of the pupils failed to give the meaning accurately after three
responses, although eventually they all succeeded, but two. The only difference
between modes 2a/2b and 3 was the absence of the visual support in 3, which
again points up the importance of visual aids and their design in the case of
young learners.

For young learners, the combination of the mother tongue (for the acquisition
of sentence-meaning) and visual aids (for the retention of sentence-meaning)
appears to be the most effective mode. This appears to be the case for secondary
school pupils, too, although the discrepancies between the results from each
mode are not so marked (Figure 18). Modes 2a and 2b achieve the best results;
the relative success of mode 3 shows that the absence of visual support is less
critical for this age group.

One significant comment can be made from the results of modes 1a and 1b
with the secondary school pupils. Just over 80% of the pupils acquired
(guessed?) the meaning accurately and quickly from the visual aid, but nearly
20% did not! The proportions do change in favour of success in understanding
as the experiment proceeds, but only slightly and never totally. In general, this
means that nearly a fifth of the pupils fail initially, and since in normal
classroom practice, pupils do not have fifteen response attempts, those that fail
initially, also fail finally, because they do not get the opportunity to improve. A
failure rate of nearly 20% is high when a teacher has to carry that number of pupils
from lesson to lesson. The failure rate is less than 5% when the visual aid
is used not as a meaning-giver, but as a meaning-reminder in support of the
mother tongue.
Figure 18

Acquisition and Retention of Sentence-Meaning (Five Modes of Presentation)
Secondary Children

The pupils were also assessed on their ability to imitate the pronunciation of the experimenters' use of the foreign language. The results of the assessment of the primary school children are shown in Figure 19, and of the secondary school children in Figure 20. It will be seen that one mode in particular proved itself to be very effective amongst the primary school children, namely 2a, which combined the use of the foreign language with visual aids, the mother tongue and the printed word. 2a and 2b had distinguished themselves in the success rate for understanding; 2a distinguished itself from 2b in the success rate for imitation proficiency, and it seems that reference to the printed version helped pronunciation efficiency (see Rivers (1964) for a strong criticism of the practice, particularly in the traditional audio-lingual method, of depriving literate learners of reference to print).
Figure 19
Development of Proficiency in Imitation (Four Modes of Presentation)
Primary Children

The assessment of the secondary school pupils' imitation proficiency confirms the findings from the primary school. There are 3 modes that prove effective; the common feature is the inclusion of the printed word. (The use of the printed word is not a major concern of this paper and will not be defended here; see Dodson, 1967:16–25.)
Development of Proficiency in Imitation (Five Modes of Presentation) Secondary Children

Dodson comes to the inevitable conclusion that the best combination of stimuli for the most efficient learning (and consolidation) of new foreign language utterances/sentences is:

1. **FL** (the foreign language spoken stimulus)
2. **MT** (the mother tongue equivalent for the presentation of meaning)
3. **VA** (pictures and other aids, e.g. acting, for the retention of meaning), and
4. **PW** (the printed word, for greater imitation proficiency).

This is mode 2a. The time taken to complete the test for each individual pupil also sheds some light on the discrepancies between different modes (see Dodson, 1967:15):
Mode 2a 10 minutes  
Mode 2b 15 minutes  
Mode 3 10 minutes

Thus the greatest amount of time was required for those experiments in which the pupils were not given sentence-meaning by means of the initial mother tongue equivalent. This is an important factor, as available teaching time is severely limited for every subject on the curriculum.

(Dodson, op.cit.).

5. A Profile of the Bilingual Method

The distinctive feature of Dodson’s Bilingual Method is the use, by the teacher, of the learners’ mother tongue for certain specifiable purposes: to convey meaning accurately and quickly, to act as a stimulus in certain drill-type activities, to check learners’ understanding, and, when necessary, to explain points of linguistic divergence between the mother tongue and the target language (e.g. points of grammar, lexis, pronunciation, orthography). The proposal to use the learners’ mother tongue for these purposes springs from observations of young children’s strategies in second-language environments and from a consideration of the results of experiments. One could also cite adults’ strategies in second-language environments, as did H. E. Palmer (1917/1964:49–68; 1922/1964:125), Belyayev (1963:161), W. Stannard Allen (1948:37), Taillon (194:309), for example.

The Method, in its original formulation (Dodson, 1967), comprised eight steps that would be applied systematically to a piece of foreign language dialogue or text such as might appear typically in language teaching course-books. Each step has its own particular purpose and plan. Some steps will turn out to be more important than others at a particular point in the overall teaching programme; for instance, Step 1 (imitation) is vitally important in the beginning stages, but would be less so after a year and might well be omitted altogether at a later stage. The eight steps will be illustrated by reference to a dialogue from New Access, and reproduced below:

GUIDED CONVERSATION Greetings and introductions

A Learn these expressions. Remember that the marks ’ show you which syllables are stressed. Syllables that do not have the mark ’ are spoken quickly and lightly. The arrow shows you which syllable has more stress than all the others. The voice goes up or down at this point.

When meeting a friend:

S1: \( \wedge \) Hello. 'How are you?'

S2: \( \wedge \) Fine, thank you. 'How \( \wedge \) are you?'

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or:  'Very well, thanks.'  'How are you?'  
      I'm 'very well, thank you.'

When meeting someone for the first time: 'How do you do?'

B Practise this conversation until you know it. Use your own names in place of Tom, Betty and David:

Tom : Hello, Betty. How are you?
Betty : I'm fine, thank you, Tom. How are you?
Tom : Fine, thanks. Who's that over there?
Betty : That's David. Haven't you met him?
Tom : No, I haven't, but I'd like to.
Betty : All right. I'll introduce you.
      Hello, David. How are you.
David: I'm very well, thanks. How are you?
Betty : I'm fine, thank you. David, I'd like you to meet Tom.
      Tom, this is my friend, David.
Tom : How do you do?
David: How do you do?

The ultimate aim is to produce communicative competence in the learners in a range of topics (determined by the course material) at an appropriate level and in an appropriate style (determined by the teacher in respect of the learners' age, ability and aim), with the requisite linguistic competence (pronunciation, spelling, grammar, lexis, discourse features).

Step 1 (imitation)

The purpose is to provide practice for pronunciation proficiency. That is the main aim of the imitation procedure, but it will also, incidentally, provide practice in a series of actual, typical foreign language sentences (as opposed to the traditional Grammar-Translation Method), in context. The procedure is an intensive stimulus-response drill, conducted entirely in the target language (English), apart from the brief use of the mother tongue (Cantonese) to give meaning, if necessary, but then accurately—for example, the fine distinctions between How are you? and How do you do?; I'm fine and I'm very well; thanks and thank you (admittedly, mainly matters of style in these cases).

If Dodson (1967) is not easily accessible, Tench (1981) provides a full and detailed description of the procedure. The stimulus-response procedure ensures that pupils gain many opportunities for individual responses; occasional choral responses increase the number of active responses. The teacher should try and ensure that responses are both accurate and fluent; pupils should be encouraged to utter the English sentences with accurate rhythm and intonation. The procedure is lively, but can be exhausting and should not be overdone.
Step 2 (interpretation)

The purpose is to consolidate the association of language form and meaning. In Step 1, the meaning is given so that the learners can concentrate on getting the pronunciation right; it was noted by the experimenters that pupils unsure of the meaning of a sentence being drilled were not able to concentrate on the matter in hand, pronunciation; divided attention produces poorer results. Now, in Step 2, the stimulus is the Cantonese equivalent (which was used to provide meaning initially) and the response is the original English sentence. In this way, meaning is bonded to form. Again, it might be noted that it is only the teacher who uses the mother tongue; the learners use only English.

The same kind of rapid stimulus response procedure is adopted, first taking one utterance/sentence at a time through the class, then the next and so on, often chaining them together in the proper sequence, so that each pupil gets a chance to respond several times. There are various ways of adapting this activity, even to the extent of dropping the MT stimulus and using just the visual aids.

It should be obvious that the MT stimulus is not a word for word translation, but an appropriate, normal utterance, equivalent (as far as this is possible) to the FL utterance/sentence being practised.

Step 3 (substitution & extension)

The purpose is to develop the learners’ ability in generating new sentences from the syntax of a sentence from the original dialogue or text. (As it happens, this is not always very applicable to formulaic expressions like greetings which often appear at the beginning of a course.) This is a fairly standard technique, the substitution exercise. One sentence may be

Haven’t you met him?

The Cantonese equivalent would be given as the stimulus, and a pupil would respond with that sentence (which would have been well rehearsed by now). The teacher substitutes her for him in the Cantonese stimulus and the next pupil has to respond

Haven’t you met her?

This might be repeated a couple of times, before another substitution in object position; the substitutions might take place in the subject, and then again in the lexical verb. This is not the time to introduce new lexis, but known lexical items should be used to consolidate what already has been taught.

A simple sentence can be extended by adding an adjunct, or coordination, with the cue coming in Cantonese and the response in English. There are many ways of varying this procedure as many a language teaching manual will show, but not many will advocate the use of the mother tongue as a cue. The MT cue is efficient, always available, always understood, and the procedure lays good foundations for the interpreting skill.
Step 4 (independent speaking of sentences)

The purpose is to give opportunity to the learners to develop confidence in the language that they have been practising in the above three steps. Different pupils are called upon to say as much as they can of the original dialogue or text. Some pupils will recall the original sentences better than others; if some get the sentences in the wrong order, that is not to be despised, since the whole purpose of this step is to get pupils to speak without a cue from a teacher. Indeed, the more adventurous pupils may well go beyond the original text. The idea is to begin to wean the pupils off dependence on the teacher. The mother tongue is not used in this step, except for incidental difficulties.

Step 5 (reverse interpretation)

This is an optional step in which the teacher gives the FL sentences as a cue, to which the learners respond with the MT equivalent. This is the only occasion when learners may be expected to use their mother tongue. The purpose is to prepare pupils for translation into the mother tongue, if tests and examinations require it.

Step 6 (question patterns)

This step is also optional, but in a different way. Its purpose is to prepare learners to handle the question patterns needed for the following step, questions and answers. If the original text included questions, then there is no need for this step; if it did not, then a mixture of interpretation and substitution is used, so that learners are adequately equipped to comprehend and ask questions.

Step 7 (questions & answers)

This step should be conducted entirely in the new language. By this step, pupils can say the original text having practised its pronunciation, its meaning and its grammar, and having practised it independently of the teacher. The teacher asks the pupils questions on the original text which must be answered in the target language. No Cantonese need be used, except in incidental difficulties. English only should be expected, since the pupils have been thoroughly prepared.

In other methodologies, a question-and-answer session is often introduced too soon after new material has been presented, and pupils have not been trained to develop the linguistic competence demanded. Hence, there is often a sense of frustration and disappointment that the question-and-answer session is not performed successfully; a sense of frustration is felt all the more so if this session is reckoned to be the 'real thing'. It is not the 'real thing' however, as the answers are pre-programmed; even this kind of session is but a preparation for the 'real thing', actual conversation in the classroom.
Step 8 (conversation)

This final step is the main aim of the Bilingual Method, but even then, it has to be admitted that is still somewhat contrived—by the very nature of the school situation. There need not be any clear division between Steps 7 and 8; once the teacher leaves the immediate topic of the original dialogue or text, then something like real conversation can ensue, with un-pre-programmed answers. At the beginning of a course, there would be little scope for developing new topics in conversation, but as the course progresses, with pupils acquiring more language forms and more topics, then the potential for developing conversations is increased.

The steps then begin a new cycle with a new dialogue or text.

Written Work

Steps 1, 2 and 3 require a rapid stimulus-response drill-type procedure, which can be both lively and exhausting; indeed, teachers may be tempted to prolong it. They should not, however, but should introduce quieter activities to balance the intensive ones and ensure variety. Quieter activities include play, drawing and writing, at least. Depending on age and maturity, the learners could be expected to engage in written work, which could vary from copying (equivalent to imitation), language exercises (equivalent to substitution & extension), dictation (and even bilingual dictation!) and comprehension questions; this is all training in linguistic competence in the written mode. Composition and dialogue writing require the fuller, communicative, competence.

Drama

Butzkamm & Dodson (1980) reported on an alternative sequence of steps, in which dialogue-writing and acting were made more prominent. They still required an original dialogue/text and the first 4 steps, but Step 4 was allowed to develop into independent writing as well as independent speaking. Pupils were encouraged to develop their own dialogues in pairs or small groups and subsequently to act them out, entirely in the target language. Butzkamm & Dodson (1980) provided a variety of examples from learners in their first year of learning English, which illustrated the variety of standards achieved. This is role-play, with the pupils themselves deciding on the roles.

In this alternative set of steps, acting out the new dialogue could be extended by the teacher or fellow pupils by asking questions and getting the ‘actors’ to answer, entirely in the target language.

6. Objections

It may be objected that there is nothing new about the above activities; that is true, although some of Dodson’s suggestions may have seemed innovative in the 60s. What is different, however, is the arrangement of these activities into a system, in which each step has a particular function to fulfil in developing
communicative competence. The most distinctive feature is the part that the learners’ mother tongue is allowed to play, and it is that factor which may give rise to many objections. Some of these objections will be considered here, related as far as possible to the teaching of English in Hong Kong.

(i) *The use of Cantonese slows down the rate of progress*

It is often felt that the use of the mother tongue reduces the time available for the use of English. This is certainly the case in the traditional Grammar-Translation Method. But it must also be noted that Direct Method teachers, who avoid the use of the learners’ mother tongue, have always advocated the importance of having as much time as possible; we noted, too, how much time Suggestopedia and the Rassias Method require. But if a teacher avoids using Cantonese, much time is certainly needed to convey the meaning of English words and sentences. However, what is more important than the time spent on conveying meaning is the time spent on practice, once meaning has been acquired. The use of Cantonese to briefly give the meaning of English sentences actually releases more time for practice in English.

(ii) *Cantonese weakens the impressions on the pupils’ minds*

This was a view held most strongly by Billows (1961), but Cantonese need only be used for certain specific purposes, and then by the teacher only. The overall impression of a Bilingual Method lesson is the domination of the target language; the mother tongue need take up no more than 10% of lesson time. Attention is continually focussed on English, not Cantonese.

(iii) *Cantonese would be an obstacle to direct thinking in English*

Another way of expressing this objection is to claim that it would not be good advice to pupils to juggle the two languages in their mind. But we cannot prevent mental interpretation even in Direct Method teaching. This is how young children and adults cope with a second-language environment. In any case, learners cannot express themselves directly in English at the beginning, without some sort of mental preparation in Cantonese. It is a fact of life, that we first handle and assess the unfamiliar (English) in terms of the familiar (Cantonese). This was very clearly depicted by Palmer in 1917! (Palmer, 1917/1964:57).

(iv) *Pupils will equate English grammatical features and word meanings with those of Cantonese*

Pupils will do this in any case, at the beginning, whatever method is used, until they are made aware of the contrast or difference, either by it being pointed out to them (deduction) or by them working it out for themselves after many examples and much practice (induction). This problem arises whether Cantonese is used or not. But the advantage of the use of Cantonese is that the teacher can make pupils specifically aware of the contrast or difference; then when they are aware of it, practice in it will be more effective.
This is nothing but a return to the old Grammar-Translation Method

Far from it, despite Stern's description above. The old method was characterised by excessive use of the pupils' mother tongue, by an unjustifiable reliance on the deductive process, by priority given to the written form and grammatical accuracy. The Bilingual Method teacher advocates a minimal, but specific, use of the pupils' mother tongue, priority to the spoken form (without neglect of the written form), training in linguistic competence (and not just grammar), and the development of communicative competence in the target language.

The aims of the bilingual method are...

1. To make the pupil fluent and accurate in the spoken word
2. To make the pupil fluent and accurate in the written word
3. To prepare the pupil in such a manner that he can achieve true bilingualism.

(Dodson, 1967:66).

7. Conclusion

A bilingual methodology for language teaching has been profiled which has proved to be effective in teaching foreign languages in school, including Welsh as a second language in Wales. It has been used extensively, not only in Wales, and despite much criticism, it has stood the test of 20 years of experience—teachers still swear by it! Could it be successfully transferred to Hong Kong for the teaching of English as a second language?

First of all, it has proved itself in the teaching of a language as a subject, both at primary and at secondary school level. The method is obviously applicable to the teaching of any language. Welsh is a minority language in Wales, with a high status culturally, but not economically, politically or professionally, in most parts of the Principality. English is a minority language in Hong Kong but with a high status economically, politically and professionally. I doubt if the difference in sociolinguistic status of Welsh in Wales and English in Hong Kong would affect the relevance of a bilingual methodology; presumably, one of the critical factors is motivation for bilingualism, but a methodology which incorporates bilingualism will, by its very nature, enhance the likelihood of achieving bilingualism.

But, it may be argued, Welsh is more like English than Cantonese is. However, the differences between English and Welsh must not be underestimated: Welsh is a VSO language, uses particles to distinguish interrogative and declarative, has a very different noun phrase grammar, has grammatical units and categories that have no equivalence in English and has a morphological pattern, mutation, that is unique to Celtic languages. British learners of Welsh often remark that Welsh has been much more difficult to learn than other European languages. The visual impact of Chinese script must not be allowed to magnify the differences between learning difficulty of Welsh.
Secondly, although this has not featured prominently in this paper, it has proved itself in the training of pupils in a second language used as the medium of instruction. The increase in the number of Welsh medium schools has been a notable feature of the current educational scene in Wales. The majority of pupils in these schools in South Wales have English as their first and preferred language; such pupils begin to acquire Welsh in Welsh medium nursery schools, but their competence in Welsh is by no means established or even adequate when they join a Welsh medium primary school. It is the experience of at least one headmaster of such a school in Cardiff that the kind of bilingual methodology profiled above has proved invaluable in establishing parity of performance in the pupils’ two languages, and at a pace quicker than that achieved with a monolingual Welsh methodology.

There is no doubt that what has proved its worth in Wales could prove its worth in Hong Kong too, provided teachers are trained in the procedures. And the children of Hong Kong would benefit as the children of Wales have done.

References


RAISING LANGUAGE AWARENESS AMONG ADVANCED ESL LEARNERS THROUGH THE USE OF HUMOUR, POETRY AND OTHER DEVIANT TEXTS

Graeme Cane

In the average ESL course, the language selected to teach the structures, functions or notions is fairly predictable.

A: Which sports do you like, John?
B: I like most sports. How about you?
A: I used to enjoy tennis, but now I like playing golf. Do you play golf too?
B: Yes, I do. I’m going to play golf tomorrow. Would you like to join me?

Language courses are usually based on a standard dialect with a standard accent and do not deviate very far from the supposed norm in sociolinguistic or semantic terms. This approach is justified by the argument that we are trying to teach the learner the basic rules of a system which can later be applied to authentic language situations outside the classroom. The fact that, as Crystal and Davy have shown, authentic native-speaker conversation is almost nothing like textbook dialogues is generally ignored by language course designers because they feel the aim of the textbook is to teach ‘langue’ (the system) rather than ‘parole’ (actual use).

A: Well what’s the what’s the failure with the football I mean this this I don’t really see I mean it cos the money how much does it cost to get in down the road now?
B: I think it probably it probably is the money for what you get you know erm I was reading in the paper this morning a a chap he’s a director of a big company in Birmingham . . .

Crystal & Davy, p. 19.

The dialect selected by English course designers is usually either Standard American in the United States or Standard Southern English in Britain because it is assumed that these two dialects will be more universally applicable to student needs. Certainly an English language course which aimed at teaching the Norfolk dialect or the Alabama dialect of English, or which concentrated on teaching slang rather than formal spoken English would be neither appropriate nor beneficial for the majority of learners.

However, as we have seen from the Crystal and Davy example, in practice English does not always conform to the rules and forms of the textbook. It is the aim of this paper to suggest that introducing, on an occasional basis, examples of English which are, in one way or another, non-standard may help the advanced learner of English to gain greater insight into the workings and uses of the language.
I am not suggesting that a language course should be based around non-standard texts, but simply that the analysis of non-standard texts in the classroom by advanced students of English can help to develop their understanding of and sensitivity towards the language. Although the examples given here are all taken from English, it may be possible to apply a similar approach in the teaching of other languages.

The type of language deviance discussed here is not the ‘transitional dialect’ or ‘interlanguage’ of the second-language learner which has formed the major focus for recent work in error analysis. Most of the following examples are nearer to what Corder calls a ‘deliberately deviant idiosyncratic dialect’ where the author ‘knows the conventions of the standard dialect but chooses not to obey them’. (p. 160–161) The first area we might look at concerns the decoding of abnormally complex sentences.

1. The girl began to cry.
2. The girl the monkey chased began to cry.
3. The girl the monkey the man beat chased began to cry.
4. The girl the monkey the man the baby tripped up beat chased began to cry.

Strictly speaking, there is nothing grammatically wrong with sentences 3 or 4 but they are ‘psycholinguistically deviant’ in that they are exceptionally difficult to decode. Aitchison (1983) suggests that a hearer will find difficulty in comprehending a sentence if it goes beyond his or her linguistic expectations or ‘psychological’ limits. The deviance of sentences 3 and 4 is therefore not syntactic but arises from the abnormal encoding of too much information in the form of embedded clauses. If sentence 4 were changed to ‘The baby tripped up the man, the man beat the monkey, the monkey chased the girl and the girl began to cry’, it would clearly be far easier to process. (For a fuller discussion of this point, see Aitchison (1983), pages 227–228.)

R.D. Laing stretches our linguistic and psychological expectations to the limit in his book of poems entitled ‘Knobs’.

Jill: I’m upset you are upset
Jack: I’m not upset
Jill: I’m upset that you’re not upset that I’m upset you’re upset
Jack: I’m upset that you’re upset that I’m not upset that you’re upset that I’m upset, when I’m not.

*Knobs* p. 21.

Another less extreme source of encoding/decoding problems is the potential conflict between what a listener predicts he will hear and what he actually hears. Aitchison (1983, p. 216) argues that listeners do not ‘activate a verb’s structures in advance’ but ‘just wait patiently to hear what comes next in a sentence’. However, if a speaker of English is presented with the following:

1. Billy the Kid shot Floyd Thursby.
2. Floyd Thursby was shot by Billy the Kid.

...
he will realise, consciously or not, that Sentence 2 is a passive transformation of Sentence 1, and will judge both to be acceptable English sentences. Influenced by 1 and 2, his subsequent reaction to the following sentences may be to classify them as deviant because they are in conflict with his expectations.

3. Floyd Thursby was shot by a streetlight.
4. Floyd Thursby was shot by midnight.
5. Floyd Thursby was shot by misadventure.
6. Floyd Thursby was shot by the way.

(Examples 3–5 above are from Aitchison (1983)).

Assuming at first that he is being confronted with a passive structure followed by ‘by’ plus agent, the English speaker has then either to classify the above as deviant or adjust his semantic interpretation of ‘by’. Eventually, he will interpret ‘by’ in Sentence 3 as ‘near’, ‘by’ in Sentence 4 as ‘before’ and so on, but I would argue that these interpretations are not as immediate and automatic as Aitchison claims. Examples such as this one with ‘by’ plus noun phrase are useful for showing students the relations between form and function and the importance of context in the interpretation of meaning.

It is usually a listener’s knowledge of the context which determines his interpretation of ambiguous sentences. The ambiguity of the following depends largely on two different syntactic interpretations. In the class, students can be asked to give both possible interpretations and to explain the precise nature of the ambiguity in language terms.

1. (Newspaper headlines) ‘GENERAL FLIES BACK TO FRONT’
   ‘POLICE FOUND SAFE UNDER BLANKET’

2. (Laundry Sign) ‘We do not tear your clothes with machinery.
   We do it carefully be hand’.

3. ‘After using your ointment, my face started to clear up at once, and after using two jars, it was gone altogether’.

Lexical ambiguity, depending on the double meaning of one particular word in a sentence, provides another source for language analysis. The following examples, which combine lexical ambiguity with intentional malapropisms, offer not just a moment of light relief in the classroom but also an opportunity for students to see that, in human language, form and function are not in a one-to-one relationship.

(a) Farm Visitor (observing three huge fields of beans): ‘What do you do with all these beans?’
   Farmer: ‘We eat what we can and we can what we can’t.’

(b) Man (pulling a small boy out of the lake): ‘How did you come to fall in?’
   Boy: ‘I didn’t come to fall in. I came to fish.’
(c) She keeps putting on so much weight that her friends are having fun at her expanse.

Another form of lexical deviance is the deliberate rearrangement of words in an established phrase or cliche so that a fresh meaning is created by the new word order.

1. Work is the Curse of the Drinking Classes.
2. The noblest of all dogs is the hot-dog: it feeds the hand that bites it.
3. I'd give my right arm to be ambidextrous.

A third form of lexical deviance is the use of words outside the boundaries of standard English vocabulary. This type of usage has been a recurring feature in the work of writers whose first language is not English but who choose to write in English. Thus, a writer from Brunei or Singapore writing in English might incorporate local words into his basically standard English text.

a. The amah was killed with a parang near the old godown.
b. I met this Mat Salleh in Bandar.

In the following extract from a poem, Shem Yarupawa, a Papua New Guinean from Milne Bay, incorporates local words into the English text in order to establish the appropriate cultural setting.

Then he came, a new man
Jeans, socks and all
He marched into the village
Dark glasses fixed to his face
Dimdim's language was his
That's my boyfriend, you said
His laplap on your waist
Chewing gum in your mouth
Perfume on your body
And you refused the buai I sent you
'It's for the rubbish drum,' you said
Pity my poor soul
What else could I offer you?

from 'Just to Please You'.

Deviance in language extends further than the breaking of syntactic or lexical boundaries. As Hymes (1972) points out, the native speaker of a language not only possesses a knowledge of the linguistic rules but also knows how to use the language appropriately in particular speech situations. When a patient enters a dentist's surgery, for example, he expects the dentist to greet him with something like:

(a) DENTIST: 'Good morning, Mr. Jones. How are you today? Please sit down. Open your mouth nice and wide and I'll give you a quick check-up.'
The following does not conform to the sociolinguistic rules of ‘dentist’s language’ in that the dentist uses a non-standard dialect where a standard dialect is normally required.

\((b)\) DENTIST: ‘Wotcha, Mr. Jones. All right, mate? Open your north and south and I’ll take a quick butchers.’

Example \((c)\) below breaks other sociolinguistic conventions by using language which is inappropriate for a dentist/patient interaction situation, even though it is in grammatically accurate standard English.

\((c)\) DENTIST: ‘O.K. Jones, sit down and shut up. Open your bloody mouth.’

Examples \((d)\) and \((e)\) are stylistically inappropriate and would likewise be considered deviant because they break the conventional styles of dentist talk.

\((d)\) DENTIST: ‘Prithee, good sir, wouldst be so kind as to open wide thy mouth.’

\((e)\) DENTIST: ‘Patients are kindly requested to open their mouths upon seating themselves in the designated chair.’

Using examples like those above, students can be asked to identify exactly which features are deviant and why they are considered to be so. Students would then go on to create their own examples of sociolinguistically or stylistically deviant language. In his book ‘Accent, Dialect and the School’, Trudgill presents his ‘translation’ into a non-standard West of England dialect of a page from a textbook on social anthropology. The passage is deviant not because it fails to communicate meaning (the message is communicated as effectively as in any other dialect) but because linguistic convention demands that only the Standard dialect be used in textbook writing.

Social anthropology be a title used in England to designate a department of the larger subject of anthropology. On the continent a different terminology prevails. There when people speaks of anthropology, what to us is the entire study of man, they has in mind only what us calls physical anthropology, the biological study of man. What us calls social anthropology would be referred to on the continent as either ethnology or sociology. Being a branch of the wider subject of anthropology, social anthropology be generally taught in connection with its other branches: physical anthropology, ethnology, pre-historic archaeology, and sometimes general linguistics and human geography. As the last two subjects seldom figures in degree and diploma courses in anthropology in this country I don’t say no more about them.

*Trudgill, p. 27.*

A related area to Sociolinguistic/Stylistic deviance is that where the conventions of Pragmatics are not followed. One reasonably accessible route into this area would be to explore with the students how Grice’s Cooperative Principle works in human communication. On proposing this principle for conversational exchanges, Grice identified four separate categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner.
The category of Quantity relates to the amount of information given by a participant in a conversation. Grice’s maxim here is: ‘Do not make your contribution more informative than is required’. Under the category of Quality, Grice places the maxim: ‘Do not say what you believe to be false’, and under the category of Relation, the maxim is: ‘Be relevant’. The final category in the Cooperative Principle is that of Manner. This relates to how something is said, and the essential maxim here is: ‘Be clear and brief’.

One way of showing students how the Cooperative Principle works in practice is to give examples in which the conversational exchange rules are broken. We can return to the dentist/patient situation and produce further examples showing pragmatic deviance.

1. DENTIST: ‘Open your mouth please, Mr. Jones.’

   PATIENT: ‘Yes, of course. Shall I open it two inches wide or three inches, or would 2 1/2 inches do? What position would you like my tongue to be in: touching the palate and the teeth, or just floating around?’

   (deviates regarding Quantity).

2. DENTIST: ‘Open your mouth please, Mr. Jones.’

   PATIENT: ‘I’d rather not.’

   DENTIST: ‘Why not?’

   PATIENT: ‘Last time I was here I opened my mouth and a pigeon flew in.’

   (deviates regarding Quality).

3. DENTIST: ‘Good morning, Mr. Jones. Now I’m going to give you three guesses as to what I’ve got in my left pocket and then I’d like you to open your mouth.’

   (deviates regarding Relation).

4. DENTIST: ‘Good morning, Mr. Jones. I wonder if you would mind employing the relevant muscles of your jaw so that it might be lowered and thus enable me to undertake an examination of your upper molars.’

   (deviates regarding Manner).

Many jokes depend for their effect on the breaking of the Cooperative Principle. Examples can be provided and the students asked to explain which categories and maxims are being broken in each case. In the following joke, the bus conductor’s reply breaks the Cooperative Principle category of Relation.

Lady on bus: ‘Am I all right for Regent’s Park Zoo?’

Conductor: ‘I should think so, lady, but I’m only a conductor, not a zoologist.’
Here, the bus context clearly shows us how to interpret the woman's potentially ambiguous question. The bus conductor's reply is deviant because in passenger/conductor discourse the most common question would relate to information about bus routes.

It has been the intention of this paper to suggest that the introduction into the classroom of non-standard texts could form a small but useful component of an advanced English programme. Such a component would be particularly suitable for prospective teachers of English, for those going on to do courses in linguistics, and as an accessible port of entry into the world of literature and literary criticism. Through exposure to and analysis of deviant texts, both the advanced learner and the native speaker can gain a fascinating insight into the subtleties of human language and communication.

References
THEORY AND INTERACTION IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

Andrew Perkins

1. Introduction

This paper describes an attempt to find practical solutions to two teacher training problems which emerged during the course of an INSET programme in Sri Lanka. While the solutions described may be crude in formulation, the problems themselves are of interest because they seem to be of fundamental importance to language teacher education and thus deserve consideration.

The first problem relates to the meaning and place of theory in language teacher education and reflects a growing concern amongst certain writers on EFL methodology in recent years to foster a more theoretical, research-oriented attitude to teaching amongst classroom teachers, and to try to examine what is meant by theory and to clarify its relation to practice. (See Widdowson, 1984)

The second problem relates to the teacher's use of language in the classroom and touches on questions which seem to be of central importance to foreign language teaching and learning. In our particular case, the difficulty that we encountered was in getting teachers to use language naturally and effectively in practical teaching sessions. This seemed to stem from their preoccupation with the procedural aspects of teaching to the detriment of their ability to interact in a natural way with the learners. Many of them seemed to have the attitude that there exists a right way and a wrong way to teach, that teaching is all about following procedures, and that learning to teach is a matter of mastering the 'correct' procedures. In short, they were obsessed with the 'what' of teaching rather than the 'why', and this imbalance became a source of concern for us because it affected the success of the teaching we observed in teaching sessions. A typical scenario for a practical teaching session would be: the teacher enters stage left clutching a detailed and carefully worked out lesson plan, s/he teaches the lesson following the plan to the letter while learners sit quietly, showing little sign of engagement or productive activity. We were often left with the impression that, while procedures had been followed with impeccable precision, there had been learnt.

This impression led us to seek ways of providing teachers with the opportunity to approach teaching in a importance of the teacher's use of language in the classroom.

2. Keeping Theory Practical

The establishment of clear and meaningful links between the theoretical and the practical components of teacher education programmes has often been cited as one of the more important problems facing the teacher educator. A programme
with a bias towards theory may fail because of being irrelevant to the needs of the teacher, of being vague and often only remotely related to what actually happens in the EFL classroom. A programme with a bias towards the practical can lead to teachers trying to master a set of techniques, or ‘tips for teachers’, without any real understanding of the principles that underlie them. It seems clear that we should seek to achieve a balance between technique and rationale, between the what of teaching and the why; and, in fact, it is something of an aberration that they have ever been considered separately at all.

It would be useful at this point to briefly clarify what we mean by ‘theory’. There are two senses of the word which are relevant to the context of teacher education. Firstly, theory is often understood as the contribution to language pedagogy of related and supporting academic disciplines such as psychology and linguistics. Typically, many teacher education programme will make reference to theories of learning from psychology and theories of language from linguistics. The inclusion of this kind of theory—or ‘received theory’ as I shall call it—is clearly based on the perfectly reasonable belief that it is possible to apply concepts and insights from these disciplines to language teaching in order to understand and improve it.

This first sense of the word theory is not the sense that concerns us here, and its place in teacher education is not in question. Our interest lies in the second sense of the word which refers to an individual teacher’s own personal theory of teaching and learning.

This personal sense of the word refers to the teacher’s own set of beliefs about how people learn and about what constitutes ‘good teaching’. The fact of the matter is that we all possess our own theory of language teaching—it is the thought and the assumptions that underlie what we actually do when we teach. Although this theory may not actually be explicit, or even very conscious, it nevertheless finds its expression in our value judgements about teaching and in the decisions we take when we are involved in teaching.

What is this theory like? To begin with, it is dynamic—something that changes and develops throughout an individual’s period of training and, hopefully, throughout his professional life. And secondly, it is probably unrealistic to view it as a highly systematic and coherent philosophy. It is more a pot-pourri of ideas, concepts, and perceptions culled from a variety of sources—from received theory and from personal experience of teaching and learning.

The important thing to remember about it is that it is very basic. It determines just about everything a teacher does. In particular it determines the many decisions that a teacher makes during the course of a working day, and it is these decisions which play such a vital role in determining how effective a teacher is. So much so in fact that some writers regard decision-making as THE basic teaching skill (Shaveson, 1979. There are of course different kinds of decisions involved in teaching: the decisions that we take BEFORE going into the classroom are often quite different from the decisions we take WHILE we
are actually teaching. The former involve questions of planning and are more reflective in character given that they are made under less pressure of time than the latter which involve the teacher ‘thinking on his feet’ while interacting with pupils. The ability to make principled decisions rapidly is a very important aspect of a teacher’s skill. It is this ability which to a large extent determines what the people do in a lesson.

These points can be summarised in the form of a simple model:

```
    Received Theory  Experience
     /          \    /          \
    Teacher's Theory
     \          /    \          /    \
     Teaching Decisions
      \        /    \        /    \
       Action
```

How do we incorporate this idea of the teacher’s theory into a training programme? Well, if we regard the teacher’s personal theory as being somehow basic and determining what the teacher does, then, logically, we would wish to focus on it and devise a methodology which would serve to develop it. We want to find a way of helping teachers to move towards a more conscious understanding of the principles and concepts which underlie their classroom
practice. To do this we need a way of enabling them to make their theories explicit so that they can be examined, discussed, tested, and reformulated. We also want a way of doing this which does not rely heavily on prescription. If we can take the teachers' own ideas and experiences of teaching as our starting point and help them to consciously develop them by discussing raw classroom data, then we feel that the experience will be more meaningful and motivating than if we simply start by laying down our own criteria and expecting them to be followed unquestioningly. What we are basically trying to do is develop theory from the classroom and from personal experience rather than apply theory to practice. We want awareness of principle and practice to develop simultaneously. (See Ramani 1986 for an interesting description of such a process.)

3. Quality of Interaction

In this section, I wish to briefly explore the notion of 'quality of interaction' and to try clarify what it is and why it is important.

Nowadays, many teachers, teacher trainers, course books, and institutions would claim to adopt a communicative approach to language teaching. While any sort of detailed look at what communication means is beyond the scope of this paper, it is a concept which has a bearing on our topic and which is, anyway, relevant to most contemporary discussions of teaching or teacher training. Let us for the moment say that we accept the idea that meaningful communication is important to successful language learning and that it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that teachers should be encouraged to give their learners opportunities to engage in such communication when possible. While there is little doubt that the quantity of interaction in which learners participate has a definite effect on language learning, what we are concerned with here is the QUALITY of the interaction in which they participate. The assumption is that quality of interaction is important and that we need to find practical ways of focussing on it in teacher training. It is something that is under the control of the teacher and should therefore concern us. (We are referring to teacher-pupil interaction rather than the total interaction that takes place in the classroom). We focus on the teacher's use of language because the teacher is, for most of our learners, the major source of input and the only real relatively mature language system to which they are exposed. While other learners are a significant source of input, the value of extensive use of pair and group work is under question given the risk of pidginisation. While we must per force accept that a significant proportion of classroom discourse will be idiosyncratic (i.e. unlike normal discourse), at the same time we have to recognise the need to give learners the opportunity to participate in natural and meaningful discourse in the classroom. It is to the quality of teacher-pupil interaction that we turn.

My assumption is that the quality as well as the quantity of interaction to which learners are exposed is an important factor in language learning, that the interaction, and that it is therefore important to deal with quality of interaction in teacher training. It is possible to extend this
idea to say that while methodology of course has its place, it is peripheral to language learning in that we do not really know what effect the techniques and procedures we deploy in teaching have upon learners—we do not really know what goes on inside the black box and how we can influence it. If we did, there would be no debate. Instead, the one thing of which we can be sure is that language learning does depend on use of and exposure to the target language.

By way of definition, let us say that:

Quality of interaction refers to the extent to which interaction is natural, meaningful, and engaging in the real-time flow of classroom discourse.

This definition may seem strange given that we are talking about language teaching which should, by definition, be about meaning. But, as Dinsmore (1985) illustrates convincingly, making sense is not such a common feature of the language classroom as might be expected. Getting teachers to make their aims clear to their learners, and to communicate naturally and effectively with them has emerged as a major problem in our practical teaching sessions. As a result, we felt the need to tackle this problem and to try to find ways of making teachers aware of the importance of their use of language in the classroom.

To explore more closely what is meant by quality of interaction I found it useful to do a rough analysis of transcripts of lessons taught by the teachers in question. A random sample of lessons was examined to discover what kind of interaction was being produced by these teachers and what kinds of areas needed working on. These are the kinds of areas I looked at:

(i) Distribution of the talk: It is a simple matter to calculate the proportion of time spent talking by the teacher compared to that spent by the pupils.

(ii) Characteristics of the learner talk: Are learner utterances repetitions or learner-initiated? What proportion of learner utterances are in overlap with the teacher? What is the length of the learner utterances?

(iii) Characteristics of the learner talk: What kinds of questions are being asked by the teacher? Display/referential/thin-air etc. Does the teacher echo, answer own questions, babble, repeat, check learner comprehension, use foreigner talk? To what extent does the teacher rely on the LI? What variety of exchange structure is there in the lessons?

(iv) Other: Is there evidence of confusion on the part of the learners? Are there instances where learners fail to follow the teacher's logical steps?

A rough analysis of lesson transcripts revealed the following facts about classroom discourse: (N.B. These are facts not evaluations.)

(i) The distribution of talk in the classroom works out at an average ratio of between 3 and 4 to 1 in favour of the teacher (76% teacher talk versus

(ii) 22% of all pupil utterances are in overlap with the teacher.
(iii) Only 11.5% of pupil utterance are more than 3 words in length, the majority of pupil utterances are single words.

(iv) Only 1.5% of pupil utterances that are more than 3 words in length are not repetitions of something the teacher has said or from the text.

Other, more general, features of the discourse encountered in the transcripts were:

(i) Frequent repetition of short phrases and instruction by the teacher. This habit contributed to the amount of time spent talking by the teacher; may also be a possible source of confusion to the pupils.

(ii) Frequent use of coaxing and words of encouragement by the teacher.

(iii) Low level of challenge. Many of the questions posed by the teacher in the class are easy or obvious. Mind-engagement does not seem to enjoy high priority in the classroom.

(iv) The teacher echoes the majority of pupil responses.

(v) The pupils’ grasp of the teacher’s aims (or ‘logical step’) is often shaky.

(vi) The teacher often answers his own questions.

(vii) Instances of the teacher checking pupils’ comprehension are infrequent. This is also made more difficult by the low level of feedback the teacher receives as a result of his virtual monopolisation of classroom talking time.

(viii) There is little personalisation in the class. Many of the questions seem to be tokens rather than actual exploration or use of the pupils’ experience, and few of the exchanges can be said to represent attempts at communication.

(ix) There is little use of the LI in the classroom.

(x) Some typical examples of exchange structures found in the lessons are:

(a) $T: Q$  
(b) $T: Q$  
(c) $T: S + V + (e.g. ‘This is . . .

\[
\begin{align*}
P: A & \quad P: A \\
T: A & \quad T: A \\
T: A & \quad T: C
\end{align*}
\]

A REEL OF THREAD

\[\text{a reel of thread}\]

\[\text{a reel of thread’}\]

(d) $T: Q$  
(‘What’s this?  

\[
\begin{align*}
P: A & \quad \text{A PIECE OF CLOTH} \\
T: A & \quad \text{a piece of} \\
P: A & \quad \text{CLOTH} \\
T: A & \quad \text{cloth'}
\end{align*}
\]

(e) $T: Q$  
(e.g. ‘What colour

\[
\begin{align*}
P: A & \quad \text{PURPLE} \\
T: A & \quad \text{Purple +} \\
\text{encouragement} & \quad \text{Very good.’)
\end{align*}
\]
So, the picture we have here is of a very teacher-centred classroom with correspondingly low pupil initiative and activity verging on almost total paralysis. The atmosphere in the class can be said to be ‘soft’, with the teacher doing most of the work, making few demands on the pupils, and providing a supportive atmosphere and plenty of encouragement. There is a high level of discipline amongst the pupils. There seems to be little attempt at genuine dialogue between the teacher and the pupils, but the only very infrequent use of the LI and the large amount of teacher talk, however, do mean that pupils receive quite a lot of exposure to the L2.

This seems a far cry from the communicative ideals to which we have become accustomed in recent years, and the utility of such an analysis is that it can be used to give us an idea of the kind of input learners are being exposed to and the kind of areas which need working on and to try to improve the quality of that input. The next stage is to make explicit those criteria we are using to evaluate these instances of classroom discourse.

There follows a series of points which relate to quality of interaction and which may be considered a preliminary list from which criteria for evaluating teacher-pupil interaction could be developed. Let us consider them as pointers to the teacher’s communicative use of language.

To go back to our definition, then, quality of interaction refers to:

(i) *The Extent To Which The Interaction In The Classroom Is Natural*

This statement immediately begs the question: what do we mean by ‘natural’? The use of the word implies that there is some sort of model with which we can compare classroom discourse to decide the extent to which it is natural. The possible models are NS-NS, NS-NNS, an NNS-NNS, and while some work has been done in the comparison of classroom interaction and real world NS-NNS interaction (Long & Sato, 1983), we do not as yet have a way of deciding which model to choose and what the model might be like. Classroom discourse is of course idiosyncratic. It is affected by the role of the teacher, the limited linguistic proficiency of the learners, the fact that the teachers are NNS, by expectations set up in the minds of the participants by the prevailing culture of the classroom, and by the instructional techniques being used. What we have done is to note the ways in which the teacher-pupil interaction differs from an intuitive model of NS-NS interaction on the principle that the main aim of classroom instruction is to equip the learner to function in the real world. It therefore makes sense to try and reduce the artificiality of the classroom while at the same time recognising that it is impossible to eliminate it. We have thus noted the ways in which we feel the classroom interaction differs from NS-NS interaction and tried to give guidelines to teachers to make their dialogue with their pupils more natural. Among the characteristics of the teachers’ communication which seemed unnatural were: the high frequency of repetition, overlap between the teacher and pupil response, preoccupation of the teacher with domination of display questions, the teacher’s echoing of pupil responses, the
fact that all the exchanges are initiated by the teacher, the limited nature of the pupils’ responses.

(ii) The Extent To Which The Interaction Is Meaningful

Meaning is of course notoriously difficult to analyse, but we needed some way of assessing the teacher’s discourse for meaning. It is possible to isolate some characteristics of the discourse which relate to meaning in a useful way:

(a) Display vs Referential Questions: most studies of classroom discourse have found that display questions tend to far outnumber referential questions in the classroom. While it is clear that display questions have their uses, they are not meaningful communication. We are concerned, not with eliminating display questions from the classroom, but with trying to increase the proportion of referential questions. Display questions, which are unknown in NS-NNS conversation, do not invite the learner to respond at length, even less to initiate and to sustain interaction.

(b) Directed vs Thin-air questions: Many of the questions are thrown out into thin air rather than directed to individuals in the classroom. Teachers do not nominate people to respond. Questions should be directed, the teacher may first ask the class then a respondent may be nominated either from the volunteers or from the whole class.

(c) Response extension: the predominant exchange structure—initiation—response—follow-up—can be altered by extending the pupil response with further open questioning. Open questions give the learner the opportunity to sustain the interaction.

(d) Modification for comprehension: the instinct of many teachers when confronted with their pupils’ lack of understanding is to repeat. While this strategy may help in that it gives the learner more time to process the language, it is often not enough. Simplification or decomposition are needed in this case and can serve to maintain meaningful discourse.

(e) Transparency of aims: a common cause for confusion in the classroom is when the learners fail to make sense of the teachers aims behind what s/he is doing/saying, the extreme case of this being when teaching deteriorates into an elaborate and frustrating guessing game. The kinds of things a teacher has to make clear are whether a question is posed to practise form or for real communication, for classroom management, the purpose of an activity, instructions, how s/he is evaluating a pupil response—for form or content.

(f) Comprehension checking: there is a need to constantly check and monitor the comprehension of the pupils.
(iii) The Extent To Which Interaction Is Engaging

This refers to the capacity of the interaction to engage the minds of the learners. Level of challenge, variety of input, wait-time, relevance (to the content of the lesson and to the pupils themselves) are all aspects of engagement.

The problem we were then faced with was how to introduce these elements into our programme at the practical level. We needed some sort of language component which was not concerned with language competence as such, but with the teacher’s use of language in communication with the pupils and as a source of useful comprehensible input—in short language that could be used by the learners for the acquisition of language.

4. Implementation

So far then, I have briefly looked at the meaning and the place of theory in language teacher education and I have attempted to analyse the concept of quality of interaction. I have expressed the desire to find a mode of training which allows teachers to develop their own theories of teaching by theorising from the classroom, while at the same time raising their awareness of the importance of the teacher’s use of language.

In order to illustrate what this mode of training might be like in practice, I shall describe part of the practical component of an in-service course in which I have been involved in Sri Lanka, and which represents an initial attempt to put these ideas into practice.

The salient points of the programme are:

(i) Teachers begin by analysing transcripts of local lessons. They are asked to make judgements about the lessons in terms of both the procedural and the interactional aspects of teaching. This is a way of making their beliefs, assumptions, and theories of teaching and learning explicit. In order to ensure that we are using the teachers’ own views as the basis for discussion, they are not given any checklists or pre-imposed criteria at all. In this way they are able to observe and to discuss teaching freely.

The tutor’s role in this is to guide the group in the final stages of their discussion to produce a set of conclusions in the form of general teaching principles. Experience has shown that teachers’ perceptions of the lessons often focus on the quality of the interaction in the lessons as much as on points of procedure. As part of staff development for the course, tutors have participated in sessions on language awareness and they are also supplied with a list of aspects of quality of interaction similar to the list appearing in the previous section. These are not intended as a syllabus, but as a way of indicating the direction of the discussion or ‘ends-in-view’. This concludes the observation and discussion part of the process.

(ii) Teachers then prepare (in groups) and teach a short lesson which is observed by all and recorded. The focus of the lesson is one of the
standard microteaching skills on which they have been briefed by the tutors beforehand. The tutor’s role during the briefing is to elicit from the group a set of criteria for the skill with which to evaluate the lesson. The microteaching skills are the focus of the lessons because they are more easily trainable than interactional skills.

(iii) The lessons are then discussed in the light of the general teaching principles which were the product of the transcript analysis and the briefing criteria for the skill. Conclusions are noted down in a methodology work book and the process begins again. This concludes the teaching and discussion part of the process.

Here is an overview of the programme:

**PHASE 1**

**TRANSCRIPT ANALYSIS**

(6 lesson transcripts are available for discussion prior to microteaching)

**Important concepts and principles of teaching**

**PHASE 2**

The PROCEDURAL PHRASE:

**Micro-teaching**

**Step 1—THE BRIEFING:**

The lecturer briefs the teachers on the skill to be practised. Together they evolve criteria for the skill.

**Step 2—LESSON PREPARATION:**

The teachers prepare their lessons in groups.

**Step 3—THE TEACH:**

One teacher from each group teaches the lesson to pupils. The lesson is recorded using either video, audio, or pencil and paper techniques.

**Step 4—THE DISCUSSION:**

Each lesson is reconsidered by the group and discussed in terms of:

(i) The criteria for the skill

(ii) The transcript teaching principles

(iii) Alternatives

**Methodology Workbook:**

Teaching Principles and Assessed Lesson Reports

5. **Conclusion**

Ellis (1986) suggests that it is useful to distinguish between two types of teacher training practices: those which are experiential and which involve the trainee in actual teaching, and those which are awareness raising and which aim to
develop the trainee’s conscious understanding of the principles underlying EFL. In this paper, I have described a process which attempts to combine the two types of activity in the belief that changes in teaching behaviour are best brought about by changes in perception, which in turn are best achieved by a blend of observation, reflection, and action.

References


CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ACROSS LANGUAGES
AND ACROSS SECTORS OF EDUCATION

John L. Clark

Introduction
This paper is divided into three sections.

In the first section I attempt to define what I mean by curriculum and
curriculum development. In the second section I try to make out a case for
curriculum development across languages, rather than treating each language as
a separate unit. In the third section I discuss curriculum development across
sectors of education and across curricular functions.

Definitions
The term ‘curriculum’ is traditionally seen in one of two ways, either as a set of
planning blueprints for what is to happen in the classroom—a rhetorical
intention in the form of policy and syllabus documents, or more globally as
embracing the intentions, the processes involved in their realisation, and the
actual products. It is this second more global view that I wish to adopt. In this
view the curriculum covers language policy, aims and objectives, syllabus
content, resources, administrative arrangements concerning time and space,
classroom teaching and learning, assessment and examinations. The reason for
adopting this second wider view is clear if one accepts that the curriculum of a
particular educational system must be judged primarily in the light of what
happens in the classroom. The policy and planning documents are important in
shedding light on the matter, but it is the quality of the classroom process and
what happens as a result of this that matters.

By the term ‘curriculum development’ I mean all the various actions that
are involved in the bringing about of improvements to policies, syllabuses,
resources, classroom practices, assessment schemes and examinations, through
work in these areas, assisted by research and evaluation, and by pre-service and
in-service education and support.

Aim of the paper
This paper aims to set out the argument that if curriculum development in
languages is to be maximally effective, coherence needs be brought to the
exercise by seeing the various languages taught within the system as interlocking
parts, each bringing its own contribution to the whole. Equally, the various
curricular functions such as policy-making, syllabus design, assessment,
resource-creation, teaching and learning in the classroom, teacher education,
and research and evaluation need to be brought into a dynamic interactive
relationship rather than left to operate in relatively autonomous ways.
Current practices

Before exploring the argument, however, it is perhaps necessary to remind ourselves that educational systems as currently conceived tend to see each language as a separate unit, and each curricular function as relatively independent. Thus separate curriculum committees will be set up in Education Departments for each language with little overt concern for each other's work, examination syllabus committees likewise. Teacher training courses will run separate methodology courses for each language group, in-service courses likewise. At school level the departmental structure will be language-specific, and make it difficult for teachers of different languages to work together; and learners in the classroom will obtain little sense of common purpose from the disparate learning experiences they receive in different language classrooms.

Across sectors of education and across curricular functions there is also little attempt to create coherence. Syllabus-planning tends to go on without much regard to classroom reality, pre-service training is not linked to in-service education, methodologies propounded are not always in accord with examination priorities, research is often out of touch with the concerns of classroom teachers, and so forth.

The picture is all too frequently one of disjunction between languages, and of discontinuity across sectors of education and curricular functions.

It is against this backcloth that this paper attempts to make a case for a change in the way curriculum development in languages currently operates.

Curriculum development across languages

Let me start, then, by exploring why it seems important to engage in curriculum development across languages rather than in separate watertight compartments. I wish to explore this idea from several viewpoints—psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, educational, professional, and practical, each of which will be examined in turn.

The psycholinguistic dimension

From the psycholinguistic viewpoint, as Cummins (1986) among others has shown, it seems clear that the knowledge, skills, proficiencies, and awarenesses derived from earlier language learning have an enabling effect upon later learning. This is not only true within the learning of the same language, but has also been shown to be true across first and second languages. When learning a second language at school, learners are not starting from scratch. As Howatt (1979) puts it: 'They start from where they are, with what they have already experienced, and they move forward from there. They do not remetamorphose like quasi-chrysalids turning into new butterflies. They are butterflies already, learning how to fly in a different way.'
Vygotsky (1934) charts the development of the mother-tongue through initial social speech developed in interaction with parents and others in two rather different dimensions, as in the diagram below.

(Diagram taken from Howatt 1979).

In the first dimension mother-tongue learners simply extend the range of early interpersonal social communication, as they take on new roles, widen their networks of relationships and the contexts within which their social life develops. In this dimension language is learnt as an embedded component of whatever action or interaction is going on at the time. Hence the difficulty, when learning a second language in the classroom, of mastering the subtleties of interpersonal action-related language in circumstances in which real opportunities for this are limited. Situations have to be contrived through a theatrical metaphor involving the modelling of dialogues, role play and simulation. The result, as Prabhu (1987) indicates, is that classroom second language learners merely learn to ape such interpersonal interaction with borrowed words, rather than to create it for themselves. Hence the current universal phenomenon of learners unable to cope with situations for which they have not been carefully prepared.

Vygotsky’s second dimension, which is crucial to academic progress in school, is the dimension in which thought and language become intertwined, so that language plays a full enabling role in cognitive development, and in its turn deductive reasoning brings about language development. Vygotsky charts mother-tongue progress in this second dimension as moving initially from social speech to egocentric speech—the sort of ‘thinking aloud’ that very young children engage in when playing, fantasising and solving problems. For Vygotsky, this is a form of ‘thinking aloud’, which needs a fictional interlocutor at this age, but which eventually falls silent, as it turns into inner speech within the mind, and becomes that stream of consciousness which guides our daily thoughts and actions and predisposes us to see things in particular ways at particular times. Gradually this stream of consciousness becomes more
and more personalised, elliptical and implicit, as we make more and more shortcuts in the way we encode thought internally.

Through schooling the learner is then pressured into literacy which Vygotsky refers to as Written Speech. this, he says, involves a major deliberate and analytic effort to relate written images of sounds to sounds and their meanings. Whereas social speech develops quite naturally through egocentric speech to inner speech, given interaction with parents and others, the breakthrough to literacy involves deliberate teaching and learning. For the first time the child becomes aware of language as a phenomenon in its own right, frozen on a page and divided into units called words. Up until then language for the child has largely been a stream of continuous sound, embedded in the context of the various events with which it has been associated. Now it suddenly becomes an object of study divorced from the context in which the child finds himself.

To this picture of mother-tongue language development Howatt (1979) adds a further dimension, suggesting that the learning of a second language for older learners in the classroom is akin in certain respects to the development of Written Speech in the mother-tongue. It, too, is dependent, at the initial stages at least, upon the learner using the same sort of analytic capacity, as was required in early literacy, to relate sounds in the new language to an existing web of meaning developed through the mother-tongue. Eventually, of course, the second language learner has to learn to rework parts of the semantic space already encoded in the mother tongue to develop a second language lexicogrammar, through multiple encounters with the second language in different contexts. Howatt (1979) goes on to argue that second language learning might be seen as a mirror image of first language learning. He suggests that for adolescent and adult learners, who have achieved literacy, it is through Vygotsky’s second dimension (akin to Cummins’ cognitive/academic language proficiency area) that a second language might best be developed initially in the classroom. He argues that the exchange of substantive information, deriving from personal experience of the world, forms a better starting point for second language learning, than the learning of highly implicit social chat, inevitably divorced from the real action in which it would normally occur, however well such action may be theatrically simulated in the classroom. In other words Howatt argues for starting with the more context-reduced information-loaded function of speech and moving to the more context-embedded interpersonal ones, rather than vice-versa. The older second language learner would thus progress in the opposite direction to young mother-tongue learners. In Halliday’s terms the second language learner would start with the informational function of language, and work backwards towards the more context-embedded regulatory, instrumental, interactive, personal and heuristic functions (Halliday 1975). This would make sense in English classrooms in Hong Kong, if we accept Johnson’s (1987) two hypotheses—firstly that there is such a thing as Internationational English, which is not primarily an interpersonal social tool but one informational, transactional and problem-
solving purposes; and secondly that it is this that learners of English in schools in Hong Kong need to acquire.

To return to Vygotsky's theoretical framework of language development, however, Cummins (1986) has shown that learners are able to transfer the more cognitive academic skills underlying the use of language in Vygotsky's second dimension from one language to another. It is thus important to ensure that the cognitive academic proficiency stage in mother-tongue learning has been reached, before attempting to introduce cognitively demanding academic work through the medium of an embryonic second language. It is often failure to ensure this, in situations where a second language is used as the medium of instruction, that leads to educational failure. There are also, of course, deductive and negotiating skills, referred to as 'communicative strategies' by Canale and Swain (1980), whose use underlie language proficiency in both of Vygotsky's dimensions. These too can be transferred from one language to another.

It seems only sensible, then, from a psycholinguistic viewpoint to attempt to promote the development of language within the learner, through planning for this across languages, and above all across the mother tongue-second language divide, so that we can build upon the learner's language experience and awareness. We need to plan for an effective transfer of skills and awarenesses from one language to another, and avoid attempting to bring about learning outcomes that are likely to end in educational disadvantage or failure.

The sociolinguistic dimension

There are some very obvious sociolinguistic reasons why we need to engage in curriculum planning across languages. Here, we are on better-known ground, as it has been clear for some time that planning for language in education needs to take account of the various roles played by various languages in the life of the members of a particular society, so that the learners can be directed towards relevant learning outcomes in each language. We need to address questions like:

- which languages will learners need?
- what contexts will they need them in?
- who will they be expected to communicate with?
- for what purposes will they need each language?

A factor in Hong Kong, as elsewhere, that is worth observing, is that educationists need to be able to plan well in advance for the likely language demands of the future. Pupils in schools today will still be active in work in 2030 and beyond, and the school curriculum needs to take this into account. On the questions of which languages may be needed by then, one can hazard a few guesses. The political scene will have changed, and the role of Putonghua will have become more important. The commercial scene will also have changed, and it seems likely that such languages as Japanese, German and Spanish will have grown in importance. It is unlikely that countries using these languages as mother tongues, and others with powerful economies, will continue to favour
the use of English as a means of transacting their business, however logical it may seem for one language to be a commercial lingua franca between peoples of all nations. Languages lie too close to the heart for logic to have much say in the matter. The Germans have already made it quite clear that they prefer to do business in German, and French-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries also prefer to use their own language. Thus for commercial reasons it seems likely that a wider range of languages will be needed. On geographical grounds, there will be demands for more opportunities to learn the languages of nearby countries for leisure, commercial and other reasons. It is already a matter for some reflection that Australia, for example, has approx. 26 languages within its school system (excluding Aboriginal languages), while Hong Kong has only Chinese, English and a smattering of French, German and Japanese. Not all of the 26 languages in Australia are there because of migrant community pressure—some are deliberately encouraged on geographical, commercial and other grounds.

It is of course impossible for school systems to include all the languages its future citizens might need for personal, commercial, geographical, academic or other reasons, and it is therefore crucially important that the learning of a second language at school level should not be seen solely in terms of practical ends, whether these be in Vygotsky's first more social interpersonal dimension, or in his second more cognitive academic one. Second language learning in school needs also to be seen in terms of an apprenticeship in learning how to learn a second language, against the day when in later life further language learning demands are encountered. The experience of learning one second language is an important base from which to tackle the learning of others.

The educational dimension

I wish now to turn to an educational reason for promoting a cross-language view of curriculum development. In his seminal book Modern Languages in the Curriculum, in addition to setting out the apprenticeship view of school second language learning, to which I have just referred, Hawkins (1981) also highlights the importance of attempting to raise language awareness among school pupils, for two main reasons. The first is that language awareness, derived through experience of language and guided reflection upon it, has been shown to be an important factor in both successful mother-tongue development and second language learning. The second is that so many prejudices are associated with language, and so many myths have been spread about language learning, that it is only sensible to attempt to generate some wisdom in these areas at school level. Pupils learn about the physical world, the world of art, the world of nutrition, their historical world; they learn about their own body and its functions, why then do they not learn about the unique human characteristic of language? At present when they leave school, they know more about life in the dark ages, and how to bring about a nuclear explosion, than about how to promote the language and cognitive development of their own children in the home. Hawkins (1981) argues passionately and persuasively for a language
awareness component in the curriculum to unite the teaching of the mother-tongue and of second languages. Through this, he wishes, as he puts it, ‘to light fires of curiosity which will burn throughout the pupil’s life’ about the nature, role, and function of language.

What is true for pupils is equally true for teachers. They too need language awareness courses at training colleges. These should not be restricted to language teachers, but should be extended to teachers of all subjects, since as Halliday (1987) reminds us, all teachers are teachers of language.

The professional dimension

As a result of the rigid divisions existing between languages within educational systems, teachers of different languages have shown little concern for each other’s work. The emergence in Britain in recent years of the National Congress for Languages in Education has begun to dent this pattern, in so far as it has brought teachers of English as a mother-tongue, teachers of other mother-tongues in Britain, and teachers of second and foreign languages together to share information about common issues, about the principles upon which their work is based, about their various practices, and about language awareness as an element common to them all (I). The Council of Europe (1988) has also brought together applied linguists, educational administrators, teacher educators, and teachers across a wide variety of languages, and across a large number of European countries, to work together towards the creation and implementation of a more communicative approach to school second language learning.

Both of these ventures have proved useful, the Council of Europe’s work particularly so, at least at the language curriculum planning level. Syllabuses and examinations in countries as diverse as Portugal, Finland, Scotland, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and England have all benefitted in a directly visible way, though classroom practice has not evolved to any great extent yet. It is almost certain that by themselves, without the mutual exchange of information with others, each national system would have progressed more slowly, held back by the prejudices of one group or the parochialism of another. Similar cross-language curriculum development work has recently been started across the various states in Australia, through the work of the Australian Language Levels Project, which will, I hope, bear similar fruit (Australian Language Levels Project Documents 1988 forthcoming, Clark 1987: Chapter 7). From these various ventures and others, a greater professionalism among teachers of languages seems to be emerging, together with a greater sense of common purpose, despite the essential differences that will and should be embodied in specific language curricula, due to differences in aims and learning contexts.

The practical dimension

Finally, I wish to bring forward a very practical reason why curriculum development across languages makes sense. It is extremely economical in terms of effort, as well as being mutually enriching sharing of ideas.

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In the project in which I worked in Scotland, instead of having curriculum development groups separated by languages, the teachers chose to work in groups concerned with different curricular functions, and to integrate these by means of an overarching Modern Languages Advisory Committee (Clark 1987). Thus instead of having a French committee, a German committee, a Russian committee etc, they chose to set up a cross-language syllabus committee, a cross-language resources committee, a cross-language examination committee etc. There was a general sense of satisfaction at the quick progress that could be made in each committee, and at the exchange of ideas across languages.

As one teacher commented:

'The classroom has traditionally been too much of a closed shop, and too many teachers have been a slave to a particular course book. In-service curriculum work has helped me to have a much broader view of things'

Another teacher commented:

'Working with others from other language groups has been a positive experience, and the amount of work achieved has been more than ever I would have expected.'

It is too long a story to go into the ways in which each Committee progressed, but one example may help to highlight the economy of effort gained by cross-language work. In the committee responsible for resource creation, working from a common communication syllabus and a common framework for each language-specific syllabus, it became possible to work out activity-types for communication, and exercise-types for form-focussed work, common to all languages. This permitted resource-creation in each language to proceed in parallel. For example, using the Geddes & White (1978) concept of the semi-script, and the contemporary notion of a series of while-listening and post-listening tasks (Ur 1984), a common set of semi-scripts and tasks were prepared for a number of units of work. Listening cassettes were then created in 3 different languages on the basis of the same semi-scripts and tasks (Cumming M. 1986). The eventual publisher, Macmillan Education, was delighted to find that the same Pupil Book with the same tasks and support material could be used with three different audio-cassettes each for a different language.

In summary, then, there seem to me to be important psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, educational, professional and practical reasons why curriculum development across languages should be actively promoted.

Curriculum Development across Sectors of Education and Curricular functions

Turning now to my concern for curriculum development across sectors of education and across curricular functions, it would seem that the problem to be resolved here is less one of promoting a perception that integration is necessary, since this is generally agreed, as of suggesting a framework and a process of curriculum development which enables coordination to occur.
There are perhaps two basic ways of going about this, the more common of which is to adopt a ‘top-down’ process, in which government-appointed syllabus committees, examination boards and commercial materials-writers combine over time to create a new curriculum package from outside the classroom. In-service educators then train teachers to adopt it in the classroom. The other way is to adopt a ‘bottom-up’ process, in which teachers are supported to renew their own curriculum in the light of their own perceptions of what changes are required in the particular learning context in which they work.

The advantage of the ‘top-down’ approach is that it appears neat and tidy, can be controlled in terms of its rhetorical intentions by the government of the day, and can then be sold to the public. Its fundamental disadvantage is that it seldom works at the classroom level for a variety of reasons. Firstly, ‘top-down’ curriculum renewal tends to assume that the same new curriculum package will suit all classrooms, whereas it is clear that there are differences among teachers and learning groups, and between learning milieux, that make such an assumption untenable. Secondly, it is the common fate of top-down externally-imposed curriculum packages that various internal constraints reduce their effectiveness. Such things as an inimical classroom culture, uncooperative school principals, large class sizes, lack of resources, insufficient staff, timetable constraints and other factors frustrate the exercise. Thirdly, it is normal for teachers to remove all the innovatory parts from such new packages in order to make them conform to their own existing practices, rather than to attempt to work within the spirit of the whole. The teachers may not be persuaded of the virtues of the new package, or may not have been willing to internalise the new perceptions of the teaching/learning process that are embodied within it.

A ‘bottom-up’ approach to curriculum renewal would seem much more likely to succeed at the classroom level. This involves providing teachers with an accessible and permanently available support service, whose staff act as consultants providing information, or access to it, and as facilitators supplying the organisational requirements for teachers to meet together to analyse their own problems, discuss alternative solutions, implement them and evaluate the results in the light of their own classroom reality. Various formats for in-service support are required, each serving a somewhat different function. These range from the usual forms of in-service course provision, to secondments for individuals or groups of teachers over relatively lengthy periods of time to enquire into problems that have arisen in the classroom (cf Stenhouse 1979, Bickley 1986) or to create new curricular tools (Clark 1987), to school-based curriculum renewal (Skilbeck 1982). In the ‘bottom-up’ approach, curriculum renewal and teacher development become one and the same thing. As Rudd puts it:

'I regard it as axiomatic that the teacher who learns from his own experience understands in a way which is just not available to persons who merely try to follow the instructions of others... I see the local curriculum development
group as a setting within which teachers can become the willing agents of their own continuing professional education.’ (Rudd 1973)

In the real world of today, however, an unrestricted version of ‘bottom-up’ curriculum renewal is not going to be accepted by governments, however much educationists may propound its virtues. We are, whether we like it or not, in an age in which an element of ‘top-downedness’ is inevitable. Rather than resisting this, it seems more sensible for educationists to attempt to guide their political masters into forms of top-down intervention that provide a broad sense of direction, but that empower and enable teachers to work towards the renewal of their own classroom action in ways that give them a sense of ownership over their own curriculum. It is I believe when teachers feel this sense of ownership, and are consequently committed to what they are doing, that they are likely to be most effective.

It is thus to a fusion of ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ curriculum renewal that I believe we should look. In an attempt to see what this might mean in practice, I should like to refer very briefly to the work of the ALL (Australian Language Levels) Project in Australia, in which I was recently involved (Clark 1987: Chapter 7, Australian Language Levels Project Documents 1988 (forthcoming).

The ALL project team were charged by the Australian Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra to bring improvements to the teaching and learning of all languages other than English across the various states within the Australian educational system. This embraced the teaching and learning of traditional foreign languages such as French and German, of languages of geographical importance such as Indonesian and Japanese, and of the mother-tongues of those communities whose cultural heritage was mediated through languages other than English. These latter embraced Italian, Greek, Serbo-Croat, Vietnamese, Chinese, and of course Aboriginal languages.

Given this array of languages, and of learners at every point on the continuum from second language beginners to proficient mother-tongue speakers, it became essential to work at the level of principles underlying the creation or renewal of language curricula, rather than attempt to produce a model curriculum to suit all contexts.

Thus a framework for curriculum design, based on 3 dimensions of language use thought to be common to the concern of all general language learners was created, and a number of activity-types deriving from these was established, as was a framework of progressive interlocking stages. Principles for school language policy formulation, for syllabus-creation, for resources-production, for assessment, for teaching and learning, for evaluation and for teacher-generated curriculum renewal were also produced. It was made clear that while these principles were based on current perceptions, experiences and values, they were not to be seen as the tablets of the law, but rather as hypotheses to be tried out by those responsible for realising curriculum renewal at various levels.
The project documents will shortly be published by the CDC in Canberra. Teachers are to be encouraged with the assistance of their in-service consultants to engage in the process of renewing their own curriculum in groups, in the light of the project principles on the one hand, and of their own classroom reality on the other. There will thus be both a common sense of direction across languages, permitting coherence and comparability, and sufficient space for those in the classroom to work towards the renewal of their own curriculum according to their own context. This does, of course, place an enormous onus on the teachers to flesh out the details. Equally, it places a responsibility on the educational system to provide the means of effective in-service support whereby this can occur. Educational systems which seek to bring about change, however, must accept the responsibility for providing the resources and the means whereby change can be effected, if intention is not to remain mere rhetoric.

Conclusion

Working across languages, and across sectors of education, and integrating top-down and bottom-up curriculum renewal, would seem to me to be the best means to the most effective renewal of the language curriculum.

Note:

1. Various publications have emerged from the work of the National Congress on Languages in Education. Relevant to the discussion in this paper are the following:

   Language Awareness (ed. Donmall. G.)
   Issues in Language Education (ed. Davidson J. M. C.)
   The mother-tongue and other languages in education (ed. Perren G. E.)
   Foreign Languages in Education (ed. Perren G. E.)
   Minority community Languages in School (ed. Reid E.)

These are all published and distributed by the Centre for Information on Language Teaching, London.

References


AN ENGLISH COURSE FOR PRACTICE-ORIENTED ENGINEERS IN NON-NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING SINGAPORE

Lai Phooi Ching, Dorothy Cheung and Christine Lo

1. Background

Singapore is a multilingual and multicultural nation dependent on international trade and commerce as its lifeblood. Like most new states, Singapore depends on education to instill in its different peoples ‘national loyalty and to develop economic skills’ (Busch, 1974:16). To meet the country’s manpower needs, the educational system has undergone many changes, one of which is in the medium of instruction. Singapore now uses a non-native language—in this case English—as the medium of instruction because English has long been accepted as the lingua franca in administration, commerce and industry. English in Singapore is thus a ‘dominant language’ (Lee, 1983:63) in terms of its widespread use in the most important spheres of life rather than in terms of the number of speakers.

2. Problems

In the educational institutions, however, the linguistic competence of students cannot be assumed as in other countries where English is both the mother tongue and medium of instruction. At the tertiary level, for example, in one of the two universities, 50% of the students require upgrading in their linguistic competence in English (Lee, 1983). It has been claimed (see de Souza 1980) that this state of affairs is largely due to the Bilingual Policy in education.

Enforced for three decades now, the Bilingual Policy has undergone many changes too. Bilingualism in Singapore bears two peculiarities. Firstly, it refers to English and mother tongue, both serving rather utilitarian purposes, i.e. English for economic development and mother tongue for cultural presentation. Secondly, mother tongue refers to the language associated with one’s ethnicity rather than one’s first language learned as a child (Gopinathan, 1977). Coming from a Chinese home, one’s mother tongue is considered to be Mandarin; from Malay, Malay; and from Indian, Tamil. Mandarin, Malay and Tamil are thus the second languages taught in schools.

Since 70% of the people are Chinese most students today take an advanced-level paper in English known in schools as ‘the first language’ and Mandarin as ‘the second language’. The second language is set at a level two years lower than the first language. Faced with this learning situation, students not unexpectedly demonstrate difficulties in coping with the two noncognate languages.

Because the Chinese in Singapore are not linguistically a homogeneous people but speak many other Chinese languages other than Mandarin, the
government found that 64.4% of the Primary 1 students speak a home language different from the second language in 1980 (Straits Times, October 9, 1987). After successive campaigns to encourage the people to speak Mandarin, the figure dropped to 12.5% in 1987 (Table 38). But this still means that 12.5% of the students have to learn two new, noncognate languages in their first year(s) in school.

### Table 38

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dialect</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While many more are speaking Mandarin at home, it is English as the first language that has fallen in its standard. English seems to be difficult to master, the students’ low competence contributing to a high failure rate and in turn, a high dropout rate. Only 40% passed the advanced-level English in their last year of high school while twice that passed their second language whether Mandarin; Malay or Tamil, leading a high ranking government official to conclude that ‘the real problem for the majority is English as a first language’ (Straits Times, December 3, 1982).

Framed against this background, this paper will describe how a Communication skills (CS) course for engineering undergraduates at the Nanyang Technological Institute (NTI) has been designed to meet the English language needs of the students and the demands made upon them by industry to put English to communicative use. The findings of a needs-analysis survey of 672 engineers from industry and recent graduates will be discussed to justify the course design model and the discipline-integrated approach adopted by the writers.

### 3. Solution

In many universities where students need upgrading in English, the language curriculum is geared toward helping them solve their language problems. Such problems stem from students’ inability to obtain relevant skills of reading, writing and speaking, thereby preventing them from participating fully in the academic environments. However, educators have recognised that a language programme for undergraduates should also be tied to their future profession.
This means that students can put the language to use in the communication tasks that await them at work. At NTI, the CS lecturers have chosen to concentrate on building students’ communicative competence rather than grammatical excellence. Several reasons account for their having reached this decision.

Rationale

NTI, until June 1987 when the School of Accountancy moved in, has been an engineering institute. Undergraduates come to NTI after a year at the National University of Singapore where linguistically weaker students are given a year-long course in remedial English specifically to address their language problems. At NTI, students are streamed into three schools, i.e. Civil and Structural Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Mechanical and Production Engineering. The emphasis of the education here is ‘practice-oriented’, i.e. students learn not only the theory but also engineering practice. The skills NTI’s graduates obtain are ‘relevant and of immediate use to the country’ (Straits Times, November 30, 1985).

(i) Singapore has some features of an LI situation in that English is the medium of instruction in the schools, colleges and tertiary institutions. Generally our students have acquired the rules of syntax and sentence structures. Therefore the CS course could concern itself with how to achieve greater efficiency in communication in the areas of science, technology and management.

(ii) In the schools, the language curriculum focuses on the general proficiency courses; therefore, at the tertiary level, the focus should be on the more career-oriented proficiency courses. This is in keeping with both NTI’s philosophy of a practice-oriented curriculum and the objective of the Bilingual Policy in Singapore viz, making English the lingua franca in the domains of education, employment and government.

(iii) Though many of our students lack native-speaker proficiency in English, to continue focussing on mere linguistic competence and grammatical correctness at the tertiary level would be counter-productive in terms of student motivation.

While the CS course focuses on skills in practice, the language component is not totally neglected. However, it is more discriminating in selecting only those language items that are genre specific to the various fields of Engineering.

4. The NTI Experience

NTI is committed to a language course that caters to the students’ academic and professional development. This is reflected in its course design which is based on a target-centred model and in a discipline-integrated approach which integrates the CS course into the engineering curriculum.
4.1 Target-Centred Course Design Model

The characteristics of such a model are:

(i) A target-centred course emphasises skills in practice rather than a corporate body of linguistic knowledge. The course is not based on features of language derived from the analysis of the so-called register of Engineering English, instead the students learn how to achieve communicative competence by for example, learning the strategies and techniques of the communication process, and how to assimilate, re-formulate and disseminate that information in their roles as professional engineers.

(ii) It works from an analysis of the needs of academic institutions, industry and the profession first and foremost rather than the needs of the learners which is the norm in most ESP courses. The input of information from these user institutions is then processed.

(iii) There are three main stages involved in processing the input received about the needs of the user institutions. Fig 21 shows how these sources work together to shape the CS syllabus.
Figure 21
Course Design Model

Stage 1
Information Source
Professional Societies, Engineering Institute

Stage 2
Processing Information
Survey: Interview, Questionnaire
Identification of communicative events
Analysis
Needs of Profession

Stage 3
Other Similar Courses
Taxonomy of Target Skills
Selection
Feedback thro' discussion, evaluation
Recognition of Constraints
Learners, Graduates
Content: Not in use now

Content for Syllabus
Colleagues: engineering, language
Practising Professionals
Stages Involved

Stage 1: Identification of Needs of User Institution

The recommendations of and feedback from professional bodies and engineering consultants help to identify the course objectives.

Stage 2: Analysis to derive a taxonomy of target skills

At this stage, the task is to analyse the type of communicative tasks students are required to do. At NTI the input came from two major sources: our engineering colleagues (especially the part-time adjunct staff who are practising engineers) who bring with them an intimate knowledge of engineering practice in industries as well as written communication samples like project reports, memos, letters, etc.

Stage 3: Selection of skills for syllabus

To decide on what skills to select and their attendant emphases requires information and feedback from colleagues, students and graduates. From colleagues, feedback comes from discussions or from working together in assessing students’ performances in some of the oral and written tasks which have an important communication skills component, e.g. students’ oral technical presentations. Feedback from students come from structured ways like administering course evaluations at the end of the course. Feedback from the recent graduates was also obtained in the needs survey recently conducted by the writers.

4.2 The Discipline—Integrated Approach

In this approach, the Communication Skills course is an integral part of the engineering curriculum: it is taught as a professional course to complement the engineer’s professional training. At NTI, this is reflected in the administrative set-up in terms of curriculum time, resources and teaching staff; and in the methodology adopted for the teaching of this course.

Unlike the normal language unit set-up where the staff members service the different departments or schools in providing language courses, the Communication Skills lecturers at NTI, who are specialists in either Applied Linguistics or ELT/ESP, are part and parcel of the academic staff of the Schools of Engineering to which they have been appointed. They take part fully in the activities of their school and are therefore totally immersed in the milieu of the discipline. Working together and interacting with their engineering counterparts are a natural outcome. The equal status accorded to the CS lecturers also enhances the building of mutual and professional respect. Thus ideas, information and feedback can be exchanged freely.

The engineering staff participate in the course as specialist informants; at times they also collaborate with the CS staff in doing some team-teaching for certain topics in the course. The engineering staff members provide valuable
input in terms of the content and context for the language activities. The CS staff, on the other hand, are assigned tasks for the schools’ specialist courses like drawing up guidelines for laboratory and final year projects, evaluating together with the subject specialists the students’ oral presentations of their technical projects, or actively participating in the training of the business or communication aspects of the schools’ professional training programme.

The methodology adopted in the classroom is to divide the skills into modules. Each module centres on one of the macro tasks identified as important to the students. For example, in the module on job applications, the micro tasks drawn up for students’ practice are writing a curriculum vitae and the covering letter, participating in simulated job interviews with the engineering staff members playing the role of interviewers.

The language part is not ignored. For example, in the job application module, students analyse a few authentic job advertisements. In the light of the analyses, they discuss the appropriacy of organisation of the content and effective use of language in writing the application letters.

5. Needs Analysis Survey

The purpose of this survey was to find out the types of communicative tasks NTT’s graduates will have to perform in their first five years of work. Of those surveyed, 375 were engineers who graduated in 1985 and 1986 (G), and 297 practising engineers (E) from industry who are supervising or have supervised NTT graduates. The responses were used to identify the needs of the user institutions, which in turn should shape the CS course at NTT.

5.1 Findings

Given the four skills, Interpersonal, Reading, Speaking and Writing (I, R, S, W), the two groups were similar in their ranking of these skills. Most of the respondents ranked I as the most important and R as the least (Table 39). Possibly both groups saw engineering as more numerical and technical than literal, hence their ranking of R as least important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This ranking is related to the frequency of the various communicative tasks used in the course of work (Table 40). On a daily basis, 85% of the respondents use the phone, while 45% read for information and 4.6% make oral presentation.
Table 40
Frequency score in the use of the different Communication Media in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th></th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with superiors</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with subordinates</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with others outside</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading for information</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Oral Presentations</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoranda</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telex</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given 18 subskills, the respondents found problems most frequently occurring in I and least in R. However, graduates found S more problematic than W. They also rated the subskills more problematic on the whole than did the engineers (Table 41).

Table 41
Total of Mean and Ranking of Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total of Mean</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In ranking the 18 subskills in the four areas, the two groups agreed much in what they found were least problematic. However, there was little agreement in the most problematic (Table 41). Engineers stressed writing problems which did not bother graduates as much as Speaking and Interpersonal ones. Only in one subskill, i.e. explaining logically, did both groups agree.
Table 42
The most and least problematic subskills
(in descending order of importance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Engineers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Most Problematic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Explain logically (S)</td>
<td>1. Write clearly &amp; write concisely (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assert oneself (I)</td>
<td>2. Work in a team (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Handle unpleasant situations (I)</td>
<td>3. Explain logically (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Argue persuasively (S)</td>
<td>4. Write grammatically (W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Speak fluently (S)</td>
<td>5. Speak fluently (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The least Problematic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Speak before audience (S)</td>
<td>1. Read at different speeds (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use punctuation (W)</td>
<td>2. Speak before audience (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Distinguish facts (R)</td>
<td>3. Extract information (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Read at different speeds (R)</td>
<td>4. Distinguish main ideas from details (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Distinguish main ideas from details (R)</td>
<td>5. Distinguish facts from opinion (R)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Discussion

For an engineer in his first five years of work, it is not his technical knowledge nor his proficiency in English which is problematic but his communicative skills. The findings of this needs analysis survey attest to this fact.

Frequency of communicative tasks influenced the way respondents ranked the importance of the four skills. Familiarity with such tasks, at least on the part of the graduates, influenced the ranking of the problematic subskills. The graduates' concern with S & I skills probably reflect their coming to grips with the transition from academia, where writing and reading were familiar tasks, to real world working where interaction and speaking skills precede.

6. Conclusion

From the needs analysis, our graduates and practising engineers from industry have indicated the problems in developing communicative strategies and putting the English Language to communicative use in the work situation. Another significant finding of our needs analysis is that our engineers are not too concerned about grammatical accuracy nor in achieving linguistic excellence. Since the English taught in schools does not prepare them for the
communicative demands made upon them by industry, and since English is the
lingua franca in business, commerce and government in Singapore, the primary
objective of an English-based course at the tertiary level should be skills-linked
and one that enhances the communicative competence of the learners. We
believe the CS course at NTI meets this objective.

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