

Edited by Vivian Cook and Li Wei

Contemporary Applied Linguistics

Language Teaching and Learning

Volume 1



CONTEMPORARY APPLIED LINGUISTICS
VOLUME 1 LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Introduction: Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching in the Twenty-first Century

Vivian Cook and Li Wei

1 General Background

Since the days of Pit Corder, the founding father of British applied linguistics in the 1950s, the discipline of applied linguistics has been usually described as ‘The theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue’ (Brumfit, 1995: 27). Similarly the members of the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAL) ‘promote principled approaches to language-related concerns’. The International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) proclaims:

applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field of research and practice dealing with practical problems of language and communication that can be identified, analysed or solved by applying available theories, methods or results of Linguistics or by developing new theoretical and methodological frameworks in Linguistics to work on these problems. (AILA, 2009)

The AILA definition is both broader in including more areas and narrower in relating applied linguistics to linguistics proper. If you have a problem with language, send for an applied linguist.

The broad definition of applied linguistics as problem-solving was certainly true in its early days. Definitions of applied linguistics now are more like lists of the areas that make it up. The Cambridge AILA 1969 Congress encompassed first language acquisition, computational linguistics, forensic linguistics, speech therapy, neurolinguistics, second language acquisition research, and a host more. Gradually many areas have declared unilateral independence from applied linguistics; first language acquisition research soon disappeared from the fold to found its own organizations, conferences and journals, as did much second language acquisition research slightly later. Applied linguistics gatherings these days are far less inclusive, though there is a growth in the Research Networks such as Multilingualism: Acquisition and Use. The AILA Congress in 2008 had 9 papers on first language acquisition compared with 161 on second language acquisition and 138 on foreign language teaching; computational linguistics and forensic linguistics were no longer on the programme, though new areas like multilingualism have been introduced. Professional organizations for applied linguistics are now

more like umbrella organizations, on the lines of the British Association in science, that meet occasionally to bring together people whose main academic life takes place within more specialist organizations; most second language acquisition researchers for instance tend to go to conferences of the European Second Language Association (EUROSLA), International Symposia on Bilingualism, Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition (GASLA), or the International Association for Multilingualism, not to conferences named applied linguistics. Professional applied linguistics is now a fairly restricted area. Most practitioners probably style themselves primarily as SLA researchers, discourse analysts and the like, rather than seeing applied linguistics as their major avocation. Journals too reflect this tendency with say the *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* showing the same kind of agenda as the AILA congress, while *Language Learning*, originally an applied linguistics journal, is now primarily concerned with psychological approaches to second language acquisition, having dropped applied linguistics from its subtitle.

The term 'problem' does, however, raise issues of its own. In one sense it means a research question posed in a particular discipline; in another sense it is something that has gone wrong which can be solved. Talking about the problem of multilingualism, say, is ambiguous between defining it as a research area and claiming that it is in some way defective. Calling areas 'problems' fosters the attitude that there is something wrong with them. Bilingualism is no more intrinsically a problem to be solved than is monolingualism. Applied linguists have to be clear that they are solving problems within an area of language acquisition or use, not regarding the area itself as a problem except in the research question sense. Language teaching is not itself a problem to be solved; it may nevertheless raise problems that applied linguists can resolve.

A perpetual controversy has surrounded the relationship of linguistics to applied linguistics. Despite AILA's fond belief that linguistics is the core, many feel linguistics is only one of the contributing disciplines. Applied linguists have explored psychological models such as declarative/procedural memory and emergentism, mathematical models such as dynamic systems theory or chaos theory, early Soviet theories of child development such as Vygotsky, French thinkers such as Foucault and Bourdieu – nothing seems excluded. Contemporary applied linguists feel free to draw on almost any field of human knowledge; the authors in the present book for instance use ideas from philosophy, education, sociology, feminism, Marxism, Conversation Analysis and media studies, to take a small sample. David Block in this volume (p. 229) calls applied linguistics 'an amalgam of research interests'. The question is whether applied linguists have the polymathic ability to carry out such an amalgamation of diverse disciplines, or indeed diverse approaches within these disciplines, when the disciplines themselves are incapable of making this synthesis. It seems inherently unsafe or indeed arrogant when the applied linguist redefines the human mind, human language or language learning to suit the needs of an applied linguistic problem.

Linguistics nowadays plays a minimal role in applied linguistics whether in terms of current linguistic theories or descriptive tools. Linguistic theories of the past

twenty years are barely mentioned by applied linguists. With the exception of Chomsky and to some extent Jackendoff, the theories come from postmodernism, psychology or sociology rather than linguistics. Indeed some practitioners radiate hostility towards linguistics, preferring to draw on almost any other area. One cause may be that the enthusiastic selling of the 1980s generative model by its supporters led to the view that linguistics has nothing practical to contribute and to a lack of interest in the many other approaches to linguistics practised today, say the recent developments in phonetics and phonology.

In a well-regarded book representative of the field called *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, the author announces ‘The book . . . will not be concerned with . . . language data, unless it is submitted to non-linguistic analysis’ (Dörnyei, 2007: 19). In the west London suburb of Ealing there was a highly successful shop in the 1960s called the *Confiserie Française* (French cake shop), which in fact sold toys. The reason was a clause in its lease that prevented the new owners from changing the name. If language disappears from applied linguistic research, the applied linguistics shop is selling toys. It should relabel itself as teaching methodology or applied sociology or whichever discipline it uses as its source.

So what problems does applied linguistics solve? If you are worried about your child’s speech, you are more likely to go to a speech therapist than to an applied linguist. If your country is torn by civil war between people who use two scripts, you ask for a United Nations Peacekeeping Force. If you are drafting a new law, you go to a constitutional lawyer or a civil servant. The problem-solving successes of applied linguistics have included devising orthographies for languages that have no written form and inventing simplified languages for mariners; applied linguists have played a part in EU projects on translation and on linguistic diversity. Most successes have, however, had to do with language teaching, such as the syllabuses and methods that swept the world from the 1970s onwards, particularly associated with the Council of Europe.

At a general level we can draw three implications from this. Needless to say, these personal interpretations are not necessarily shared by all the contributors.

- (1) *The applied linguist is a Jack of all trades.* Real-world language problems can seldom be resolved by looking at a single aspect of language. Since applied linguistics is interdisciplinary, the applied linguist is expected to know a little about many areas, not only of language, but also of philosophy, sociology, computer programming, experimental design and many more. In a sense, applied linguists are not only Jack of all trades but also master of none as they do not require the in-depth knowledge of the specialist so much as the ability to filter out ideas relevant to their concerns. An applied linguist who only does syntax or discourse analysis is an applied syntactician or an applied discourse analyst, not a member of the multidisciplinary applied linguistics profession. In other words multidisciplinary applies not just to the discipline as a whole but also to the individual practitioner.
- (2) *The applied linguist is a go-between, not an enforcer, a servant, not a master.* The problems that applied linguistics can deal with are complex and multi-facet-

ted. As consultants to other people, applied linguists can contribute their own interpretation and advice. But that is all. The client has to weigh in the balance all the other factors and decide on the solution. Rather than saying 'You should follow this way of language teaching', the applied linguist's advice is 'You could try this way of language teaching and see whether it works for you.' Alternatively the applied linguist should be responding to problems put forward by language teachers, not predetermining what the problems are; the applied linguist is there to serve teacher's needs, a garage mechanic interpreting the customer's vague idea of what is wrong with their car and putting it right, rather than a car designer.

- (3) *Sheer description of any area of language is not applied linguistics as such but descriptive linguistics.* Some areas concerned with the description of language are regarded as applied linguistics, others are not. Make a corpus analysis of an area or carry out a Conversation Analysis and you're doing applied linguistics; describe children's language or vocabulary and it's first language acquisition; make a description of grammar and you're doing syntax. Overall making a description is not in itself solving a problem, even if it may contribute to the solution.

Outside language teaching, applied linguists have taken important roles behind the scenes as advisors to diverse governmental and EU bodies, for example Hugo Baetens Beardsmore's work with bilingualism. But they have had little impact on public debate or decision-making for most language problems, the honourable exceptions being the work of David Crystal and Debbie Cameron, whom many might not consider primarily as applied linguists. Problems are not solved by talking about them at applied linguistics conferences; the solutions have to be taken out into the world to the language users. Take the political correctness issue of avoiding certain terms for reasons of sexism, racism and so on. This is based on one interpretation of the relationship between language and thinking: not having a word means you can't have the concept, as George Orwell suggested with Newspeak. Yet applied linguists have been reluctant to contribute their expertise to this debate, despite the extensive research into linguistic relativity of the past decade. Public discussion of language issues is as ill-informed about language as it was fifty years ago at the dawn of applied linguistics.

A recent theatre piece by the Canadian director Robert Le Page called *Lipsynch* was crucially concerned with language. The dialogue took place in three languages with the aid of subtitling running along the front of the stage; it took for granted the multilingualism of the modern world. The heroine was attempting to recover the voice of her father who had died when she was young. All she had was a silent home movie. So she engaged a lip-reader to find out the words, then a lipsynch actor to read them in alternative voices till she recognized her father's. This didn't work until she herself uttered her father's words. In another scene an elderly aphasic patient delivered a monologue, judging by audience reaction the first time that most of them had encountered this kind of discourse. At a dinner-party, film actors and agents attempted to converse simultaneously in three languages, to comic

effect. *Lipsynch* movingly showed the importance of language to people's lives and the language problems they encountered.

As this reminds us, language is at the core of human activity. Applied linguistics needs to take itself seriously as a central discipline in the language sciences dealing with real problems. Applied linguistics has the potential to make a difference.

2 The Applied Linguistics of Language Teaching

This volume attempts to reassert the importance of the applied linguistics of language teaching. It assumes that the unique selling point of applied linguistics that distinguishes it from the many domains and sub-domains of psychology, education and language teaching is language. At its core it needs a coherent theory of language, whether this comes from linguistics or from some other discipline, a set of rigorous descriptive tools to handle language, and a body of research relevant to language teaching.

This is not to say that the language element has to dominate or that linguistics itself has to feature at all but that it does not count as applied linguistics of language teaching:

1. *If there is no language element.* This does not mean it could not justifiably be studied as language teaching methodology, applied psychology and so on. But why call it applied linguistics if there is no language content?
2. *If the language elements are handled without any theory of language.* The theory of language does not need to come from linguistics but might be philosophy or literary theory: crucially applied linguistics cannot treat language as if there were no traditions of language study whatsoever. Nor can the methods of language description be based solely on folk ideas from the school tradition of grammar or the practical EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching tradition, which would be rather like basing physics on alchemy or folk beliefs. Doubtless some aspects of these may be interpreted in a more up-to-date and scientific fashion, but this applies equally to alchemy.
3. *If the research base is neither directly concerned with language teaching nor related to it in a demonstrable way.* That is to say, a theory from outside language teaching cannot be applied without a clear chain of logic showing how and why it is relevant. An idea from mathematical theory, computer simulation or first language acquisition needs to show its credentials by proving its link to second language teaching through L2 evidence and argument, not imposing itself by fiat, by analogy, or by sheer computer modelling. If one were, say, to adopt knitting theory as a foundation for the applied linguistics of language teaching, one would need to demonstrate how warp and weft account for the basic phenomena of language acquisition and use by showing empirical evidence of their applicability to second language acquisition.

Over the years the applied linguistics of language teaching has had its most important relationships with linguistics and psychology. Applied linguists have

designed syllabuses and tests used around the world; some have ventured into coursebook writing. Most of this has been based on general ideas about language learning, going from the early influence of structuralism and behaviourism that led to the audiolingual teaching method, the influence of Chomskyan ideas about the independence of the learner's language and of social arguments by Dell Hymes that jointly led to the communicative syllabus and communicative language teaching, and the wave of cognitivism in psychology that contributed to task-based learning. By and large this has been application at a general level, not based on detailed findings about second language acquisition. It is hard to find teaching drawing on, say, specific information about sequence of phonological acquisition or studies of learners' errors.

The dangers with this have been twofold. One is that for many years it was assumed that the implementation of language teaching ideas was universally beneficial; the applied linguist's hired gun was on the side of the goodies. But it became clear that many changes in language teaching methodology were not culturally, politically or morally neutral. Communicative methodology for instance required a classroom where the teacher was an organizer rather than an authority. In countries where teachers are treated as wise elders who know best, the image of the teacher as friendly helper ran counter to the students' beliefs. So language teachers became proselytes for Western individualistic views, not seeing themselves as serving the students within their own cultural situations for their own ends but as converting them to another role. As a Chinese minister said, 'For English language teaching in China we need a method that is Chinese.' The types of language teaching advocated by applied linguists then commonly incorporated Western values rather than being culturally neutral, if such neutrality were even possible.

Alongside this cultural bias came a growing realization that language teaching was inherently to do with power and politics. The choice of language to be taught was one issue: why choose say French as the language to be taught in English schools? Choosing a language because of its international currency reinforced the language power structure of the globe, adding to the power of ex-colonial languages like English and Spanish or of religion-linked languages like Arabic and Hebrew. Spreading English to the world may provide a neutral lingua franca for the world to use or it may impose the hegemony of a hypercentral language on the world if it fails to detach itself from the power of the native speaker.

The choice of the native speaker as the target of language teaching has indeed become increasingly problematic. On the one hand it was a matter of which native speaker: why were dialect speakers in one country excluded, say Geordies or Glaswegians? Why were alternative standard languages across the world excluded, say Singapore English or Indian English? Clearly the choice of which native speaker to use was based more on status and on power than on objective criteria, such as number of speakers or ease of learning.

On the other hand it was a matter of the value of monolingual native speakers. If your goal is to speak English to other people who are not native speakers of English, what has the native speaker got to do with it? While there is an argument

for a form of English that ensures mutual comprehensibility, this does not necessarily imply a status native speaker variety. The overwhelming importance of the native speaker in language teaching has taken away the rights of people to speak like themselves and to express their own identities as multilinguals; Geordies or Texans can show with every word they utter that they come from Newcastle or Houston; Frenchmen must try to avoid any sign in English that they come from France. Hence applied linguistics has had to enter a harsher world where the value of language teaching cannot be taken for granted as it may be a way of establishing or reinforcing a subordinate status in the world.

The other main danger is that applied linguistics may be losing contact with actual teaching and so giving up much of its impact. The interest in theories from different disciplines among applied linguists means that what they are saying gets further and further from answering the teacher's question 'What do I do with my class of 14-year-olds learning French next Monday at 10 o'clock?' One obvious retort is that it is not the applied linguists' job to provide detailed advice of this kind since they do not know the specifics of any teacher's classroom and should not over-ride the teacher's feel for the complexity of their situation and the needs of their students; at best applied linguists can provide general guidance on which teachers can draw for their specific teaching situations.

But, as Michael Swan's contribution to this volume illustrates, the applied linguist still tends to impose theory-based solutions that ignore the reality that teachers face in the classroom and that are unsubstantiated by an adequate body of pertinent research evidence. The implication is still that their recommendations, currently say task-based learning and negotiation for meaning, should apply to the whole of language teaching rather than to the limited area and specific cultural context that is their proper concern. In the audiolingual teaching method of the 1960s, a crucial phase was exploitation; you teach the structure and vocabulary through dialogues and drills and then you get the students to make them their own through role-plays, games and the like: 'Some provision will be made for the students to apply what they have learnt in a structured communication situation' (Rivers, 1964). The language teaching methods advocated by applied linguists such as communicative language teaching and task-based learning have been a great help in developing exploitation exercises. But, as Michael Swan points out, to exploit something it has to be there in the first place; you can't do the communicative activities or the tasks without having the basic vocabulary, syntax and phonology to draw on: communicative language teaching and task-based learning presuppose a prior knowledge of some language. The crucial question for language teachers is how to prime the pump sufficiently for the communicative and task-based activities to take place. Applied linguists have never solved the problem of bootstrapping posed by Steven Pinker many years ago: how does the child get the initial knowledge that is necessary for acquiring the rest of the language? So applied linguistics has concerned itself with the analysis and frequency of vocabulary but has seldom described the teaching techniques through which new vocabulary can be taught. If you want to find out about the techniques for teaching new elements of language, you have to turn to the teacher-training

tradition such as Ur (1996) and Harmer (2007), not to books written by applied linguists. Just as applied linguists used to lament that linguistics had become too rarefied for any application, so applied linguistics is becoming too rarefied for language teaching.

3 This Volume: Individuals Looking to the Future

This volume is then intended to show the importance of the contribution that applied linguistics can make to language teaching. It does not start from some currently fashionable method but from the overall purpose of language teaching and the implications of general ideas of language. The contributions do not resemble the genre of book currently called handbooks, which mostly have state-of-the-art surveys of the field or histories of past achievements. Rather the contributors here are individuals laying out their ideas of a future for language teaching.

The volume starts with three chapters that try to base twenty-first century language teaching on sound ideas about how people learn a second language. Macaro makes suggestions for strategies-based intervention in language teaching based on the new revitalization of the learning strategies field. Building on the emerging consensus about non-native speaker teachers, Llurda argues for a rebalancing of the roles of native and non-native speaker teachers. Cook applies the multi-competence approach to suggest that teaching has to recognize the diversity of groups of second language users.

The next three chapters (4–6) are concerned more with the classroom. Pica presents the case for language-focused content-based tasks, illustrated with classroom examples. Nation examines the advantages of simplified vocabulary in language teaching through the lens of simplified readers. Swan appeals for applied linguists to look at language itself and not to abrogate the distinctive skills of the course-writer.

Two chapters (7–8) look at the nature of the second language user. Han proposes a mathematical model to account for ‘fossilized’ learners who never pass beyond a particular stage of acquisition. Dewaele argues for multiple approaches to learner factors rather than an analysis based only on quantity.

The final four chapters (9–12) adopt more theoretical perspectives. Byram looks to a future of intercultural citizenship within the history of modern language education culminating in the Common European Framework. Block puts identity research on a firm post-structural concept of interaction, balancing the social with the psychological. Kramsch applies the concept of thirdness, which refuses to treat the world as a series of dualities, to yield people who can operate between two languages. Kelly Hall shows how the concept of discursive practice leads to a classroom rooted in social activity.

These thumbnail sketches do no justice to the richness and scope of the contributions. These chapters stimulate because of the strength of their individual views of language teaching from an applied linguistic perspective; contrast the optimism of Byram about multilingualism in Europe with the Emperor’s Clothes views of

recent language teaching methods by Swan. These are very much individuals looking to build the future of language teaching grounded on a solid concept of language in applied linguistics, united by a common belief in the importance of multilingualism to individuals and to societies.

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CHAPTER

1

Developments in Language Learner Strategies

Ernesto Macaro

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by exploring the origins of language learner strategies (LLS). It describes a historical shift of interest, by researchers, towards the language learner rather than the teacher or the method, and examines the changes in conceptualizations of language competence and language learning.

The chapter then documents the developments that have taken place since the mid-1970s in the way that researchers have defined LLS, in the way that they have gone about their research, and how they have categorized LLS.

Next the chapter explores the relationship between how successful and unsuccessful learners have been conceptualized in the LLS literature and the implications this has for the role that strategic behaviour plays in successful learning. These implications also impact on the approaches adopted with regard to implementing a programme of strategy instruction.

Lastly, the chapter attempts to summarize the research evidence in LLS, and proposes solutions to some of the theoretical and methodological problems.

In this chapter I have tried, in order to facilitate the flow of the argument, to keep referencing on LLS research to a minimum, given the huge output in this research area. For a highly comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography of strategy theorizing and of empirical research, readers should turn to Cohen and Macaro (2007).

1.2 The Origins of Language Learner Strategies

If we delve back into the history of research in second language acquisition (SLA), we can detect two lines of development that appear to converge at the birth of LLS research. The first is a line which starts with a shift in researchers' attention away from the teacher and from the method of teaching. The second was a gradual change in the beliefs of researchers, practitioners and policy makers of what learning a language was actually all about. We will look briefly at both these lines of development.

1.2.1 Rejoice: The 'Good Language Learner' is Born!

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a gradual shift became apparent in researcher attention away from the teacher and his/her method of teaching to the learner and his/her learning outcomes and behaviour. This shift in attention occurred because there developed a disillusionment with the potential of teacher-focused or method-focused research to provide answers to why some learners learnt languages better than others. Thus, if the answer was not in the behaviour of the teacher, nor the method that s/he was using, an answer might reside in the learners themselves. Researchers therefore began to focus their attention on groups of learners and, increasingly, the individual learner.

This shift in focus was boosted by evidence available from first language studies which showed that young children appeared to progress systematically through a series of stages in the acquisition and development process, from their first non-verbal communications to mastery of the spoken language. The temptation to transfer this body of knowledge to the L2 domain became irresistible. However, it soon became apparent that the SLA phenomenon was extremely complex. On the one hand, the hypothesis that L2 learners also went through a number of recognizable stages in the development of their morpho-syntax, regardless of their first language origins, was supported by (albeit now contested) research evidence. On the other, this development, this 'interlanguage', was by no means predictable from one learner to the next in terms of either rate of progress or final level of achievement. Moreover, for a particular group of researchers (e.g. Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975), observing the variability in development purely from a morpho-syntactic perspective was not sufficient. There were other features of that variability which were of equal importance, such as their range of vocabulary knowledge, their ability and willingness to communicate, their ability to deal with new and complex spoken and written language.

It was this group of researchers that began looking at the characteristics of the 'good language learner'. The characteristics of the good language learner were the genes that were programmed at the birth of LLS research and, as we shall see, this early 'genetic programming' was to have both facilitative and problematic consequences.

The characteristics were broad and universal. For Stern (1975: 31) they included 'an active approach to the task', 'experimentation and planning', 'willingness to practise', 'self-monitoring and critical sensitivity'. For Rubin (1975) they included the willingness and ability to guess the meaning of unknown words, the willingness to monitor one's own speech, a strong drive to communicate, a willingness to attend to both form and meaning, and a lack of inhibition. For Naiman et al. (1978/1995) they additionally included the realization by the learner that language was a means of communication and an ability to manage the affective demands of language learning.

It is interesting, some 30 years later, to look back on the cautious and tentative nature of Naiman et al.'s conclusions about the good language learner. The authors

propose that, although language background and past learning experience does have a hand in shaping learning outcomes, it is important not to stereotype learner differences, that the ‘good language learner, with pre-determined overall characteristics, does not exist’ (ibid., 224), and that there are many individual ways of successfully learning a language. Consequently, the authors recommended a ‘cautious teaching how-to-learn approach’ (ibid., 225).

It is also interesting to look back to their conclusions in terms of two further seeds that were being planted in these early writings. The first was a call to ‘study critically the different inventories of learning strategies and techniques *and to develop an exhaustive list*’ (ibid., 220, emphasis added). This seed did germinate and the search for taxonomies of strategies was to be a major objective for a number of years. The second was a realization that language learning is a complex process which for many learners involved a long period of study and sustained effort and that therefore ‘a longitudinal case study approach’ (ibid., 221) was needed in order to investigate how learners went about learning and the nature of their development in that process. In general, that seed fell on stony ground.

We now turn to the second line of development that gave rise to LLS research.

1.2.2 Searching for Communicative Competence

Another impetus for the birth of LLS research were the developments that were taking place in L2 education generally. Researchers were not only abandoning the quest for the ‘best method of teaching’ but were also, as suggested above, abandoning the belief that a demonstration of learning was achieved merely by providing evidence that the learner had knowledge of the rule system of that language. In other words, the conceptualization of what it was to be competent in a language was changing such that by 1980, following the theoretical work of Dell Hymes (1967/1972), a seminal paper was produced by Canale and Swain (1980) where communicative competence included not only grammatical competence (a certain level of grammatical knowledge), but also sociolinguistic and discourse competence. Crucially (for our purposes), it also included strategic competence, which represented ‘the compensatory communication strategies to be used when there is a breakdown in one of the other competencies’ (Canale and Swain, 1980: 27).

Strategic competence, from the overall perspective of communicative competence, in these early explorations, focused on communication strategies (Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Wong-Fillmore, 1979). These were the strategies that L2 learners deployed, in speech, in order to overcome the deficiencies in their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar of the target language. ‘Circumlocution’, ‘word coinage’ and ‘fillers for silences’, were all strategies that L2 speakers adopted in order to maintain the flow of the conversation. Of course these strategies did not directly lead to language learning, but they did, at least in principle, facilitate continued input and interaction with a native speaker or near-native speaker, and this could only be a good thing. Moreover, when they were combined with negotiation for meaning strategies (e.g. ‘asking for clarification’, ‘providing confirmation

of understanding'), the communication strategies were not only offering more direct learning possibilities but also joining a different and more confident stream of second language acquisition research.

That strategic competence was part of communicative competence was also argued theoretically by a number of other authors (e.g. Bachman, 1990). To reduce it to its simplest form, the argument went thus. Being able to read, write, listen to and speak a language requires two knowledge domains: linguistic knowledge and strategic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge means a sufficiently large mental lexicon and a rule system sufficiently developed to allow a learner to put an utterance or sentence together. Strategic knowledge means knowing what to do with linguistic knowledge; knowing how to put it to its best use, given that linguistic knowledge is, by its very nature of being second language knowledge, always going to be relatively deficient. However, as we shall see, the *relationship between* linguistic knowledge and strategic behaviour has not always been as central to the development of LLS theory as might have been predicted.

If strategic behaviour is what learners do with their linguistic knowledge, then it seems pertinent to explore and define what we mean by 'do' and this is the focus of the next main section of this chapter.

1.3 Exploring a Language Learner Strategy

In the following sections we will explore those definitions and features of a strategy that have caused controversy and/or have undergone some development over the period of intensive strategy research. For an empirical study of these controversies, the reader should turn to Cohen (2007) who carried out a qualitative survey of experts in the field and their beliefs about the nature of a strategy.

1.3.1 The Relationship between Knowing and Doing

The first feature of a language learner strategy that has become an issue is in the relationship between knowledge and action. We have conceded in an earlier section that being able to do something requires you to have the knowledge to do it. In her definition of a strategy, Wenden (1987) included the knowledge that learners have of themselves as learners. It seems logical that, in order to have knowledge of oneself as a learner, one needs to have knowledge of the strategies that one *might* use even if one doesn't use them. If I am driving a car, I have the knowledge that I can use my indicator lever in order to indicate. Now, I might develop the bad strategy of not always indicating, but in order to indicate I must have the knowledge that the indicator lever exists and what it does.

This knowledge-behaviour relationship in a strategy has become an issue because of the theory of 'proceduralization' (Anderson, 2000) or automaticity. If we do something so often that it becomes automatic, do we still 'know' about the behaviour? Does it still form part of our 'declarative knowledge'? In other words can a strategy be subconscious behaviour? Over the years, this issue has been the

focus of some debate but the general consensus has emerged that strategies are conscious behaviours (see Cohen, 2007) because in order to be strategic they need to have a goal. I have recently argued (Macaro, 2006) that, since strategies are conscious behaviours, they must be operationalized in working memory, although through extensive repetition they may become subconscious. This means that the learner is no longer aware that they are using them. However, given that a strategy has to have a goal and a learning situation (or be related to a learning task) then, at certain moments in a new situation or with a new goal, an important 'feature' of a strategy is that it *can* be brought back to working memory and given the attention it needs in order to be evaluated against that new situation.

1.3.2 The Size of a Strategy

The next feature that has been a subject of considerable debate is whether strategies are 'big' or 'small'. The issue here is how does one put a boundary round an example of strategic behaviour? We noted above that the good language learner was described as using 'big strategies' such as 'focusing on communication' or as 'having an active approach to learning and practice' (Naiman et al., 1978: 225). But are these large strategies tenable as constructs? Is it possible to mix mental behaviour (cognition and metacognition) with physical action (motor behaviour)? Do these large strategies actually tell us anything worthwhile about the learner?

For example, if we were to decide that 'taking notes when listening to an L2 lecture' is a strategy, then how would we classify a piece of self-report such as the following (from a hypothetical Spanish L1 student):

Well . . . when I'm listening to a lecture in English I take notes about the most important points . . . now, how I decide which are important and which are not is difficult to say . . . it kind of depends . . . sometimes I look at the slides the lecturer has put up and pull out what I think are key words about what he or she is trying to put across . . . other times I write down the words that I don't understand and try to put them in two columns . . . English words I don't know and need to look up in Spanish . . . and English words I know in Spanish but which I still don't understand because they're too technical . . . sometimes I write whole sentences in Spanish as a sort of short summary of what I think they are saying . . .

Although this is a hypothetical example, I think it throws the 'size of strategy' problem into stark relief. Is note-taking the strategy? Is deciding which pieces of information are important the strategy? Is key-wording a strategy? Is making a decision between the two columns a strategy? Is the intention to later look up words in a dictionary a strategy? Is writing a summary a strategy? And in writing a 'short summary' in Spanish, are there not many other mental operations going on that one could classify as a strategy? For example deciding to use a Spanish cognate, being aware of 'false friends', connecting lexical meaning with previous L1 knowledge, deciding to leave out a piece of information and so on?

Some researchers in the field have tried to resolve this problem by proposing a hierarchy of strategies whereby (in our example) note-taking would be some kind of over-arching strategy and all the others below it would be sub-strategies or supporting strategies. This notion has not made much headway, principally because, while pragmatically attractive, it is theoretically flawed. Hierarchies depend on lower components remaining relatively stable. If a major change is made to a sub-strategy or strategies, the nature of the over-arching strategy also changes to the point where to continue calling it by the same name become meaningless. In a similar vein some researchers have talked of larger 'strategies' and smaller 'tactics' but this approach has also failed to catch on because a theoretical demarcation line between a strategy and a tactic is hard to come by. Thus within lists of strategies we often find a large, one-off strategy such as 'I try to read a text without translating into L1' alongside small and often repeated strategies 'I subvocalize difficult parts of a text' (Ikeda and Takeuchi, 2000: 31), or 'using reference materials' alongside 'visualizing information read' (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001: 438).

If putting a boundary around an example of strategic behaviour is difficult, then for research purposes the unit of analysis is not measurable, and for teaching purposes the unit of instruction is unclear. If researchers cannot agree on the unit of analysis, then validity and reliability go out the window, classification becomes difficult, and replication virtually impossible.

Recently, I have attempted to resolve this situation (Macaro, 2006) by proposing that the unit of analysis should be as small as is practically achievable and that 'a strategy's description should be effected at the lowest relevant level of articulation within the boundaries of conscious cognition' (p. 327). I then propose that with these small strategy units we can build larger but flexible 'clusters of strategies' which *in combination* can be seen to be achieving (or trying to achieve) a particular learning goal in a specific task or learning situation. Let us take a listening comprehension task as an example. Whatever the teacher's objectives in setting such a task a learner will, to differing extents, set their own goals and these may incorporate the teacher's objectives, stated or otherwise. These goals will be comprehension-oriented in the first instance but may also include a learning orientation, for example the learning of certain items of new vocabulary. A comprehension-oriented cluster of strategies will depend on the type of task being required against the L2 text. For example if being required to listen to a recorded text twice and to respond with an open ended recall protocol in L1, the cluster might include:

1. initial perusal of any clues given (e.g. title/rubric of text, pictures, short glossary)
2. initial activation of schematic knowledge against the clues given
3. initial prediction of what L2 words might occur in the text
4. attending to opening section of text
5. chunking units of sound in the speech stream to arrive at meaning
6. monitoring of meaning obtained against previous topic knowledge
7. holding short stretches in phonological working memory for perceptual processing during brief pauses in the text (did I hear the word 'equally?')

8. visualizing problematic chunks in the speech stream and deciding on 'best fit' ('which I Ron Ecally found their way'; 'which ironically found their way')
9. inferring the meaning of an unknown word from surrounding text
10. using grammatical information in the text matched against own interlanguage to reduce meaning options
11. inferring the meaning of an unknown word from schematic knowledge
12. deciding to quickly jot down recalcitrant unknown words
13. deciding not to 'think' about difficult chunks but save these for second listening
14. attending to subsequent section(s) of text and using some/all of the above strategies on these sections, but additionally,
15. checking that initial formulations of meaning obtained match later in-text evidence.

To these intersecting clusters of comprehension-oriented strategies (see Macaro, 2006: (p. 326), for a diagrammatic explanation of the model), a learner may also bring clusters of (for example vocabulary) learning strategies which (a) may be associated with the process by which the new lexical item was understood (as in 'ironically' above) and (b) may be additional learning strategies which they use more regularly (e.g. keyword method; make a new sentence using the word).

The above approach to analysing strategic behaviour has a number of advantages. First, it does not conceptualize strategic behaviour as merely a taxonomy of the total number of possible strategies that need to be used when listening but rather sees listening as a complex dynamic process in which the listener deploys his/her existing linguistic resources in an orchestrated attempt to resolve comprehension problems. Secondly, it does not conceptualize strategic behaviour as something that can be universally applied to any similar task without modification, this modification being subject to: text difficulty, speed of delivery, prior knowledge of topic, task type (a multiple choice task might require a very different cluster of strategies), and the number of opportunities for listening to the text. Thirdly, it rejects the superiority of top-down strategies over bottom-up strategies (see below for further discussion), instead acknowledging that both processes have compensatory or confirmatory functions. Fourthly, it demonstrates that the dichotomy of 'language learning strategies' and 'language use strategies' is an unnecessary one – the two constantly complement one another.

The above approach therefore attempts to situate itself in a theoretical model of language learning in which *use* is dependent on learning having resulted from previous tasks (with 'task' being used in its broader sense) and *learning* takes place through modified use in new tasks. The approach adheres to a cognitive processing model of acquisition utilizing human memory resources and is a refinement of the theoretical framework for strategies first established by O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

It is too early as yet to ascertain whether this approach to strategy definition and strategy size will be adopted by the LLS research community. In any case conceptualizing the unit of analysis cannot be dissociated from an overall theoretical

framework which includes an understanding of what strategies actually do and what distinguishes them from other ‘things’ that language learners do. It is this issue to which we now turn.

1.3.3 What Makes an Action Strategic?

Dörnyei (2005), in a recent review of the progress made within LLS research, begins by questioning whether strategies actually exist. His main argument is that researchers have not managed to establish that which makes a certain kind of behaviour strategic and that which makes it non-strategic. In this observation he is absolutely right.

The problem resides (metaphorically) in the DNA of the good language learner. We will leave for later the whole theoretical discussion about what we mean by good and successful learners. For now let us focus on strategies. Does the good language learner only use good strategies? If that is the case, then there must exist bad strategies and these are very likely being used by ‘bad language learners’. If, on the other hand, the good language learner simply ‘uses strategies’ or ‘uses lots of strategies and often’, then the corollary must be that the poor learner doesn’t use strategies at all, or uses a very limited number fairly often, or uses quite a few different strategies but not very often.

Both scenarios are problematic. If we are saying that what you *do* with the linguistic knowledge at your disposal is *always* some kind of strategy, then how do we distinguish good strategies from bad? Simply on the basis that they are used by good learners? The argument then becomes circular: strategies are good because they are used by good learners; good language learners use good strategies. If we are saying that what you do with linguistic knowledge is *not always* a strategy, then what do you call all the other things that you do? Non-strategic behaviour? But what would non-strategic behaviour look like? In the literature there are very few examples given of what non-strategic behaviour might look like and they are usually things like ‘giving up’ ‘not bothering to . . .’ (Mitchell, 1992) which seem somewhat trivial, in research terms, and in educational terms seem to be equating non-strategic behaviour simply with lack of effort.

Some LLS researchers have ventured to posit a few bad strategies. For example ‘translating into L1’ (see for example Vandergrift (2003) when considering listening comprehension). Now there might be a case for this being a bad strategy when ‘listening for overall meaning’, but to classify it as a *consistently* bad strategy is a proposition not supported by research. The overwhelming evidence is that the L1 is used as a facilitating resource in all kinds of L2 activities including reading (Kern, 1994) and writing (Manchón et al., 2007). Similarly (as I have intimated above), some researchers have suggested that in comprehension tasks ‘top-down’ strategies are good and ‘bottom-up’ strategies are bad. This too flies in the face of considerable swathes of research evidence (e.g. Tsui and Fullilove, 1998; Macaro and Erler, 2007; Graham and Macaro, 2008). Thus the theory that there are ‘bad strategies’ appears to be unfounded.

In order to overcome this problem, once again researchers have turned to the notion of combinations of strategies, or clusters of strategies, and the notion of ‘orchestration’. In other words, to be successful at a language task, learners have to choose from all the strategies available to them, in the right combination, and at appropriate moments. This resolution to the problem is predicated on three very important propositions (see Macaro, 2006). First, strategies have to be small and comprise of mental activity, not motor actions (and not even outward manifestations of mental activity). Secondly, *all* conscious cognitive behaviour should be classified as strategic so long as, in the mind of the learner, there is some sort of learning goal or task-achievement goal. Thirdly, there are no ‘good strategies’ and ‘bad strategies’. It is in the way that small strategies are combined against the task in hand and with the goal in mind that makes them effective – in other words it is the selection of the appropriate strategy cluster that is the key. Clusters of cognitive strategies are overseen or ‘monitored’ by metacognitive strategies which evaluate how effective the orchestration of the strategy cluster is performing.

If there has been one major development in LLS strategy research, it has been towards this notion of orchestrating combinations of strategies and the role of metacognition in facilitating that process. In other words, it is the appropriateness of the strategies used when carrying out a task that is more important than how frequently they are used or even the type of strategy being used (Chamot and El-Dinary, 1999).

Nevertheless, the notions of frequency of use and of good and bad strategies persists among some authors. Also remaining remarkably intractable is the belief that strategies can vary hugely in size, and that they can comprise both mental and non-mental (motor) behaviour (e.g. Weinstein and Hume, 1998: 12).

Having outlined developments in the way the unit of analysis has been defined and how the unit (a strategy) is supposed to operate, we can now turn our attention to how strategies have been elicited from learners – the tools that have been used to find what strategies learners use.

1.4 Developments in Strategy Elicitation Instruments

It is not surprising that, given the lack of consensus as to the unit of analysis and what it does, there should be some controversy over how to recognize the unit in a learner and how to arrive at definitive lists or taxonomies of strategies.

Generally speaking there have been two approaches to strategy elicitation: the questionnaire and the verbal self-report (or think-aloud protocol). The relationship between taxonomies and the questionnaire has not always been an easy one as it is sometimes unclear whether the questionnaire came from ‘grounded’ taxonomies (i.e. elicited via qualitative instruments from the learners themselves), or whether they were created by the author(s) and then examined for validity.

LLS questionnaires can be divided into two broad types, the general questionnaire which tries to elicit the overall strategic behaviour of the learner, and the skill-specific or task-specific questionnaire.

Without doubt the best known general questionnaire is the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (or SILL) devised by Rebecca Oxford in the late 1980s (see Oxford, 1990). It is estimated that this instrument has been used in at least 30 doctoral dissertations (personal communication, Rebecca Oxford) as well as a number of published papers. The SILL has two versions: a version for English as a Second Language; a version for foreign languages other than English. The latter has 80 items divided into six subscales.

The SILL has its supporters and detractors. In support of the SILL is not only its attempt at comprehensive coverage, but also the fact that it has been submitted to reliability and construct validity measures and come out well. For example in a large study (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989) it achieved a cronbach's alpha of 0.95. In confirmatory factor analysis (Hsiao and Oxford, 2002) there appeared to be a good fit between the six factors, as originally conceptualized by the author, and the overall data provided by the population of language learners it was tested on.

Nevertheless some authors (e.g. Dörnyei, 2005), have been at pains to point out the SILL's problems. Not surprisingly these problems are related to the notion of strategy size and abstractness that we discussed above. They are also related to the issue of frequency of use of strategy which, when combined with the strategy size issue, compounds the difficulties.

Let us, for example, compare two SILL items related to vocabulary learning: (i) I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word and (ii) I use flashcards to remember new English words. The first requires a mental operation that can be achieved in a moment, the second consists of a physical action that takes a considerable amount of time and resources to achieve and, in any case may include the first strategy. So, how can these two strategies be estimated, in comparative terms, by the respondent in terms of frequency of deployment. Can using flashcards 'less than half the time' be equated with connecting a word with an image 'less than half the time'? Dörnyei has attempted to crystallize the SILL's problems by claiming that the items cannot be considered together as presenting the cumulative profile of a language learner and has advocated an estimate of trueness (how true a statement is for a respondent) rather than an estimate of frequency of use.

Despite its potential inaccuracy, there may still be some value in using the SILL as a general indicator of what individual learners' strategic behaviour is like and its categories have been put to good use in more qualitative research (e.g. Carson and Longhini's (2002) diary study). The SILL is also a useful pedagogical tool that can start learners thinking about their strategic behaviour. Where I personally have a problem with it, as with any general LLS questionnaire, is in its very strong association with the good language learner, or with measures of proficiency or achievement. As these are terms I shall be addressing later in this chapter, I will not pursue them further here. Perhaps the caveat which must be borne in mind the most when considering a general strategies questionnaire is that it cannot show linear causality with proficiency or with success, merely an association between the strategic profile of the learner and some measure of language learning success. Yet, the temptation is to continue to make an underlying causal claim – that successful

learners are successful because they use the strategies enumerated in general questionnaires.

A fairly strong trend in LLS research has been the development of skill-based or task-based questionnaires. The fact that skill-based and task-based questionnaires should differ from each other is important. The difference relates to another issue in LLS research – the transferability of strategies from one task to another.

Skill-specific questionnaires have been developed particularly for the receptive skills of reading (Ikeda and Takeuchi, 2000; Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001; Oxford et al., 2004; Cohen and Weaver, 2006; Macaro and Erler, 2007) and listening (Goh, 2000; Vandergrift et al., 2006). Questionnaires have been developed to a lesser extent in speaking (communication strategies) for example by Nakatani (2006) and in vocabulary acquisition (Fan, 2003).

A comparison between two reading questionnaires (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001; Macaro and Erler, 2007) throws light on a problem which LLS researchers are experiencing, that of the age of the learners. Many questionnaires have been devised with adults in mind. Consequently to answer them they require the meta-cognitive awareness, sophistication and maturity that only adults (or late adolescents) have. Young children of 9 or 10 years of age cannot respond to a complex set of ideas such as those embedded in instruments developed for adults. Nor are they likely to have the resilience to answer numerous items. Moreover, questionnaires which refer to reading strategies such as ‘paraphrasing for better understanding’, ‘adjusting reading rate’ and ‘using text features (e.g. tables)’ (Sheorey and Mokhtari, 2001: 442) are unconvincing in terms of representing strategies for young-beginner readers who are confronted with texts of no more than a hundred or so words. This has led researchers working with young children to develop age-specific and indeed educational environment-specific questionnaires. In order to aim questionnaires more precisely at particular populations, researchers have adopted different instrument development methods. Macaro and Erler (2007) used a grounded approach starting with qualitative data collected originally in interviews by Erler before going through a process of trialling the instrument with the age group. This difference in approach is important. Surveys should either be built on existing lists of possible strategies or they should aim at eliciting specific strategies in order to answer particular research questions.

A further development in questionnaire design has been to make them not only skill-related but task-related. This has stemmed from the notion put forward by some researchers (e.g. Cohen, 1998) that respondents are more likely to be inaccurate in their estimation of frequency of strategy use the further they are away from the learning activity corresponding to the strategy being elicited. Consequently, researchers have investigated whether data collected was affected by the presence or absence of a clear and immediate task. Ikeda and Takeuchi (2000) found that respondents reported higher frequencies of reading strategy use when a task was absent than when a task was associated with the questionnaire. They also investigated whether reported frequencies were higher with an easier task than with a more difficult task. Surprisingly they found no differences.

Oxford et al. (2004) then partially replicated Ikeda and Takeuchi's study controlling for reading proficiency level and found no significant differences for either task presence or task difficulty. However, they did find an interaction between task difficulty and reading proficiency level. That is, low proficiency learners had greater difficulty comprehending the hard text and thus reported using more strategies and with greater frequency than the high-proficiency readers.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this body of research is that while (small) individual strategies are present in most skill-based tasks, the way that they are used will vary according to the amount of challenge that the task poses, this in turn being very likely dependent on the linguistic knowledge of the person doing the task. Once again, the evidence points to individual strategies being used in clusters with metacognitive judgements being made about when, how, and how often to deploy an individual strategy within a cluster.

The above body of research also points to a trend towards narrowing down the focus, away from the general and universally applied strategies to be found in questionnaires, to much more age-group specific, task-specific and even culture-specific instruments.

This trend is mirrored in the widespread use of task-based self-reports, think-aloud protocols and, more recently, stimulated recall. Development in the design and use of these techniques has been slow and a number of issues remain which can be summarized thus:

1. Is it actually possible to elicit concurrent strategic behaviour (see Ericsson and Simon, 1987)? In other words is it possible for a respondent to orally report cognitive activity at the same time as they are actually doing that activity? This is especially so in on-line tasks (listening and speaking).
2. Does the reporting of strategic behaviour actually distort the carrying out of the task? Would the respondent carry out the task differently if they were left alone to get on with it? There is some evidence here (Leow and Morgan-Short, 2004; Bowles and Leow, 2005) that there is little disruption.
3. Should the respondent be 'trained' in how to think-aloud or does this put ideas into his/her head about what kinds of strategic behaviours are possible or appropriate?
4. Should the language they are reporting in be the target language of the task or the respondent's own language? Reporting in L1 is easier, but does it inevitably lead to the more frequent reporting of translation-type strategies?
5. How reliable are data about strategic behaviour when it is behaviour that normally the respondent does not pay much attention to?
6. Do we need to employ different elicitation techniques when requiring young children to provide concurrent strategic behaviour?
7. What should the analysis procedures be? Given our concern with identifying the unit of analysis, to what extent is the analyst inferring the use of a strategy by the respondent as opposed to being absolutely sure that a strategy is being used? To what extent is the analyst interpreting rather than reporting the data?

This last point has led theorists (e.g. White et al., 2007) to call for much finer-grained transcriptions, with annotations based on discourse analysis procedures in order to minimize analyst interpretation and increase reliability between respondents. Additionally, the question remains as to whether socio-cultural factors, extraneous to the transcription, should be included.

Of course, many of the issues above pertain to other second language acquisition domains but they seem to be particularly pertinent to the reporting, analysis and synthesis of strategic behaviour. They are also particularly pertinent to the classification of strategy lists and taxonomies. Space does not allow a detailed examination of how these taxonomies and classification have developed from the mid-1970s to today but I would want to posit the following trends:

1. As already argued, early taxonomies were general and used 'large strategies', later taxonomies are much more skill-specific and contain at least some 'smaller strategies'.
2. Early classifications often included social and affective strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) such as 'finding a conversation partner' or 'telling oneself not to get anxious', later classifications have tended not to include these, limiting themselves to cognitive and metacognitive strategies.
3. A number of authors have (albeit implicitly in their writing) begun to reject the whole notion of definitive taxonomies in favour of specifying a task and then identifying combinations of strategies (N. J. Anderson, 1991), strategy clusters (Macaro, 2006), or strategy chains (Oxford et al., 2004) that might be associated with that task.

1.5 The Good Language Learner Reborn

In this section we will examine the extent to which the early conceptualizations of the good language learner have changed. In so doing we begin to examine the theoretical models that may underlie LLS instruction.

Recently some researchers (e.g. Macaro et al., 2007) have begun to question whether strategy researchers have been sufficiently precise in their use of what we might call 'performance indicators' and when relating these to strategic behaviour. What I mean by this is that a number of terms have been used in the LLS literature, either as dependent or independent variables, to describe good and less-good learners. These terms are: 'proficient', 'successful', 'high-achieving', 'experienced'. A simple search of the bibliography of strategy research in Cohen and Macaro (2007) reveals 22 papers where 'proficiency' occurs in the title, 11 where 'achievement' occurs in the title, 2 where 'expert/expertise' occurs, and 14 where 'success' occurs. There are also two instances of the use of 'skilled/unskilled' but these seem to be used synonymously with 'successful' so I will not count them as a different category.

Space does not allow an in-depth analysis of the way these performance indicators have been used in the literature nor whether there is total or partial overlap.

I will limit myself to stating why I believe differentiating between these indicators is important. In so doing it will be necessary to refer to some of the arguments in the earlier sections of this chapter.

Let us start with 'proficiency'. The standard definition of proficiency is a measurement of a level of ability in one or more of the four language skills regardless of all L2 learner-related factors. In other words, it doesn't matter if a learner started learning the L2 early or late, has learnt it for 2 months or 10 years, learnt the L2 naturalistically or in formal settings, was highly motivated or less motivated, was taught by a great teacher or a complete charlatan, was in a class of 5 or 50. A test of proficiency is blind to all these factors. It just measures the level they have reached at a specific moment in their learning trajectory. A typical proficiency test is the IELTS test.

Let us now look at 'achievement'. The standard definition of achievement in educational literature (although sadly not in applied linguistics literature) is a measure which very often takes in some, if not all, of the above learner-related factors. So, in education, researchers might look at students' work over a period of three months and say that student A is achieving higher levels than student B. But, in so doing, researchers attempt to control for many factors. They ask themselves, how is it that A and B started learning German at the same time, had the same teacher, were present in class for the same amount of time, appeared to be equally attentive and motivated, produced the same amount of work, and yet and yet . . . they are not achieving equally in the work or the test the teacher gives them?

Let us now look at the use of the word 'success'. There is no standard definition of what we mean by a successful learner, either in the educational or applied linguistics research literature. Usually in strategies literature a successful learner is someone who has done well in the (often limited) language test that the researcher has set him/her. It is somewhat akin in meaning to 'proficiency' in one language skill but without the 'international blindness' of the IELTS test, nor the controlling for learner variables of the educational literature. I find it one of the most obscure of the performance indicators in strategy research literature. Nevertheless, we could define it as doing well at a specific task at a certain moment in time.

Lastly, there is the notion of 'expertise'. This has a considerable pedigree in psychology literature and in the literature on teacher education. In applied linguistics it usually designates people who have learnt a lot of languages; those who have repeatedly shown an ability to learn a language. These are experts who can bring all the wealth and richness of their experience to any L2/L3/L4 task or tasks.

Now, if we take these four definitions and apply them to the early conceptualization of the good language learner and his/her strategic behaviour, what do we have? Do we know which one of these categories the good language learner belongs to? It is very likely that the expert is a good language learner. He or she has proved it again and again. But expert learners are by no means in the majority and we should certainly not be modelling our teaching approaches on them since not all learners will have their opportunities.

Does the good language learner belong to the high proficiency category? Clearly not. They may have taken many years to get to that level of proficiency and spent a fortune on private tuition. Thus the strategies they are using may not be the crucial ‘value-added’ factor leading to high proficiency and we should therefore not necessarily be advocating his/her strategies when considering other learners.

Clearly the good language learner cannot easily be associated with the ‘successful’ learner as I have described them above. Success in a single task or even a single skill does not necessarily equate with being good at language learning generally and over a prolonged period.

Is the good language learner someone who is a high achiever as described above? As long as we have enough data, it does at least appear so from the evidence before us as teachers or researchers. They seem to be doing better than others even though they have received, and are receiving, the same language learning experience. It is therefore likely that what they are doing with their learning experience, their strategic behaviour, is something quite special, especially if their achievement is sustained over time.

In the field of listening comprehension strategies, the review by Macaro et al. (2007) concludes that these various performance indicators have not been stated with sufficient precision and therefore the correlations made between listening success and strategy use are not convincing. As the authors argue,

If strategy use is the ‘value-added’ component in skill-related L2 processing, then, researchers need to control *at the very least* for linguistic knowledge (vocabulary and grammatical knowledge). (Macaro et al., 2007: 168)

They then argue that three different research questions can be asked with regard to listening comprehension and listening strategies (ibid., 168–169):

1. ‘Does unequal linguistic knowledge result in different listening strategies being deployed?’ In other words, does the very fact that a learner has reached a certain level of competence result in them using different strategies from those who have not reached that level? This approach is in essence testing the short-circuit hypothesis where the corollary is that a learner with low linguistic knowledge cannot, or finds it very difficult to, deploy a particular strategy or cluster of strategies.
2. ‘Is there evidence of different strategies being deployed among participants who have *equal* linguistic knowledge?’ Here, having controlled for linguistic knowledge, the researcher investigates whether the independent variable (strategic behaviour) affects the dependent variable (success at a listening task or tasks). In other words this is taking the high-achievement perspective where certain learners with the same experience appear to be achieving more than others, the hypothesis being the value-added nature of their strategic behaviour.
3. ‘Are there cases of students with lower linguistic knowledge who are *so strategic* in their listening that their lack of linguistic knowledge is compensated for by

their strategy use, leading to comprehension that is as good as (or better than) that of students with higher linguistic knowledge?’ This is, by and large, taking the expert learner perspective and, as I have argued, it is unlikely that we may find many of these in the average L2 classroom.

In summary, it appears that the most fruitful avenue of research in terms of identifying the good language learner is to look for the ‘high- and low-achievers’ as compared to their immediate peers. However, in so doing, it is essential to control carefully for many linguistic and educational variables.

1.6 Developments in Strategy-based Instruction

A number of issues surrounded early implementations of strategy instruction programmes. Even the very name given to the process of teaching learners how to become better learners was contested, and the use of ‘learner training’, ‘strategy training’ and ‘strategy instruction’ were all terms used in the literature. Most recently the term strategy-based instruction (SBI) has been used (Weaver and Cohen, 1997; Paige et al., 2004; Rubin et al., 2007) and appears to be gaining popularity.

Many of the early disagreements have now been resolved and I summarize the consensus below.

It is now generally accepted that, during SBI, students should have a say in selecting the strategies they want to develop rather than having strategies imposed on them. This is in line with the shift away from a global profile of the good language learner, a profile to be copied by all. However, whether in reality this is happening throughout SBI studies is not so certain. Nor is it clear that the instruction is being geared towards a specific population let alone geared to individual students with particular L1s. In a recent SBI in listening (Graham and Macaro, 2008) the researchers first studied the strategies of the population (English lower-intermediate learners of French), before implementing an SBI programme targeting the specific difficulties of that population as well as providing feedback on strategy use to individual learners. One of the difficulties the learners had been experiencing was their inability to adapt to the stress patterns of French (so different from English), and parts of the SBI focused on this difficulty.

It is now generally accepted that metacognition is a vital component in any SBI programme as it encourages the learner, through reflection, to take responsibility for their learning.

Most SBI is carried out in an integrated fashion. Whereas in the past some (e.g. Ellis and Sinclair, 1989; Flaitz and Feyten, 1996) appear to be suggesting a separate ‘training programme’, now researchers advocate that content, language and strategies should be taught simultaneously. On the other hand, most researchers appear to adhere to the belief that SBI should be explicit rather than implicit.

Most models of SBI now have 5 recognizable steps: initial awareness raising of the extent and types of LLS available to the learners; a phase during which the teacher or peers model the strategies they use; opportunities for the learners to practise using the strategies with the teacher/researcher's support (sometimes referred to as 'scaffolding'); removal of the support; and evaluation of the effectiveness of the SBI. This evaluation can take a number of forms. Most recently Graham (2004) has advocated a strong link between strategy evaluation, attribution and self-efficacy. Students may be attributing their lack of success or progress to their inability or the sheer difficulty of the language thus demonstrating low levels of self-efficacy with regard to a language task. A programme of SBI is instigated and evaluated by individual students. They are encouraged to view any gradual improvement in their learning as being the result of a change in strategic behaviour. This leads to improved self-efficacy.

There is a growing realization that SBI for young children has to be very different from that used with adults. This may seem obvious but it was not always the case. For a clear and practical distinction in the implementation of SBI with these two age groups see Rubin et al. (2007).

At least two issues remain, not so much as controversies, but almost as insurmountable problems.

First, some learners, particularly older learners, seem resistant to SBI. As Carson and Longhini (2002: 434) put it: 'strategy training is undoubtedly an important part of classroom language acquisition, but it may be the case that strategies are not as modifiable as we have thought'.

Perhaps some learners feel SBI is a waste of time and would rather be getting on with the language learning itself. This attitude is not without its supporters in the literature (e.g. Kellerman, 1991; Rees-Miller, 1993). Other students may simply be 'too stuck in their ways' to want to change. Some high-achieving learners, of course, may not need to change. The only possible solution I can see to this intractable problem is for change in strategic behaviour to be part of the assessment system. In other words, assessment would need to focus on the process of learning rather than the product of learning. This is, of course, not an easy path to follow as virtually all high-stakes assessment is summative and based on product. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to envisage an assessment system which measures improvements in learning how to learn as well as the achievement itself.

Secondly, it is clearly easier to use the L1 for SBI than it is to use the L2, at least with all but the most advanced learners, and perhaps these learners are less in need of instruction anyway. However, inevitably, both teachers and researchers are concerned with the resulting reduction in exposure to the L2. It seems to me that there are only two possible answers to this problem: first, to provide a judicious mixture of L1 and L2 in the instruction, gradually trying to increase the use of L2; secondly, to provide evidence that SBI instruction is so effective in raising achievement that it is worth the 'time out' from exposure to the L2. As we shall in the final section to this chapter, the field is still some way from demonstrating conclusively that SBI is as effective as all that.

1.7 The Research Evidence in LLS and SBI

So, what does the research evidence tell us about strategic behaviour? In order to try to summarize the findings I will divide them into research on the relationship between LLS and other variables, and research on SBI, that is research which has tried to intervene in the process of learning.

If we return briefly to the discussion on performance indicators above, it is quite clear from the research evidence available that learners who have reached high levels of proficiency use more and very different strategies from learners who have reached lower levels of proficiency. This is well documented both in studies using large taxonomies of strategies and more qualitative studies using verbal self-report. However, the fact that higher proficiency learners deploy different strategic behaviour does not mean that they have reached proficiency *because* of that behaviour. It may simply be the case that higher proficiency *facilitates* different strategic behaviour. As I have alluded to above, there are very few studies that control for all other important variables thus demonstrating that strategic behaviour is the key independent variable in bringing about higher proficiency.

There is fairly strong evidence that older learners use different strategies from younger learners. In a very large study (Victori and Tragant, 2003), involving learners aged 10, 14 and 17, significant differences in frequency of strategy use were discovered between the youngest group of students and that of the other two groups. Particularly, the older two groups claimed to be using many more cognitively complex strategies, whereas the 10 year olds reported higher use of social strategies.

There is less uncontested evidence that females are more strategic than males. Although, within-studies, frequency of use differences have been found, between-studies have reported that females used different strategy types *from other females* (see for example Ehrman and Oxford, 1989 compared to Oxford and Nyikos, 1989, and compared in turn to Dreyer and Oxford 1996). The different findings in these studies are possibly attributable to the different populations being investigated and the learning environments they were experiencing. Moreover, both Wharton (2000) and Griffiths (2003) did not find females using more or particularly different strategies than males.

The often claimed difference between cultural groups' approaches to L2 study have also not been substantiated by LLS research. Bedell (1993, reported in Bedell and Oxford, 1996) found only limited differences between the Chinese students he studied and Western students reported in other studies, and Grainger (1997) found no significant differences in reported strategy use. In fact, a number of authors (e.g. Goh and Foong, 1997; Gu, 2005) operating in the Asian context have found no evidence that Asian students overuse memorization strategies (considered 'bad' by some!), nor do they use memorization strategies in preference to 'higher-order' strategies (metacognitive) for managing and regulating their learning.

The variable which appears to interact with high or different strategy use the most is motivation (see for example MacIntyre and Noels, 1996; Gardner et al., 1997; Wharton, 2000). This is not surprising given that even a quick glance at any

strategy taxonomy implies a high level of commitment and sustained effort to language learning. Clearly high levels of sustained effort are precisely the ingredients one would look for in a motivated learner. What remains unclear is whether it is a motivated learner that uses more or different strategies or whether the use of more or different strategies leads to success with learning and therefore to higher levels of reported motivation. Moreover, it is possible that learners who perceive a need to improve in a particular area may decide to deploy a different set of strategies from learners who have no particular need for rapid improvement, but both sets of learners may report high levels of motivation. Once again this points to the importance of examining the use of combinations of strategies as used in specific tasks, specific learning situations, with a specific population of learners and, most importantly, over a period of time.

Our earlier discussion suggested as yet no research evidence for a causal link between strategic behaviour and either proficiency or achievement measures. One of the ways in which a causal link could be established would be if the research evidence on strategy-based instruction was positive.

In a recent systematic review of strategy instruction Hassan et al. (2005) concluded that, on the whole, there is *some* evidence that L2 learners who undergo some sort of intervention into their strategic behaviour make more or faster progress than those that do not. The evidence is only tentative because (a) a number of methodological and reporting problems have been detected in the SBI literature and (b) some studies have not shown significant improvement.

There have been a few interventions into general strategic behaviour (Flaitz and Feyten, 1996; Nunan, 1997), particularly in trying to raise metacognitive awareness, but the extent to which these have contributed to improving learning outcomes is not always convincing. In the Nunan study, students reported using more strategies post-treatment but no improvement in any of the language skills was reported. Flaitz and Feyten contended that, after just one 50-minute session of metacognitive awareness raising, the experimental group outperformed the controls in final course grades, but no measurement of pre-test proficiency was reported.

The vast majority of SBI studies have focused on a single skill, again reflecting the trend in researchers being more able to work at the cognitive/metacognitive, 'small strategy' level.

In listening comprehension, the picture is very mixed. Three SBI studies (McGruddy, 1995; Ozeki, 2000; Seo, 2000) found only very partial improvement among listeners in the experimental group. More positive results were found in studies by Thompson and Rubin (1996) and by Kohler (2002) although there does not seem to have been a pre-test in the latter study. Both these studies had a strong metacognitive element in the instruction, encouraging listeners to reflect on their strategic behaviour. A positive impact of SBI on listening has been found recently by Graham and Macaro (2008). This study had four features which differentiated it from other listening interventions: (1) it based its selection of strategies on a previous descriptive appraisal of the strategies used by the population (lower-intermediate learners of French with English L1); (2) it linked the development of

learner self-efficacy, with regard to a task, to the learners' evaluations of the effectiveness of the strategy clusters they were encouraged to try out; (3) the instruction involved high levels of scaffolding including feedback to the learners on their ongoing reporting of strategy use and (4) it measured long term effect by means of a delayed test.

In reading comprehension, the overall results seem a little more conclusive.

Carrell et al. (1989), Raymond (1993), Talbot (1995) and Kusiak (2001) all found that students derived some benefit from SBI. These studies focused on helping students to identify text structure and to create a mental 'semantic map' while reading, thereby enabling inference of unknown or unfamiliar words. Fraser (1999) additionally identified two types of inferencing strategies: word-identification strategies which rely on the form/sound of the word to make informed guesses as to meaning, and sense-creation strategies which utilize both language and situational clues. Again she found some benefit resulting from SBI in these combinations of strategies. These studies have been conducted with fairly advanced university students or with students above the intermediate level. More recently Macaro and Erler (2007) found positive results in a reading intervention involving young (11–12 year olds) beginner-learners.

There have been two types of SBIs with regard to speaking strategies. The first has conceptualized speaking as interactional behaviour. Communication breakdowns have therefore been considered as involving both participants. For example, studies by Dadour and Robbins (1996), Bejarano et al. (1997) and by Nakatani (2005) included 'interaction strategies' (e.g. clarification requests; appealing for assistance) as well as 'compensation strategies' (e.g. circumlocution). In both the Dadour and Robbins study and the Nakatani study, the groups receiving SBI significantly improved not only their oral proficiency test scores but also used significantly more strategies. Bejarano et al. (1997) reported an increase in strategies used but improvements in oral proficiency were not measured.

The second type of study has focused entirely on the compensation strategies available to the learner experiencing difficulty. For example, Dörnyei (1995) carried out SBI with high school students in avoiding the topic or replacing the topic with a different one, circumlocution or paraphrase, and the use of hesitations with fillers in order to ensure that the conversation continued. Here too the SBI group showed some improvement in their oral performance and in the quality and quantity of strategy use.

As Manchón et al. (2007: 229) observe, 'the study of writing strategies should be viewed within a wider research movement known as "process writing"'. Consequently the types of SBI in writing have been wide-ranging, reflecting the diverse interests to which L2 writing is put. For example, Aziz (1995) attempted to improve note-taking (and as a consequence, writing performance) through cognitive and metacognitive strategies, whereas Klohs (1994) focused on production problems when writing and using a mnemonic device in order to solve those problems. Both Creswell (2000) and Conti (2004) have examined, in their SBI programmes, the relationship between the writer and the teacher, Conti via strategy reminders and scaffolding sheets, and Creswell via a kind of dialogue through

marginal annotations initiated by the writer. Other differences in SBI approaches have centred on the level of generality of the writing strategies being considered, from a holistic approach (Sasaki, 2004), through planning and revision (Ching, 2002), to only revision following teacher feedback (Sengupta, 2000).

The overall impression of the effects of SBI on writing is a positive one with most studies reporting some improvement and others considerable improvement. However, few studies have investigated, through delayed tests, whether this improvement has remained with the passage of time and (as Manchón et al. (2007) observe) without considerable subsequent writing practice. In other words, the possible confounding effect of increased writing practice during the intervention period has not been completely ruled out.

1.8 Conclusions

In this chapter we have observed that the LLS ‘movement’ came about because the locus of research interest became the learner and because what learners do with their linguistic knowledge is perhaps as important as that knowledge itself. These two factors were a major contribution to the birth of the concept of the good language learner. This learner was conceptualized as being an active rather than a passive learner. Soon many researchers were to examine enthusiastically his/her strategic behaviour, attempted to come up with taxonomies of strategies, and advocated that other learners follow his/her example. In retrospect I believe that this approach was a mistake.

I have argued that without a complete understanding of how the good language learner *becomes* good it is impossible to arrive at the conclusion that all LLS researchers would like to arrive at – that strategic behaviour leads to successful learning.

I have argued that the approach taken, initially at least, led to the globalization (not to say the cloning) of the good language learner, an attitude which may be considered highly ethnocentric when imposed on other cultures. Although subsequent researchers pulled back from this globalization of the good language learner, it was too late – the underlying belief persisted.

I have argued that this belief has led researchers to investigate insufficiently specific populations and to neglect the need to identify individual learner problems thereby being able to propose individual strategic remedies. I therefore summarize here a number of solutions to difficulties identified in LLS research.

I have attempted to show that there has been a transition from eliciting ‘large’ and somewhat abstract strategies, to much ‘smaller’ and more carefully explained strategies. These strategies, I have argued, should be internal to the learner and should be considered as the raw material of conscious cognitive processing. Moreover, I have advocated, with others, that these smaller strategies should be considered in flexible combinations or clusters. Supporting this transition may lead to the accusation that the original conceptualization of a strategy has changed

such that it should be given a different name. I do not believe so for three reasons. First, it would be a pity in my view, to break with a 30-year-old tradition and come up with some new and equally problematic name (or even a newly coined name!) that researchers and practitioners alike would have to accommodate into their belief systems. Secondly, the use of the word 'strategy' is widespread in the field of neuroscience to signify conscious mental activity and the fine-grained approach I am advocating for second language learning sits comfortably alongside that field. Thirdly, authors are free to choose whichever conceptual framework they wish to adopt (large or small) so long as they are quite clear at the outset which one they are adopting and so that their findings and arguments can be judged against the framework they are using. What I believe is unacceptable is to attempt to mix and use both.

Despite this concession, I believe that the era of the large scale, large strategy study is probably at an end. However, generalizability of strategic behaviour can be achieved by beginning to investigate if and how strategies transfer from one task to another and one educational setting to another.

We should stop looking at 'proficiency' as an outcome measure. Proficiency (whether general or skill-specific) tells us virtually nothing about the relationship between language learning success and strategic behaviour. Instead I have argued that we should be considering 'achievement'. By controlling for many factors we can identify high-achieving and low-achieving students and identify not only the strategies they use but *why* they use them. Additionally, it may be useful for some research questions to identify language learning 'experts' and observe the combinations of strategies that they use.

There remains one further question. Has LLS research made the transition to practice? Is strategic behaviour being taught in L2 classrooms across the world? This is a difficult question to answer for two reasons.

First, what would 'teaching strategic behaviour' look like? Would it have to be similar to the kinds of researcher-led interventions described above? Or would it be sufficient to establish that practitioners were referring to useful approaches to learning (e.g. don't forget to plan your writing; think about the title before you start reading this text), something which, anecdotally, we know happens in many classrooms?

Secondly, we simply do not know the extent to which practitioners are aware of LLS research, and if they are, their reaction to it. To my knowledge there are very few studies (Lawes and Santos, 2007 is a possible exception) which have investigated this question, either nationally or internationally. Yet it seems to me obvious that LLS researchers need to engage with large numbers of practitioners (not just the interested few who take part in empirical studies) in order to understand why strategic behaviour is not being addressed in their classrooms. This information, together with more rigorous research into the relationship between strategies and achievement, as well as more solid proof of the value of strategy instruction, is a pre-requisite for the continued and healthy development of the language learner strategies endeavour.

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CHAPTER

2

The Decline and Fall of the Native Speaker¹

Enric Llurda

2.1 Introduction

The field of applied linguistics has lately been questioning and thus redefining the concepts of ‘native speaker’ (NS) and ‘non-native speaker’ (NNS). Initially, a fixed dichotomy involving the two categories was accepted, used and exploited in research on second language acquisition. Studies on interaction between ‘native speakers’ and ‘non-native speakers’ (Long, 1983; Pica, 1988) or research on ultimate attainment in SLA, (Coppetiers, 1987) exemplify such an approach in which NNSs were paired to or compared with NSs. Such a distinction, though convenient, has been questioned in the literature. Several researchers (Rampton, 1990; Davies, 1991, 2003; V. Cook, 1999; Liu, 1999; Brutt-Griffler and Samimy, 2001; Piller, 2002) have critically looked at the theoretical foundations of the NS/NNS distinction, and pondered whether or not there is any reason to continue establishing a separation between those people who have a given feature (i.e., NSs) and those who don’t (i.e., NNSs). As Matsuda (2003) has claimed, the discussion has typically been based on the overall perception of ‘native’ as positive, in contrast to ‘nonnative’, perceived as a negative feature.

Despite strong theoretical arguments advocating for the abandonment of any reference to ‘native speaker’ or ‘non-native speaker’ (Paikeday, 1985; Rampton, 1990; Kachru, 1992), and Davies’ conclusion that no purely linguistic properties could be exclusively associated to native speakers, the fact is that the terms are still used, even by those who complain of the discrimination suffered by ‘non-native speakers’ on the grounds of such a distinction. The issue has been repeatedly raised in the electronic list of the TESOL (Teaching of English as a Second or Other Language) NNEST (Non-Native English Speaking Teacher) Caucus/Interest Section and the case has been made to substitute the ‘NNEST’ identifying name for one that does not include the term ‘non-native’.² Yet, the Caucus itself and researchers within the area do still pervasively use the term ‘non-native’ to refer to those teachers whose mother tongue is not the same as the language they are teaching.

Indeed, the whole debate of NS/NNS is fraught with emotion and sometimes suffers from reductionist approaches that ignore the complexity and the contexts

of the issue. Davies (2003) acknowledged one single element that could be used to mark a NS and differentiate it from a NNS: acceptance as such by a significant portion of members of a speech community. So, the outcome of his analysis was that it is not so much linguistic or psycho-linguistic properties but rather group admission and self-attachment that somehow determine whether an individual speaker is ultimately labelled a NS or a NNS. Such a labelling will eventually have powerful effects on the life of the individual, as shown by studies of accent-based discrimination (Lippi-Green, 1997).

However, as pointed out by Liu (1999), and by Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001), a continuum approach is going to more accurately reflect the reality of several people who cannot label themselves as either NSs or NNSs, but can however feel comfortably at some intermediate point due to their diverse individual experiences. Examples of this kind would include the case of a subject in Liu's (1999) study who claimed to be a NS of Tagalog but learnt to speak English before he could speak Tagalog.

A different approach to overcoming the rigid NS/NNS dichotomy was taken by Piller (2002), who interviewed a group of L2 users and observed that about one third of them claimed they could pass as native speakers in some contexts:

As with gender and ethnic passing, passing for a native speaker questions and destabilises the categories of native and non-native speakers themselves. 'Native speaker' is no longer an identity category, and rather than being something that someone is, it becomes something that someone does. The flip side of passing for a native speaker is passing for a non-native speaker. And, indeed, many of my participants find their original native identities challenged at times, for instance after prolonged absence from their L1 communities. (Piller, 2002: 201)

Piller refused to consider native speaker identity as a rigid binary category to which speakers either do or do not belong. Instead, she chooses to look at native speaker identity in a dynamic way, by which individuals do not always totally fit into one given category, but can temporarily move from one to another. In this sense, the idea of 'passing for native speaker' developed by Piller provides a rich new view on advanced L2 users who can temporarily take a native speaker identity, due to

1. the particular type of communicative performance the speaker is involved in;
2. the incorporation of local speech features in a way that 'coincides with the stereotypes of the audience';
3. the medium used for the communicative encounters (oral, written, and electronic); and
4. the interlocutors.

Piller concluded that 'the passing of expert L2 users is contextual rather than identity-related' (2002: 198), and 'while we look for a stable trait of 'near-native' speech, passing is a temporary performance'. As already pointed out by Paikeday

(1985) the term 'language user' may be more adequate and less tendentious, especially considering the widespread positive connotations in other aspects of life of the term 'native' vs. the negative edge frequently attached to the term 'non-native'.³ V. Cook (2002) also strongly advocates the term 'user' and goes one step further by proposing the substitution of 'L2 user' for 'L2 learner', pointedly claiming that many 'L2 users' can no longer be considered perennial learners of the language, as they have full right to be considered legitimate users of an L2 variety of the language. Finally, this is in line with current discussions on the role of English as a Lingua Franca at international levels, and the need for all users of English to interact in a mutually intelligible way, thus rendering the labelling of 'native' and 'non-native' useless, and bringing a new dimension of proficiency at the international level, as expressed in Modiano's (1999) reformulation of Kachru's (1981) concentric circles.

Outside applied linguistics, the distinction between NS and NNS is as pervasive as ever, and the NS enjoys great prestige among language teachers as shown by research (Llurda and Huguët, 2003; Jenkins, 2007) and by common job advertisements asking exclusively for native teachers (see, for instance, the Korean job board at www.eslcafe.com). There is a widespread acceptance of the idea that the NNS is an imperfect user of the language, and the NS is often valued as the ideal teacher by potential students, who see in them a 'natural' superiority over NNSs for teaching the language. And, in some places, there is even a prevention against native teachers who have spent too long in an environment with a majority of NNSs, as they may have got contaminated by the non-native speech of local inhabitants. This generalized perception is rather consequent with another standard perception among non-linguists, especially in countries in which a majority of the people are monolingual, namely that the ideal speaker is the monolingual speaker and that bilingualism is an accident rather than a desirable aim of a society.

Studies on bilingualism provide a rich source of evidence on the need to understand the linguistic abilities of language users in their wholeness, rather than as independent mental abstractions. Most language users in the world can use more than one language, that is, they have some degree of bilingualism or multilingualism. Such a state of affairs helps us visualize a world in which most 'language users' are in fact 'multilingual language users', and therefore do not fit into the description of an 'ideal' native speaker. According to Cummins' Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (1979, 1981) the languages spoken by a bilingual speaker are not stored in separate compartments. Instead, they appear to share a single large common area which serves as a shared space between all the languages spoken by a single person. It appears only logical that the decline of the concept of the native speaker as the ideal speaker is parallel to the surge of the concept of the bilingual speaker or more recently of the multi-competent speaker (V. Cook, 2007; this volume). Less than 100 years ago, Jespersen questioned bilingualism on the grounds that a bilingual child 'hardly learns either of the two languages as perfectly as he would have done if he had limited himself to one' and expressed his worry that 'the power required to master two languages instead of one certainly diminishes the child's power of learning other things, which might and ought to

be learnt' (Jespersen, 1922: 220; quoted in Davies, 2003: 81). That was the predominant perception among linguists during the first half of the 20th century (Pintner and Keller, 1922; Smith, 1939; Darcy, 1953). However, those supposed disadvantages of bilingualism came under attack from evidence that showed the non-detrimental influence of bilingualism on *mental ability/mental development/intelligence* (Arsenian, 1937; Weinreich, 1953), and later the existence of positive effects of bilingualism on different cognitive abilities (Peal and Lambert, 1962; Feldman and Shen, 1971; Ianco-Worrall, 1972; Ben-Zeev, 1977; Yelland et al., 1993; Lasagabaster, 1998). But unfortunately, as Minami (2002: 733) points out, in many countries, 'the folk belief bemoaning the "language handicap" in bilinguals persists over the concept that bilingualism is a "language asset"'.

Academic discourse on bilingualism no longer claims bilingual speakers are handicapped vis-à-vis monolinguals. Furthermore multilingual approaches, such as V. Cook's (1992) formulation of multi-competence, emphasize this dimension of the bi/multi-lingual speaker as a person who has developed a fairly complex mental and socio-communicative system. The current conception of bilingualism is key to the discussion of NS and NNS language teachers. Paraphrasing Grosjean (1989), if a bilingual person is expected to perform like two monolinguals in one, the ideal we are setting them against is the NS. If, on the contrary, bilinguals are regarded as multifaceted individuals who possess a different, albeit more complex, mental organization, we are finally questioning NS dominance and NS idealization. In such a case, monolingual competence will be replaced by multicompetence as the optimal state of mind, and experienced multilingual users will have the upper hand.

In a rather coincidental way, native speakerism was at its height when, according to Phillipson (1992), the Commonwealth conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language held at Makerere (Uganda) designated the native speaker as the ideal language teacher. It took several additional years for applied linguistics to start looking at the non-native speaker in its own right (Phillipson, 1996), rather than the negation of what it was assumed not to be (i.e., a native speaker). Recently, non-native speakers who devote their professional lives to the teaching of languages which are not their L1 have enjoyed increasing recognition, as it is shown by the number of books, book chapters, journal articles, as well as Ph.D. and MA thesis that have centred on the study of non-native teachers' characteristics, virtues and socio-cultural concerns (Llurda, 2005; Moussu and Llurda, 2008). In the next section, I will provide a review of relevant research on native and non-native teachers, which will necessarily turn around the figure of the non-native teacher of English, as practically no research has been done to date on NNS teachers of other languages.⁴ No doubt more research needs to be done on teachers of languages other than English, but so far the available data is very limited. It might be argued that native teachers have never been the object of a specific focus in research, and it might be added that this constitutes a discrimination against NSs, who are not studied in the academic literature. Such a claim would be utterly misguided, as most research on language teaching has traditionally taken for granted that the standard default teacher was a native speaker, and therefore on

many occasions in which NSs were studied, the reports only mentioned ‘teachers’ (without any modifier) as the object of study.

2.2 Research on Non-native Speaking Teachers

The question of native vs. non-native identity of language teachers has probably been long present in the mind of language educators, though it was not researched until Peter Medgyes devoted his attention to NNSs in ELT (Medgyes, 1992, 1994). Before, language teaching had been carried out by native and non-native teachers alike, with some methods stressing the importance of foreign languages being taught by native teachers (e.g., the Direct Method), while others establishing methodological procedures based on the assumption that native teachers were not available in a given context (e.g., the Reading Approach in the US, in the 1920s). However, since Communicative Language Teaching appeared as the dominant theoretical framework in second and foreign language teaching, an implicit rule was that native speakers were ideal for promoting natural and spontaneous communication, and therefore when available they should naturally be preferred over non-natives. Only in contexts where natives were scarce or non-available would non-native teachers be considered acceptable. This was the case of ELT in ‘expanding circle’ countries (Kachru, 1981).

The notion of ‘the native teacher as the ideal teacher’ was equivalent to the notion of ‘the monolingual native speaker as the ideal speaker’. In some extreme cases, monolingual native speakers would be preferred over native speakers with a good knowledge of the learners’ L1 (see Llurda, 2009, for evidence of the pervasiveness of such a monolingual ideology among current non-native teachers). In that context, nobody thought it was necessary to do any kind of research into the question of what would non-native speakers’ contribution to the language class might be. It was clear that native teachers were worth more than non-natives, and only non-natives with near-native proficiency could entertain any legitimate aspiration to enjoy a certain prestige in the language teaching profession. This was the situation when Medgyes (1992, 1994) changed the parameters of the discussion and introduced the question that challenged the above assumptions: who is worth more as a language teacher, the native speaker or the non-native speaker? This point had already been raised in an influential language teaching forum like TESOL with their ground-breaking statement on Non-native Speakers of English (TESOL, 1991). And now, for the first time, NNSs were the object of research and were mentioned in academic literature. Just mentioning NNS teachers in an academic context gave the whole group a visibility it had never enjoyed before. Beyond the particular outcomes of Medgyes’ research, its fundamental value was the assertion of the existence of NNS teachers and their intrinsic value for the profession. Naming NNSs and making them visible in front of the language teaching and research community was close to giving them a citizenship card. It was, to put it in a metaphorical way, the first hole in the wall of native speakerism, the unquestioned ideology of supremacy of the monolingual NS as the ideal language teacher,

and what is more, as the default language teacher. In the last few years, visibility among the research community has been granted by an increasing number of papers dealing with NNESTs, and more specially by the publication of books exclusively centred on the study of NNESTs (Braine, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005).

Although research on native and non-native speaking teachers is still lacking in many aspects and suffers from some important problems,⁵ it has so far come up with some relevant findings. These include very diverse aspects that range from students' general openness and acceptance of non-native teachers, especially after having had sufficient experiences involving NNESTs, to teachers' self-perceptions and characteristic lack of self-confidence. The latter is a particularly sensitive aspect, as it points to aspects of professional self-esteem, and hints at the existence of an inferiority complex. Medgyes had already mentioned the existence of a generic inferiority complex affecting NNESTs (1994: 38), and the effects of being a non-native teacher on professional self-esteem were also addressed, albeit in a rather marginal way, by Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999), Varghese et al. (2005), Rajagopalan (2005), and Llurda et al. (2006). Llurda (2009) brings up a more radical image to this debate by stating that many NNESTs suffer from a syndrome that is somehow resonant of the Stockholm Syndrome, inasmuch as NNESTs suffer from discrimination by NSs who are preferred in many professional situations, but they still find a justification for such a discriminatory practice and do in fact agree with the choice, as shown by research pointing at NNESTs' typical preference for NS models and NS teachers (Llurda and Huguët, 2003; Sifakis and Sougari, 2005; Jenkins, 2007). Language teachers and researchers' lack of positive attitudes towards English as a *Lingua Franca* was revealed by Jenkins (2007), and Sifakis and Sougari (2005) showed that Greek teachers took a rather norm-bound approach (i.e., based on a NS model) to the teaching of English pronunciation. I have argued elsewhere (Llurda, 2004) for the importance for NNESTs to adopt the formulation of English as an International Language or English as a *Lingua Franca* in order to develop a positive self-image and feel rightfully entitled to teach a language that is not their mother tongue. It appears, though, that many NNESTs still refuse to embrace such an approach to ELT.

2.2.1 Is There Anything Wrong with NS Teachers?

In light of the previous discussion, one may think that the main purpose of the above research was to show the 'inadequacy' of NSs and an alleged 'superior quality' of NNSs as teachers. This is far from being true. Claiming the need for a higher role and better appreciation of the NNS condition does not carry with it a downgrading of the NS. Any change of perspective that affirms the qualities of NNSs may challenge those NSs who are convinced that their sole NS condition makes them good teachers. However, the reality is that the majority of NS teachers – those who worry about their professional training and have a genuine interest in

better understanding and empathizing with the situation experienced by language learners – will only agree with an enhanced status of NNSs. In fact, a great impulse has been given to the increasing assertiveness of NNSs by many NSs who have contributed with their work to demystify the notion of the NS and value the capability of NNSs as teachers (for example Phillipson, 1992; V. Cook, 1999; Modiano, 2005). What is important here is to accept that all teachers, NS or NNS, need pedagogical training and knowledge of the language being taught (Derwing and Munro, 2005) regardless of their place of birth, race or self-attachment to any given speech community. And this includes those NNS teachers who do not share their students' L1.

2.2.2 Outcomes of Research

The artificial construct of the separation between native speakers and non-native speakers in language teaching that was discussed at the beginning of this chapter has been recently dealt with by several researchers who have used two major arguments to eliminate such a discrimination: (a) minimizing any perceived differences between the two groups; and (b) vindicating the role of the non-native speaker as a rightful language teacher.

(a) Minimizing perceived differences between NSs and NNSs

The difficulty in establishing boundaries that separate NSs and NNSs has been the focus of a few studies centred on speakers who experience difficulty in defining themselves either as NSs or NNSs. Nayar (1994) provided an initial discussion on the need to overcome the NS–NNS dichotomy, and Liu (1999) conducted a series of interviews with seven language teachers to conclude that there was no consensus regarding the meaning and implications of the terms NS and NNS. Liu expressed the need to think of NNS professionals as being along 'a multidimensional and multilayered continuum' (p. 163).

The fact that three of the participants in the study could not affiliate themselves with either the NS or the NNS category indicates that in some cases such a clear-cut distinction may not be easy or even plausible to make. Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (2001) also reported four cases that may be considered difficult to categorize under the NS/NNS distinction. Bringing up cases that do not conform to a commonly established categorization questions the adequacy of such a categorization. These studies illustrate the existence of intermediate areas between the stereotyped NS and NNS, which provide evidence for the existence of a continuum that ranges from extreme English nativeness (e.g., a monolingual speaker of standard American or British English) to clear non-nativeness (e.g., a learner of English as a foreign language at the beginner level). And, in Liu's own words: 'if we perceive all ESL professionals on a NS–NNS continuum, then it is their competence and professional growth that will define their professionalism' (Liu, 1999: 175).

Thinking in terms of language users rather than language learners (V. Cook, 2005) strengthens the above argument, as there is no longer the need to focus on native speaker models in language teaching. In this respect, the formulation of English as an International Language (Sharifian, 2009) or English as a *Lingua Franca* (Seidlhofer, 2004) comes in handy. A language that is truly international is not owned by any group of speakers (Widdowson, 1994) and competence is based on the capacity to use language forms that are intelligible for the global community (Modiano, 1999).

(b) Vindicating the role of non-native speakers in language teaching

Language teaching has never been a straightforward activity. Research has emphasized the complexities of language teaching and language learning, and different methodological approaches have sometimes embraced opposite principles, a further sign of the difficulty of finding a simple answer to the question of how to teach a language successfully. Recent research on NNESTs has additionally shown that language teaching can be successfully performed by non-native teachers, and therefore has minimized the importance of an absolute knowledge of standard and colloquial language forms by stressing the added value of teachers who have a shared experience of struggling to learn the language with their students.

Some of the advantages of NNESTs that have been reported in the literature, mainly by Medgyes (1994: 51), Tang (1997: 579) and Seidlhofer (1999: 235–242), are founded on the premise that they have walked along the same path as their students, sharing with them their previous experience as language learners, although this experience may be different whether the teacher and students are native speakers of the same or a different language. The main advantages are listed here:

- They are a model for imitation
- They can successfully teach strategies for language learning
- They have a high level of awareness of the language and can supply information about it
- They can anticipate the difficulties that will appear in the learning process
- They can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of students
- They often have the same mother tongue as their students, which allows them to use it when necessary, and act as mediators between different languages and cultures
- They have more familiarity with the local context, and specifically with the syllabus and examination procedures.

The above advantages pinpoint the added value of having a non-native teacher, something that had never been considered in previous literature on language education. Further research has focused on perceptions of different agents and experiences aiming at transforming negative perceptions into a higher appreciation of NNSTs' role in language teaching.

2.2.3 Internal Diversity among Native and Non-native Speakers

Having reviewed the arguments for minimizing the differences between NSs and NNSs, let us now look at another issue that has often been overlooked in the literature. This is the question of internal diversity within the NS and NNS constituencies.

The question is pertinent as NSs and NNSs are too often opposed to each other without consideration of internal differences. Characteristics of NNSs are opposed to those of NSs with no critical discussion of the different factors that may alter such a straightforward generalization. As Holliday (2005) pointedly remarks, NNSs have often been reduced to a single homogeneous group in many discussions, with the result of reducing their complex reality to a simple stereotype valid for all individual cases. This is similar to what has happened in many other contexts, in which the 'others' are denied any internal variation and are reduced to a series of false stereotypes. Holliday calls this practice 'native speakerism', which constitutes one manifestation of the more general phenomenon of culturism and, eventually, racism. Acknowledging the existence of internal diversity within a group is the first step to accept their complexities and understand their particular circumstances.

In the field of NSs, a basic distinction needs to be established between well-trained teachers and what Árvai and Medgyes (2000) call 'backpackers', who spend one or two years teaching English in a foreign country without any previous training, experience or knowledge of the local language and culture. More recently, Ellis (2002, 2006) has placed great emphasis on the monolingual/multilingual dichotomy. One of her main arguments is that a key dimension in ESL teachers' content knowledge is 'the teacher's knowledge/experience of the acquisition of the content in formal contexts' (Ellis, 2006: 3), whereby the content can be 'English' (restricted to NNSs) or 'a second language' (open to bilingual NSs). According to Ellis (2006: 4) monolingual NSs' experience of language learning 'is in the babyhood and the process of learning is not accessible for examination by the speaker'.

In his discussion of the goals of ELT, V. Cook (2007: 226) points out that:

(they) include benefits for the learner's mind, such as those gained through the manipulation of language; benefits for the learner's future career; opportunities to emigrate; and the effects on society whether through the integration of minority groups, the creation of a skilled work-force, the growth of international trade.

As none of those goals involve the need to approximate native speakers, Cook demonstrates that what ELT really is concerned with is the development of the L2 user – 'somebody who knows and uses a second language at any level' (V. Cook, 2007: 228). Such a concept 'recognizes that L2 users are different kinds of people from monolingual native speakers, and need to be evaluated as people who speak two languages, not as inefficient natives' (V. Cook, 2007: 229). Cook's concept of

the L2 user nicely complements that of multi-competence (V. Cook, 1992) and its basic claim that the different languages spoken by a multilingual person combine in their mind in a way that creates a new complex system in which both languages interact rather than simply one being added to the other (Grosjean, 1989).

2.3 Critical Approaches to Language Teaching: The Decline and Fall of the NS

Native speaker teachers have traditionally enjoyed the benefit of being considered the default language teacher, the one who is rightfully entitled to carry out the task of teaching a new language to speakers of other languages. Hundreds of years of contact between languages have involved multiple occasions for language learning and language teaching among their speakers. However, only within the last two hundred years has there been a serious concern about the process and the methodology used in teaching a language, including what a teacher needs to be able to do inside the classroom. This has often involved a reaction to the traditional grammar-translation method and an appraisal of native speakers as providers of input and capable of naturally using the language in the classroom. The Natural Approach, the Audio-Lingual Method, and Communicative Language Teaching, among others, have emphasized the teacher's fluency and capacity to use the language. Unfortunately, this reaction to traditional language teaching did also bring a discredit and a rejection of aspects of language teaching that might prove useful and effective in many classrooms, such as the use of the L1 in the language classroom (V. Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2005), the use of translation as a pedagogical tool (G. Cook, 2007), or the development of learners' language awareness (Cots, 2008).

And only at the end of the twentieth century have we finally come to grips with the idea that non-native speakers may be as good teachers as natives, and that good language teaching requires a good command of the language plus the right amount of training and ability to teach a language. It may be argued that in many countries (for example Spain, UK, Japan) non-native teachers have always been in a higher position than natives, but this has mainly been due to bureaucracy related to nationality requirements for accessing a permanent language teaching job in the public system of schools. Successful teaching will come out of the balanced combination of the two factors: command of the language as well as training and ability to teach it.

Simon Borg (2006) points to the native–non-native distinction as one of the characteristic elements of language teaching, inexistent in the teaching of any other subject matter. It is obvious that there are no native speakers of, say, physics, or mathematics. But it might nonetheless be argued that in order to be a good professor of Spanish history, one needs to be a Spaniard. Interestingly, nobody has made such an assertion. It appears, then, that the need to be native is only perceived as reasonable when we use the word 'language', instead of 'history',

‘geography’ or any other discipline. The realization of such an unfair state of affairs has triggered research on NNESTs and the appraisal of such a group of teachers, with the consequence of an abandonment of the idealization of the NS as the default teacher. But, should we rejoice in the fall of the NS as the default teacher in the language research and teaching literature? I think we should, only if what we mean is a reconsideration of the place in the language teaching world of all kinds of professionals, be they NSs or NNSs, white-Anglo Saxons, or members of any other ethnic group. A parallel case that comes to mind in this discussion is the struggle of women in society. Some attacks on feminism have been unfairly grounded on the claim that feminists are against men and are fighting against the opposite sex. This is utterly wrong, and it is, however, absolutely true that current feminism seeks to reconsider the role of men in society in order to recognize women’s right to access all social spaces. Similarly, NNSs have now finally gathered the strength to voice their concerns and claim their right to be heard in the language teaching and research community. As claimed by Flowerdew (2000, 2001), the voice of NNSs’ has often been silenced in influential professional and research forums. And as Jenkins (2007) demonstrates, their concerns are still fairly invisible in many professional publications addressed to the international language teaching community. Also, similar to the feminist movement, there is widespread reluctance towards accepting the new discourse (Holliday, 2005) as well as it is also likely that an excess of enthusiasm may have taken some writers to express their opinions in a far too emphatic way. Despite the increasing publication of studies centred on NNESTs (Moussu and Llurda, 2008), I personally feel these are still marginalized and perceived as non-relevant by the majority of the language teaching community. And, what is more, a great deal of NNESTs are still convinced that the good teacher is the NS teacher (Llurda and Huguet, 2003; Llurda, 2009).

2.4 Final Remarks

Sifakis (2004), in his analysis of teachers’ awareness of English as an international language (EIL) makes a useful distinction between three areas in the debate surrounding EIL: ‘theory’, ‘reality’ and ‘application’. In his own words:

‘Theory’ is concerned with the delineating and defining of the EIL paradigm. ‘Reality’ is related to observations of actual EIL communication and an understanding of the various cognitive and communicative processes involved. Finally, ‘application’ is related to the teaching of EIL and refers to those pedagogical considerations that the EIL teacher should be aware of. (Sifakis, 2004: 238)

This distinction proves very useful to separate the range of influence of recent innovative ideas in applied linguistics, such as the concept of EIL with all its implications as discussed in the literature, and the one that takes centre stage in

this chapter, i.e., the native speaker/non-native speaker distinction. If we look at the *theory* domain, the discussion has taken us a long way from Chomsky's reference to 'the idealized native speaker' (Chomsky, 1965: 24), to the current critical views on 'nativeness', 'the ownership of a language', 'competence', etc. However, *reality* in EIL and on NS–NNS language teaching performance remains elusive and short of systematic descriptions that factually account for what actually happens in everyday EIL interactions and language classes involving native and non-native speaking teachers. Finally, when it comes to the *application* of ideas established in the *theory* to practical language teaching, say the non-ownership of English by native speakers (Widdowson, 1994), the concept of the L2 user as opposed to the L2 learner (V. Cook, 2002, 2005), or the importance of aiming at a fully intelligible level of competence in the study of foreign language rather than an impossible native model, evidence shows that there is a great divide between theory and practice, or between researchers' ideas and practitioners' views (Jenkins, 2007; Llurda, 2009). Such a divide must be interpreted in line with Markee's argument regarding research innovations, which do never advance in a linear way and sometimes take long paths before they are finally allowed to permeate into the general 'common sense' opinion (Markee, 1997).

Getting back to the main thread of this chapter, I will use a metaphorical image to refer to the current status of native speakers in linguistics, applied linguistics and language teaching. Using language common in sports literature (and military, as well) the foundations of 'native speakerism' have been hit hard by current critical research on language teaching, but in no way have they been destroyed, as there is a strong defence made up of the thousands of teachers and laypeople who associate one person with one language, and thus regard monolingual speakers as ideal speakers, additionally disregarding the complexities and internal diversity which exist within any given language. The native speaker is under attack but I would dare say it still is in a pretty good shape.

Complexity and diversity are two terms that define our contemporary world, and we cannot afford failing to incorporate diversity in all aspects of our lives involving language: from language analysis to language teaching and language use. Contemplating all language users, both native and non-native, as collaborators in a context of increasing international communication, and advancing from theory to practice in the understanding of the implications for teaching English as an international language, are the best way to comprehend the complexity and diversity in our profession.

Notes

- 1 I am grateful to Tracey M. Derwing and Vivian Cook for their comments and suggestions which greatly helped me improve this chapter. Yet, all errors and shortcomings are exclusively my fault.
- 2 A recent example happened during 2008, when a debate took place in the list related to the convenience to move on and work towards becoming an 'Interest

- Section' within the TESOL organization. Some members raised their concerns over the maintenance of the 'non-native' label in the name of the group.
- 3 See that in natural sciences, the term non-native is typically used as a synonym to 'invasive' and 'damaging' to the 'native' or 'autochthonous' species, like the following quote: 'Many weeds have pretty flowers, but they are a growing pain. They crowd our native plants which provide wildlife with food and shelter. These invaders are called aliens or non-natives. They are *Biological pollutants*'. (Copied from an exhibition panel at Gooseberry Falls State Park, Minnesota, USA, May 2001).
 - 4 Callahan (2006) presents an interesting study of NNS teachers of Spanish in the US.
 - 5 See Moussu and Llorca, 2008, for a more complete discussion on methods of research used so far and some of their problems.

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CHAPTER

3

Language User Groups and Language Teaching

Vivian Cook

3.1 Introduction

A Japanese woman is using Spanish on holiday in Spain; a Cantonese man is speaking Mandarin in London; a Swiss German child is reading High German aloud at school in Zurich; a Bengali-speaking Muslim is reading Arabic to practise his religion; two Danish and Brazilian businessmen are using English to do business with each other; André Brink is code-switching from English to Afrikaans as he writes a novel: L2 users' lives, experiences and situations are as varied as human lives can be. At one level all second language learners are the same: they're all human beings with human minds. Whatever human beings have in common as mental potential is shared with L2 users – the universals of language whether the syntax of Universal Grammar (Cook and Newson, 2007), the processes of Processability Theory (Pienemann, 1998) or the semantic primes of Wierzbicka (1996). In everything else, L2 users reflect the amazing diversity of humanity.

This chapter explores the consequences of this for future directions of language teaching. It argues that most language teaching methods ignore the range of L2 users and of their purposes; they imply they are a universal panacea to be applied across the board almost regardless of learner or situation, whether the communicative language teaching world epidemic of the 1970s or the current vogue for task-based learning.

3.2 Multi-competence Background

In the early 1990s I proposed a perspective called multi-competence, originally defined as 'the compound state of a mind with two grammars' (Cook, 1991). This was reworded as 'the knowledge of two languages in one mind' (Cook, 2007a), because some people took the term 'grammar' in the narrow meaning of syntax rather than in the broad meaning of linguistic competence intended. Multi-competence emphasized the relationships of the languages in the same person's mind rather than the separate existence of a first language and an interlanguage. Multi-competence is not a model of second language acquisition in the same sense as say Universal Grammar (UG) but is more a way of looking at second language

acquisition from the vantage point of the L2 user as a distinct kind of person rather than from that of the native speaker – all of the people described above are doing things no monolingual can do. Multi-competence can therefore have implications for many areas of L2 acquisition and use, even for UG (Cook, 2009).

The multi-competence perspective was productive in supporting the growing movement to regard the L2 user as a person in their own right rather than as a defective native speaker, in highlighting the reverse transfer effects of the second language on the first, and in showing the distinctive ways of bilingual thought, as summarized in Cook (2007a). The implications for teaching that have emerged concern the role of the first language, the nature of the second language (L2) user's knowledge of the second language and the goals of language teaching (Cook, 2007b).

As multi-competence came out of a Chomskyan tradition, it started with the individual's knowledge of language. Cook (2007c) distinguished five meanings of 'language', summarized in the following table:

<i>Meanings of 'language'</i>	
Lang ₁ :	a representation system known by human beings – 'human language'
Lang ₂ :	an abstract entity – 'the English language'
Lang ₃ :	a set of sentences – everything that has or could be said – 'the language of the Bible'
Lang ₄ :	the possession of a community – 'the language of French people'
Lang ₅ :	the knowledge in the mind of an individual – 'I have learnt French as a foreign language for 8 years'

So multi-competence was conceived of as Lang₅ rather than as social in the Lang₄ meaning of 'the possession of a community' or as societal in the Lang₂ sense of 'an abstract external entity'. Others were taking up this point about the restriction to Lang₅. Kelly Hall et al. (2006) made 'a case for a usage-based view of multi-competence' (220). Brutt-Griffler (2002) proposed a Lang₄ 'the multi-competence of the community'; rather than assuming communities have a single language, we should start by seeing how languages relate to each other within the community. Jenkins (2006) pointed out the absence of ELF (English as Lingua Franca) from multi-competence, exemplifying a gap in second language acquisition (SLA) research in general.

Another weakness that became apparent was that multi-competence seemed to treat language knowledge as static rather than constantly changing. In terms of the individual, language knowledge is in flux, according to dynamic systems theory (Herdina and Jessner, 2002; De Bot et al., 2005): 'all language knowledge is socially contingent and dynamic' (Kelly Hall et al., 2006: 229). In the first language, a person's language knowledge may be growing, as in children acquiring their first language, or declining, as in first language attrition through injury, ageing or change of circumstances when another language becomes more important to them. The window during which linguistic competence is static may be small and

untypical. In the second language too, L2 users may be acquiring the second language or may be losing it through attrition: all is change. Individual multi-competence in a sense builds this in through the changing relationship between the two languages in the same mind on the integration continuum (Cook, 2003); the term 'attrition' with its negative connotations of loss and damage is no longer appropriate within the system as a whole. The balance and form of the two languages changes over time and shifts dynamically. The relationships between languages in the multilingual community is also continuously shifting, say the growing problems between French-speaking and Dutch-speaking areas of Belgium or the use of Spanish as a 'niche' lingua franca in London (Block, 2006) or Italian among migrant workers in German-speaking parts of Switzerland (Schmid, 1994).

3.3 Communities and Language User Groups

The social aspects of language have mostly been discussed through the concept of community. Sociolinguistics has come up with many definitions of the speech community (Patrick, 2002), whether as people living in an area such as the Lower East Side of New York (Labov, 1966) or Bergen (Kerswill, 1994), people united by a uniform style of speech (Bloomfield, 1926) or a set of evaluative norms (Labov, 1966), or people who belong to a social network (Gumperz and Levinson, 1996). A perpetual dilemma is whether you first find an existing community defined in, say, geographical terms and then look at the languages they use, or you find a language and look for the community of its speakers: is the sociological group the given or the language?

While language is often seen as a shared core value of the community (Smolicz et al., 2003), it is not criterial, as in the case of Jewish communities speaking diverse languages (Myhill, 2003); members of the community are not necessarily fluent in its language, as with Scottish Gaelic (Dorian, 1981). People may be part of a cultural community without speaking its language – how many Irish Americans learn Irish? The concept of language community can be circular when the number of speakers of a language is taken to be the number of members of a culture, as sometimes happens for Welsh (Laitin, 2000).

The core value of a community is, however, almost invariably taken to be a *single* language; a minority ethnic community is seen as identifying itself with its own language, protecting it and maintaining it as a heritage. 'An individual's use of two languages supposes the existence of two different language communities; it does not suppose the existence of a bilingual community' (Mackey, 1972: 554). This denies the reality of the multilingual communities in the world with more than one language at their core; India for example has a 'Three language Formula' 3±1 system in which everyone has to know Hindi and English plus the local state language; if the local state language is either Hindi or English, they only need two languages; if they live in a state where Hindi or English is not the state language and they speak another language, they need four languages (Laitin, 2000).

So does a second language confer partial membership of another monolingual community or full membership of a bilingual community – Brutt-Griffler's (2002) 'multi-competence of the community'? English has a L2 user group of people across the world, whether businessmen, academics or international footballers, for whom the native speaker community is virtually irrelevant. Having two languages may bring people into a different multilingual community. Or it may allow them to belong to a global virtual community in a possible social network unrelated to geographical proximity or to any common language identity in the usual terms.

Let us do the multi-competence reversal of viewing the multilingual community as normal and the monolingual community as an aberration. Most nations in the world regardless of their official positions as monolingual or bilingual actually contain speakers of many different languages. According to the 2006 census, Toronto for instance has 2,746,480 mother tongue English speakers, 58,590 mother tongue French but 2,160,330 speakers of neither English nor French, the official languages of Canada (Canada online, 2007); London has a similar profile with 300 odd languages spoken. At one level people may belong to native speaker communities who talk to fellow-members, say the English speakers, the Italians and the Chinese in Toronto regarded separately. Clearly the overall community in these conurbations is multilingual, with speakers of the non-status language using a second language English to communicate with the English speakers and with members of other communities, Italians with Chinese, etc., or even another language as a lingua franca, say the use of Italian in Toronto by Vietnamese and Poles in their workplaces (Norton, 2000). Just as the concept of individual multi-competence stressed the L2 user in their own right, so the multi-competence of the community stresses the multilingual community in its own right, not as a collection of people with different L1s but as a community with an integral use of two or more languages. According to Canagarajah (2007), 'Linguistic diversity is at the heart of multilingual communities. There is constant interaction between language groups, and they overlap, interpenetrate, and mesh in fascinating ways.'

3.4 The De Swaan Hierarchy

How can the groups that language users belong be categorized? Siegel (2006) used 'sociolinguistic settings', based on the idea of dominant language. An alternative is the hierarchy proposed by De Swaan (2001), shown in Figure 3.1, partly because it does not imply dominance in power terms.

In this scheme, languages differ in terms of geographical and functional areas – where they are used and why. At the bottom come languages that are *peripheral*; they are used within a circumscribed territory for the purposes of a local community. This may be a small section within a country, say Gaelic in Scotland, cover a whole country, Japanese in Japan, or extend across countries, Kurdish in Turkey, Iran and Iraq. As the term 'peripheral' seems to convey some evaluation, I prefer the term *local* as more neutral. Next up the hierarchy come *central* languages used within a geographical area for communication between different groups mostly



Figure 3.1 The hierarchy of languages (adapted from De Swaan, 2001)

for education and government, say English in India used by native speakers of many languages for everyday public functions. Above this come *supercentral* languages that have a wider geographical spread and are used for cross-national communication for a limited range of functions, say Arabic or Latin for religious ceremonies, or Japanese for karate. Finally at the top come *hypercentral* languages used chiefly by non-native speakers across the globe for a large range of purposes.

3.5 Groups of Language Users

Language users can be divided into groups according to the four De Swaan levels.

Group A. people speaking their L1 to each other	English L1 speakers in London or Polish L1 speakers in West London	native local language
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The first group is people using their first language with each other in the local language geographical territory. This is the sole group to contain only monolingual native speakers of the language. A monolingual Londoner, Berliner or Parisian can get by on their first language alone. The size or location of a speech community does not affect the issue of whether people are native speakers of a local language: you do not forfeit your native speaker status by belonging to a minority

community even if a local variety, say French in Louisiana. Nor indeed do you stop being a native speaker by moving to another language community or by ceasing to use it altogether – monks under a vow of silence are still native speakers. Group A communities use their native local language for all the possible monolingual language functions of human life. It is not usually questioned whether Group A native speakers are successful, since, apart from those with a disability, they are successful by definition: a native speaker is whatever a native speaker is.

Group B. people using an L2 within a larger community	Bengali L1 speakers using English L2 in shops etc. in London	central language
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The second group consists of permanent residents using a central second language to communicate with the wider community outside their local language group, in Siegel's terms a dominant L2 setting (Siegel, 2006). Some local language groups may be indigenous in that they have been established for generations, say the old-established Bengali speakers in London or Gujarati speakers in Brooklyn, or may predate the use of the central language, for instance Aborigines in Australia. Others may be short-term immigrant communities, like Polish workers in England.

Group B constitutes the classic 'second language' situation – a language 'that becomes another tool of communication alongside the first language . . . typically acquired in a social environment in which it is actually spoken' (19). The first language remains alongside the second language for other social and cultural purposes, probably the case most reported in language contact and shift, for example Fishman (1991). The central language may be the language of government and so the means through which speakers of purely local languages fit into the society structurally, in Siegel's terms, an institutional L2 setting (Siegel, 2006). The central language is not, however, used exclusively for communicating with the monolingual Group A but also with fellow-users with different native languages. The Bengali shop owner in Tower Hamlets uses English for filling in his income tax return but also for speaking with Arabic customers, both equally English in nationality, as are most of the speakers of the 300 first languages of London (Baker and Eversley, 2000). The central language enables people to cooperate with each other for everyday living within the same area. The native speakers of anything but the central language have to learn it or be taught it.

While some of the users of a central language are Group A monolingual natives, others are L2 users from many other L1 local languages, say the situation in the states of India. Success for the non-native learner of a central language means the ability to use it for all the necessary purposes of their public lives and their unofficial contacts. In accordance with the multi-competence view of the reverse transfer effects from the L2 to the L1, this may mean that the L1 is to some extent affected by the central language; Cantonese speakers in Newcastle upon Tyne for instance say 'tiojau' ('table wine') rather than 'jau' ('wine') as used in Hong Kong and 'bafong' ('bathroom') rather than 'saisanfong' (Li Wei, 1994: 66).

Group C. people using an L2 internationally for specific functions	international communicators; purpose-specific (Seaspeak), academic, religious, business, etc.	supercentral language
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The third group consists of people using a supercentral language across national or linguistic borders for a specific range of functions of language rather than for all functions; the closest correspondence in Siegel’s scheme is coexisting L2 settings (Siegel, 2006). Religions for example have often required believers to use a particular language, whether Hebrew, Arabic, Latin or, occasionally, English. In England for many years civil engineers had to study German because of its importance to their profession. French was once the international language of world diplomacy. Sometimes this has led to specialized international versions of the language for particular functions, for example *SeaSpeak* (English for Mariners) (Weeks et al., 1988), *Simplified Technical English* (ASD, 2007), *Simple English Wikipedia* (2008) or *Special English* used for broadcasting on the Voice of America (VOA, 2008).

Supercentral languages can be used for wider public or private functions across different countries. Swahili has 770 thousand native speakers mostly in Tanzania but 30 million lingua franca speakers spread across several African countries (Gordon, 2005). While Group C includes monolingual native speakers, these may be outnumbered by the non-natives; nativeness is not a criterion for admission. Success is measured by the ability to use the supercentral language for specific functions, say landing a plane safely via Air Control English, or by the ability to use it within its international territory, for instance French as part of Francophone culture in Central Africa and France. A particular group is language teachers using their second language for teaching in classrooms – a specialized function of a language and hence falling under this category. In many cases supercentral languages make a token gesture to the native speakers of the country where the language once originated, say France for French or England for English, often showing a historical connection with the colonializing power, say France for Central Africa or Spain for much of Latin America.

Group D. people using an L2 globally for a wide range of functions	English as Lingua Franca	hypercentral language
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The fourth group consists of people using a hypercentral second language, perforce English, globally across all countries and used for all possible second language functions, rather than the limited set in Group C. While various alternative names have been used for English in this international role, such as World English and English as an International Language, the current term seems to be English as Lingua Franca (ELF) (Seidlhofer, 2004) – English as a global means of

communication between native speakers of other languages. People who speak ELF belong to communities that cross frontiers, united by their common interests – ‘a virtual speech community’ (Canagarajah, 2007: 925). In Graddol’s view, learning English no longer counts as learning another language; it is an addition to the three Rs necessary for primary school children everywhere (Graddol, 2006). The fact that some people may speak the hypercentral language as native speakers is irrelevant to the use of the language, indeed may be a handicap (House, 2003). The concepts of native speaker or home country are immaterial to these L2 users; the native speaker Group A are only one of the possible types of user, whose local language English may differ significantly from hypercentral ELF. House (2003) distinguishes between languages for identification and languages for communication: no-one is a native speaker of ELF; no-one treats it as their prime identity; they simply use it for communicating with other people like themselves.

The De Swaan analysis treats language users in terms of wider group membership and of language function. De Swaan (2001) sees the acquisition of second languages as typically going up the hierarchy. Speakers of a local language have to learn a central language to function in their own society, say speakers of Ulster Scots learning English in Northern Ireland. Speakers of a central language need to learn a supercentral language to function within their region, say speakers of Ha learning Swahili in Tanzania. Speakers of a supercentral language need the hypercentral language to function globally, true of anybody but a native speaker of English. Some L2 users move in the opposite direction down the hierarchy; an immigrant to a new area may need to acquire the local language, say Finnish in Finland or French in Quebec, seen by Siegel (2006) as a minority language setting. In this case, passing for the monolingual native speakers that make up Group A may be a possible motivation, even if unrealistic for most people. De Swaan (2001) claims that L2 users are the glue that keeps these societies together; without people who can bridge the language gaps they would cease to function. For SLA research and language teaching the lesson is that there are many groups of second language users, not one standard type, and that these differ in the functions that they use the second language for.

The De Swaan hierarchy does not, however, encompass the many groups of L2 users to whom the two dimensions of territory and function hardly apply. Let us try and sketch one or two of these other groups in terms of their membership and language function.

Group E. people historically from a particular community (re-) acquiring its language as an L2	Mandarin for other Chinese dialect speakers; returnees	identity language
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People descended from a particular cultural or ethnic group may want to learn its language, for instance to talk to their grandparents. Mandarin Chinese is now being learnt by 30 million adults round the world (Graddol, 2006); the Confucius

Institutes for teaching Chinese around the globe have found that many of their students are ethnic Chinese wanting to learn Mandarin; in the United States 140,000 people are attending heritage Chinese classes (Brecht and Rivers, 2005). Language maintenance classes take place in most British cities, in London ranging from Polish to Greek. Some people are trying to find their roots through language; they don't want to be L2 users so much as participants in a Group A cultural tradition. The multilingual De Swaan hierarchy seems beside the point; the language is not being learnt for its inter-group value, only as a way of identifying with an ethnic or national group – an *identity language*. The measure of success is the L2 users' ability to feel part of their historically related community (Valdés, 2005).

Group F. people using an L2 with spouses, siblings or friends	bilingual couples: parents and children	personal language
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Some L2 users, however, keep their user language within a small social group. People have often joked that the best way of learning a language is to marry someone who speaks it; bilingual married couples feel they are quite capable of passing for native speakers (Piller, 2002). Some parents choose to use a language with their children they will not encounter outside the home, whether George Saunders (1988) using German in Australia or d'Armond Speers using Klingon (d'Armond Speers, 2006). Children, chiefly twins, sometimes create private or secret languages of their own (Thorpe et al., 2001). But unrelated pairs of people can decide to use a second language: Henry VIII wrote love letters to Ann Boleyn and Katherine of Aragon in French (Vatican City, 2006), the language of courtly love. Success for this personal language is perhaps immeasurable. The De Swaan hierarchy of territory and function has nothing to do with these pairs and handfuls of people.

As well as these six reasonably distinct groups, other groupings seem to combine these categories in one way or another. Tourists for example expect to be able to get along with L2 English, regardless of the local language – Japanese tourists using English in Cuba. English for tourism is no longer a matter of English-speaking tourists going to non-English speaking countries or non-English speaking tourists going to English-speaking countries: 74 per cent of tourism through English involves only L2 users (World Tourism Organisation, cited in Graddol (2006)). In other words tourism for English is now a question of the global use of the hypercentral language. But tourists are only one example of the general group of short-term visitors to another country or area with a different language. Others include: athletes going to the Olympic Games, businessmen attending conferences, policemen investigating crimes, pilgrims, British retirees visiting their villas in Spain in so far as they need Spanish at all, the list is endless. All of these have short-term needs for a language, whether for the hypercentral language or for central or supercentral languages. But mostly these short-term visitors need it for very specific purposes to do with their visit and with any associated social functions. It seems irrelevant to the groups A–F since it is not related to territory.

A further group is people gaining an education through a second language. Universities around the globe from Germany to Dubai have started teaching in English, not so much as a lingua franca as a means to an educational end. In reverse, students go to another country to get their higher education, Zaireans to Paris, Greeks to England, etc. Group A native speakers are barely relevant to this (except in so far as they can profit by teaching 'their' language). Within this general framework comes the elite bilingualism of children educated in International Schools, whether multilingual, such as the European schools (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993), or taught through a second language, say the French Lycée in London or the Canadian bilingual immersion schools. Success is measured by gaining the appropriate examinations, qualifications, entry to a career, and so on. This education language is probably reserved for movement up the hierarchy to supercentral and hypercentral languages; it is thus distinct from the use of a central Group B language by different local Group As, or by the global use of a hypercentral language, though these may be true for some of its speakers; its closest relationship seems to be with the limited functionality of supercentral languages.

There are also people who return to their country of historical origin and need to re-acquire the first language, or indeed to acquire it for the first time. Examples might be Jews 'returning' to Israel having to learn Hebrew even if they were Yiddish speakers (Fishman, 1991), or Puerto Ricans 'returning' from the US to Puerto Rico (Clachar, 1997). Others are children of expats going back to the country their family originally came from, say Japanese children returning to Japan (Kanno, 2000); these need to acquire the language of the homeland for practical purposes, often finding it extremely difficult. The difference from Group E heritage users is that the language is for active use as a local language, rather than for gaining cultural identity.

A large group consists of children being taught a second language as part of the school curriculum – the classic foreign language situation whether French in England or Spanish in Japan, called by Siegel (2003) an external L2 setting. They may be Group A native speakers of a language or Group B L2 users of a central language; they are usually learning another language that is higher on the De Swaan hierarchy – say French taught in London secondary schools through English to local children whose native languages may be English, Gujarati and Greek. They could not be fitted into the main groups above since their only need for the L2 is in the classroom, their main goal to get through the hurdles of the educational system. Since this group of non-users will figure in the following discussion, we can call them the *CL (Classroom Learner) group*.

Nevertheless some language teaching aims purely at effective classroom L2 use. Community Language Learning for example sees language learning in terms of the benefits for the individual learners without reference to the outside world (Curran, 1976). Task-based learning also often seems to see the point of acquiring the language as being the ability to carry out classroom tasks not necessarily related to the world outside: 'I regard this as desirable but difficult to obtain in practice' (Skehan, 1998: 96).

Finally, it is perhaps obvious that an individual may have multiple memberships in these groups. A professional footballer coming to London needs not just the central language for coping with living there but also the specialized supercentral language of football for interacting with the rest of the team (Kellerman et al., 2005) – a majority of Premiership footballers in England are non-native speakers of English. ‘Each man in his life plays many parts’, simultaneously and consecutively.

3.6 Language Groups and SLA Research

Before turning to the implications of this analysis for language teaching, we should see how these groups are handled by SLA research. All of these groups of L2 users have acquired the language in one way or another. Group B central languages come out of untutored acquisition in the home, the street or the workplace by children or adults. Or they may be the product of education in the school classroom for children or specialist classes for adults. A Bengali child in the East End of London may pick up English knocking about with a football in the park or learn English from a teaching assistant. Some SLA research has looked at this type of acquisition from Dulay and Burt (1973) studying grammatical morphemes acquisition among Spanish-speaking children in California to Hannan (2004) doing the same with East End Bengalis. Central language acquisition by local groups has not however usually been distinguished from other types of acquisition, except through the second/foreign language distinction. Research into the acquisition of a central language relating officially to the society and unofficially to other groups within it has seldom been undertaken, except in terms of the development of such groups through passage to a putative Group A native group.

The supercentral language acquired by Group C, the international specialist communicators, may again be learnt in specialist classes for particular needs, Japanese in judo classes, Arabic in the study of the Koran, French for bilingual secretaries. What English do you need to play football professionally (Kellerman et al., 2005)? How much German to function as a migrant worker (Klein and Dittmar, 1979)? SLA research has rarely looked at the specific properties of such acquisition.

Group D, the acquisition of the hypercentral language, is starting to be studied as a specific form of acquisition. Descriptions of the pronunciation of L2 learners in their own terms rather than native terms have been produced by Jenkins (2002); descriptions of the ways L2 users use grammar to each other are coming out of the ELF movement, for example Seidlhofer (2004). But full accounts of the distinctive acquisition of English as a hypercentral language rather than a local language are some way in the future.

What has occupied the vast majority of SLA research are the CL group of learners in classrooms and the group of immigrants to the United States, usually measuring them in terms of either failure to achieve Group A native standards – ‘Relative

to native speaker's linguistic competence, learners' interlanguage is deficient by definition' (Kasper and Kellerman, 1997: 5) – or of success at carrying out classroom tasks, not by their ability to function in multilingual situations. The *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (Doughty and Long, 2006) presents 21 or so representative examples of specimen research in shaded boxes spread across its chapters. Three of these give no descriptions of the subjects of the research at all; one is a computer simulation. In the remaining 17, the subjects are L2 learners and all but two groups are adult (one being described as students from two high schools in Britain, odd both because Britain as such is not an educational area and 'high school' is a rare designation for schools in England, chiefly used by private schools); they are described as native speakers of English, Arabic, etc. and as 'students' or 'learners'; in 7 studies a native speaker group features as a control. These pieces of research concern English people acquiring Japanese, French, Korean in English-speaking countries; English being learnt by speakers of Japanese, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Finnish and Swedish and by four groups of non-native speakers of unspecified L1s; Italian being learnt by English and French native speakers in an unspecified context; French being learnt by Canadians, German by Swedes. None of the situations used by groups B–D appear to be involved (Of course this does not mean that the original research omitted these details, simply that the writers of the summaries did not think them worth mentioning). No details of other languages known by the learners are supplied, yet one in five of the population of the USA speak a language other than English at home (US Census Bureau, 2003), similar figures probably being true of Canada, the UK and most countries.

Nevertheless all the languages being acquired are supercentral or hypercentral; only a few of the learners speak purely local languages: SLA research goes up the hierarchy even if unwittingly. The research is primarily about the CL group; their implied goal is to be as close as possible to Group A native speakers, not L2 users at all. For all our L2 user groups B–F, what counts is the effectiveness of their use within the different contexts rather than the nativeness of their speech; it is only the CL group for which nativeness is relevant, and this only because the teachers, the education system, etc. and the researchers say so.

SLA research has then been making generalizations about second language acquisition based on the CL group, the only group with no clear goal and no clear community to belong to, and on immigrants considered as supplicants for Group A membership rather than as Group B central language users. Grosjean (1998) showed how careful we must be in specifying the subjects involved in bilingualism research, particularly in terms of language mode. The argument here is that we need to be equally careful in specifying the language groups the learners belong to and want to belong to, rather than treating SLA research as a unified whole. Generalizing from the taught CL group is particularly difficult as we cannot isolate the effects of teaching. Interestingly for many of the other groups teaching is not a major concern; it is simply taken for granted that you have to be multilingual in Central Africa or India.

3.7 Language Groups and Language Teaching

So how can the second language groups B–F be related to second language teaching? We will not deal with Group F, since language teaching is unlikely to be a driving force in this private one-to-one relationship. The sole exception is perhaps the type of teaching known as reciprocal language teaching (Hawkins, 1987), in which pairs of people teach each other their respective languages. Nor will we deal with Group E, which raises a whole host of issues – is Mandarin really a heritage language for a London Cantonese speaker?

3.7.1 *Group B Learning and Teaching of Central Languages*

Historically the teaching of central languages has concerned ethnic minority children and immigrants. Usually these have a local language at home and may be directly taught the language at school or mainstreamed into ordinary classes. They have mostly been measured against the Group A monolingual language (and of course usually found deficient) rather than against its use as a central coordinating language with fellow non-natives as well as with Group A monolinguals. Language teaching needs to recognize Group B L2 use for public functions with Group A officialdom and for social uses with members of Group A and fellow members of Group B. It also needs to take account of the extent to which the overall community is multi-competent or monolingual.

The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum for England (DfES, 2001) provides an example of educational thinking on this topic. The target is four types of learners: settled communities such as Hong Kong, refugees, migrant workers and partners and spouses of learners – all essentially prospective Group B members. It aims at defining ‘in detail the skills, knowledge and understanding that non-native English speakers need in order to demonstrate achievement of the national standards’ (DfES, 2001: 7). In other words, the only goal of ESOL learners is to become part of the Group A rather than part of a Group B: their target behaviour is not multi-competent but monolingual. While the curriculum adapts the delivery of this to the particular needs of ESOL learners, this concerns the means not the target, which is to meet standards appropriate to native speakers, laid down in the master curriculum *A Fresh Start* (DfEE, 1999). The content of the curriculum is defined in terms of ‘can-do’ statements like ‘can make requests’ and in terms of traditional EFL grammar ‘*there is/are + noun (+ prepositional phrase)*’, without any distinction between the needs of a monolingual Group A native speaker and a Group B L2 user. Since the learners of ESOL in England are in fact never going to be members of monolingual Group A, what is needed for this and for other situations like it is a curriculum that recognizes the particular uses and issues associated with the use of a central language by Group B speakers.

3.7.2 *Group C Teaching of Supercentral Languages*

One characteristic of supercentral languages is their limited use across borders for a small range of functions. Since the 1960s this specialized functionality has been

the concern of many an ESP course, ranging from courses for oilrig-workers to courses for general practitioners; to the consternation of one of my ex-students, her first teaching job was English to a Japanese sex-shop manager.

The other characteristic of the supercentral language is its use for public domains in different countries. The most taught languages in European countries are English (50% of all pupils), followed by German in northern and eastern Europe, French in southern Europe, and Russian in the Baltic and Bulgaria (Eurydice, 2005). Apart from English, the hypercentral language, all of these are supercentral languages with a sphere of influence extending outside their own countries and sometimes outside Europe, say with French and Spanish. Language learning in schools in Europe is overwhelmingly upward in the De Swaan hierarchy towards supercentral languages and the hypercentral language.

The project set up by the Council of Europe called the *Common European Framework* aims 'to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination' (Common European Framework, 2008). The Framework achieves this through a comprehensive description of the goals of language teaching, using can-do statements such as 'I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know' and compiling long checklists of different language competences such as socio-cultural competence – 'Everyday living, e.g.: food and drink, meal times, table manners; public holidays . . .'. This description is incorporated in the *Language Passport* (2007), which provides 'a record of language skills, qualifications and experiences' through self-rating of six levels of language achievement based on the can-do statements. For example at level A1 (breakthrough level) understanding, 'I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and my immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly'.

While the European Framework insists 'The language learner becomes *plurilingual* and develops *interculturality*', there is little concession to the actual role and nature of supercentral languages, perhaps because of the EU's avowed neutral stance between its 23 languages. The overall emphasis in the Framework is on the development of an ability to function like a native speaker. Two goals are 'Understanding a conversation between native speakers' and 'Understanding a native speaker interlocutor'. Native speakers are indeed an important group of users of a supercentral language but the non-native speakers are equally important; the group has a shared need to communicate within a territory. The concept of plurilingual, stressed in the Framework, seems to mean a series of interlocking Group A local languages, not the creation of a multi-competent European society. The role of the supercentral languages of the EU is much more than the creation of cloned native speakers for each other language.

3.7.3 Group D Teaching the Hypercentral Language

The hypercentral language English is the one that is all things to all people, not confined to a particular territory or a particular function. Its users do not have to

take part in a particular society, unlike Group B, or utilize more specific functions in a wider territory, unlike Group C; potentially they use English with anyone anywhere for almost any reason. Group A native speakers of English have no special status, indeed may struggle with some aspects of hypercentral English more than their non-native fellows. Group D speakers retain their own L1 identities while at the same time using an L2 to deal with each other – language for communication (House, 2003).

The ELF movement recognizes that L2 users are different from native speakers; it does not promote a native speaker standard for teaching. Rather the aim is to teach this particular variety of English for global use for many functions. The emphasis is not on what native speakers do but on establishing and teaching the ELF variety of English. So the phonological syllabus that learners need to use to communicate with each other is described: don't bother with teaching /ð/ (this) and /θ/ (thistle) as this causes no communication problems; do take care about making vowels longer before voiced consonants in say 'bad/bat', 'league/leak', 'bard/Bart' (Jenkins, 2002). Similarly the grammar of ELF is in the process of being described through the VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) project (Seidlhofer, 2004); drop the third person 's' in 'makes' and replace infinitive 'to' constructions with *that*-clauses, as in 'I want that . . .'.

One meaning of the word 'language' is the Lang₂ sense of 'abstract external entity' (Cook, 2007c) in Popper's world 3 of abstract ideas (Popper, 1972), as in 'the English language' or 'the Chinese language'. Lang₂ is something out there in the world of abstractions, like the rules of football, that can be codified in a dictionary and a grammar book. Countries or nations are often linked to Lang₂, as in the aphorism attributed to Weinreich, 'A language is a dialect that has an army and a navy': English is the language of England, French the language of France regardless of how many people in these countries have other native languages.

ELF clearly does not fit this conventional Lang₂ framework. It is not an institutionalized object with a set of grammar books and dictionaries; what descriptions exist are descriptions of current usage, not of a notional standard. It is not spoken by a social elite in a particular country but by a heterogeneous international community with nothing in common other than ELF. It is not so much the existing Lang₂ language English used as a Lingua Franca so much as Lingua Franca English, an international variety of its own, continually being created for use. Canagarajah (2007) indeed prefers LFE to ELF.

Nor is ELF a question of the choice between local New Englishes. Some varieties of English have indeed become independent of British or American national standards, such as Indian, Singaporean, Australian, and so on; all of these have their own group A local uses for native speakers but also central Group B uses for natives and non-natives; thus Singapore has English as its 'first' language with perhaps few native speakers but a large number of Group B central language users from the Tamil, Chinese and Malay communities. Choosing ELF is not identifying with a local variety but with its exact opposite.

So there has been a danger of confusing the two issues. One issue is whether say British English should be taught as a central language in a particular country

rather than a local standard, say in India. This is a separate issue from whether to teach ELF as a hypercentral language. The functions of English hypercentral and central language are different. Indian English is no more or less appropriate as the target of learning than any other language variety. ELF is not speakers of Indian English talking to speakers of Singaporean English, both using their own local English standards. It is instead speakers of Indian English, Canadian English, Japanese, French, or whatever, talking to each other in the global ELF variety: ELF has distinct linguistic differences in phonology, lexis and grammar of its own. Perhaps the only area where the hypercentral language is bound to the old national standards is spelling where the choice worldwide is between British and American styles, with some local variants, e.g. 'colour' in Canada and two forms 'labor' and 'labour' with different uses in Australia (Cook, 2005).

The distinguishing mark of ELF is that it is dynamic on a different time-scale to the changes in other varieties; it is always in the process of instant creation by its users. 'ELF never achieves a stable or even standardised form' (Meierkord, 2004: 129). ELF users are mostly capable of smoothing out the difficulties of communicating with each other as they go along; 'mistakes', that is to say communication difficulties, are usually remedied by the participants on the spot, though Sampson and Zhao (2003) do provide some hair-raising examples of miscommunication between seamen using ELF. ELF use is characterized by strategies such as *Represent*, in which the listener echoes the speaker's remark for purposes such as checking their understanding (House, 2003), and *Segmentation*, in which the speaker breaks their speech up into smaller chunks that are easier to process (Meierkord, 2004). The characteristics of ELF may be not so much the syntactic patterns and phonemes of the actual product as the processes which give rise to them; another person may produce different forms but use the same overall processes. These processes resemble those involved in other contact situations, such as pidgins, and in the creation of new languages, as in the emergence of Nicaraguan Sign Language (Senghas et al., 2004). ELF is dynamic in the sense that it does not have an established rule-book or standard; it makes it up as it goes along; ELF is a prototype of language as a dynamic system. I have often been asked by teachers what to put in place of the native speaker target for students; my answer used to be that we need a description of what successful L2 users can do, gradually being met by descriptions of ELF. I now feel the answer should be that ELF does not have a final state comparable to that of the Group A native speaker; rather it is a collection of processes that respond to a variety of situations. Teaching is giving people a capability to function, not the knowledge of grammatical rules, lexical items, etc. There is no definable end-state in terms of the aspects of language that L2 users know. Hence appropriate tests of ELF success need to be process-based rather than tests of knowledge – measuring students on how well they can communicate to new L2 users rather than testing book mastery of an ELF syllabus of grammatical and lexical items.

This leads to questions about the value of extensive corpus data such as that in VOICE (Seidlhofer, 2004). Collecting and analysing large amounts of people's speech is an example of Lang₃ – language considered as set of produced sentences

(Cook, 2007c). ELF seems much more a set of processes than a grammar and a vocabulary; it is like describing how people hit the ball in tennis, compared with reporting on their scores. The corpus ‘facts’ of ELF are useful as a basis for working out the processes that produce them but cannot provide a syllabus for language teaching of a conventional kind like the European Framework. Teaching is ideally going to aim at helping people to use these ELF processes rather than any specific grammatical forms or vocabulary. As Canagarajah (2007) says, ‘it is . . . premature to say if LFE [Lingua Franca English] is teachable like other languages in a product-oriented and formalistic manner.’

The dynamic nature of ELF raises a doubt about the proposal for a phonological syllabus based on language learners’ comprehension problems. Learners are still learning; i.e. it is doubtful whether they have sufficient command of the ELF variety to act as a model as assumed in the learner-based syllabus of Jenkins (2002). Pronunciation difficulties should at best be established from experienced ELF users with different L1s, not from inexperienced classroom learners. And they should be based on the processes necessary to the production of ELF English, such as vowel lengthening, rather than on individual phonemes such as /ð/.

3.8 Conclusions

So language teaching has to be clear whether it is teaching

- a local language to people who want to take part in a monolingual local language community, whether Finnish in Finland or Basque in Spain
- a central language to people who want to take part in a multilingual community where the language is used, say English in London or Delhi
- a supercentral language to people who want to use it for specialist cross-national uses, say French for diplomacy
- a hypercentral language to people who want to use it for a range of purposes across the globe.

But most language teaching has not been concerned with these issues. It teaches language – a standard native homeland monolingual variety believed to be good for all purposes and all people. It cannot be assumed that all students of English now need it as a hypercentral language, or that all English children need French as a local language for visiting France, or that all learners of Chinese are heritage learners; and so on. We need to see how language teaching can better prepare people for use of second languages in the diverse situations in which they find themselves in the twenty-first century.

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CHAPTER

4

Integrating Content-based and Task-based Approaches for Teaching, Learning and Research

Teresa Pica

4.1 Introduction

Understanding and appreciating the learner's role in the language learning process has been a recurring theme in language teaching methodology and language learning research over the past several decades. In the 1970s, professional references by Stevick (1976) emphasized humanistic approaches and the learner's affective needs. In the 1980s, Allwright (1984), Krashen and Terrell (1983), and Nunan (1989b) drew attention to learner-centred activities and materials. More recently, Kumaravadivelu (2003) has described a series of macrostrategies aimed at achieving learner autonomy in the classroom. A learner-centred approach was taken by language learning researchers in the analyses of learners' errors (for example, Richards, 1974) and reports of learners' creative construction of their interlanguage grammar (Dulay and Burt, 1974) that dominated the 1970s. This was followed by a focus on the learner's contributions to interaction with an interlocutor as a way to access the input needed for learning. This research, which was initiated by Hatch (1978) and Long (1981) continues to date in the work of Long himself (Long, 2006) and many others (see, for example, Mackey, 2007). The components and parameters of a learner-centred theme continue to be described and debated, and are reflected in the use of content-based and task-based approaches that engage learners in activities authentic to their communicative, academic and professional interests and goals. Strategies to orient the classroom and curriculum towards such practices have been prominent in the training of many of today's language teachers who prepare to teach learners of English and other world languages. This is seen in Canada, for example, where university programs prepare teachers to work in language immersion settings (Genesee et al., 2006), and in the USA, where workshops and courses based on standards set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) provide professional development for teachers of English language learners in the academic mainstream. The practical, professional and theoretical content of their coursework, field assignments and placements prepares these teachers

to analyse the needs of individual learners and to devise activities through which learners can collaborate to help each other.

Increasingly, today's language teachers are also being called upon to work with learners in ways that extend beyond their original training and expertise. Due to budgetary restrictions, teachers of academic content, who once team-taught with second language specialists, are now asked to work on their own. Many language specialists find themselves assigned to subject-content classrooms. This is seen, for example, when they are assigned to classrooms of learners whose needs are anchored in language, but whose goals extend to mastery of academic, professional and technical content and skills. These learners include the millions of language minority children whose classroom enrolment is on the rise throughout the modern world, international students at universities that use a national language as their medium of instruction, and native-born professionals in multinational corporations and research centres that use a world language alongside their mother tongue. Across this broad range of learners, proficiency in a second or foreign language is required for subject-content learning, information exchange and the sharing of ideas and concepts. As policy makers, parents, and society at large speak out on the urgency of meeting this need, language teachers are expected to deliver the needed service.

Many teachers are asked to provide discipline-specific linguistic and communicative skills in the sciences, technology, business and other specialized areas. Still others are expected to promote proficiency in subject content and the language in which that content is available. At first there were prerogatives for programmes to be sequential, so that a language teacher would provide initial L2 instruction and a content teacher would follow with L2 encoded content instruction. This was the model used throughout the USA, in university English language centres, transitional programs in bilingual education, and 'pull out' language classes for younger school learners, who spent much of their day in the academic mainstream. These services have been overshadowed by the demand for instructional activities and approaches that integrate language and content. In addition to what has been described for the USA, ministries of education in Asia, especially South Korea, are revisiting current policy that sequences English language and content instruction and are debating a move towards English and content integration that would begin when students enter primary school (Lee, 2007). Assigned to classrooms in which time and budget constraints reduce the frequency of opportunities for team teaching or even team planning with content teachers, language teachers are expected to achieve effective outcomes in linguistic, communicative and subject matter domains. While such assignments have gained increasing prominence among language teachers, it is not unusual in the USA, especially in urban settings, for subject-content and primary school teachers to be given a similar charge. As a result, English language learners in US schools often find themselves placed in a classroom with a single, very dedicated, but over-extended teacher, whose skills are geared to support either their language or their content needs (Shah, 1999; Carrigg et al., 2004).

As teachers broaden their responsibilities to language learners, findings from second language acquisition (SLA) research offer insights into ways to integrate language and content in the classroom. That such insight is available to teachers reflects the growing complementarity of interests and concerns among theory-based researchers and classroom practitioners (Pica, 1997). Increasingly prominent are their mutual questions about the relationship between language learning and content learning (see, for example, Wesche and Skehan, 2002; Pica, 2002, 2005; Stoller, 2004), and their collaborative studies on content-focused interventions that can facilitate L2 learning (Doughty and Varela, 1998; Harley, 1998; Pica, Kang and Sauro, 2006; Pica, Sauro and Lee, 2007; Kowal and Swain, 1994; Swain, 1998).

A language support component has been implemented across a range of content classrooms, resulting what are known popularly as sheltered, adjunct/tutorial, theme-based, and language for specific purposes (LSP) approaches. In sheltered classes, students whose second language proficiency is not quite competitive with native-speaking classmates, attend separate sections of a course, where they are presented with the standard academic curriculum, delivered at a slower rate and supplemented with additional academic support and language focused feedback. Adjunct and tutorial services are often offered in lieu of a sheltered section of a course, so that second language speakers might attend a mainstream course, but work with a tutor on papers and projects. Theme-based and LSP courses are often offered through language institutes and programmes as a way of building language study around the strengths and interests of a language learner (see Mohan, 1979; Chamot and O'Malley, 1994; and Pica, 2002 for overviews and descriptions). In addressing questions about the relationship between language and content and in devising approaches to integrate them for classroom learning, many researchers, have turned to the construct of the task, with its emphasis on key features such as two-way information exchange, goal orientation and learner-interlocutor agreement or convergence. These features have been described in Long and Crookes (1992), Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993) and Ellis (2003). Their work thus far has revealed that learners' participation in language-focused, meaning-based tasks generates many of the linguistic, communicative and cognitive processes associated with successful learning. A study by Swain and Lapkin (2001) is illustrative of two such tasks. In one, which was a two-way information exchange activity, students worked in pairs to construct a narrative passage based on a series of pictures. One student held the odd-numbered pictures, and the other, the even-numbered pictures. The students could look at only their own pictures as they pooled information to replicate the passage. In another task, known as the 'dictogloss', individual students took notes as they listened to a teacher-read passage. Then they assembled in pairs to reconstruct the passage based on their sets of notes. Findings on both tasks revealed that as the students worked together to understand each other and reproduce their passages along a coherent time line, their frequent requests for clarification often drew responses in which earlier utterances were modified towards linguistic precision and complexity, particularly with respect to verb tense formation.

The same pattern of interaction was found in a picture placement task used by Pica, Young and Doughty (1987). As learners followed directions for placing farm-related tokens on a picture of a farm, they requested repetition and restatement of the token names and where to put them. Videotaping of their performance revealed that the learners often used the repetition time to consider new placement options and reset earlier placements. Those who were given such opportunities better understood the directions and were far more accurate in their placements.

These and other information exchange, goal oriented tasks provide a context for learners to be given modified input to aid their comprehension of message meaning. At the same time, learners can receive feedback on the comprehensibility and accuracy of their linguistic performance, and modify their output accordingly. These processes, in turn, increase the amount of processing time for learners to review and also notice the L2 forms and features in their input, feedback and attempts at output. By design, then, language focused, meaning-based tasks offer potential enhancement to the teaching and learning of meaningful subject content and the language needed for its comprehension and expression.

This chapter will next describe the learning processes that can be promoted by, and integrated through, the learner's task participation. It will then demonstrate how to create language-focused tasks out of meaning-focused texts taken from the subject-content curriculum. It will describe how the tasks can be designed so that learners' attention is drawn to L2 features that are difficult for them to notice on their own, and report research findings on their classroom implementation. In describing the tasks and reporting findings on their implementation, the chapter will illustrate how they facilitate the work of teachers and researchers and bring learners closer to meeting their linguistic needs and content goals.

4.2 Input, Feedback and Production Processes that Inform Task Design

Thus far, numerous studies of immersion, sheltered, thematic and other types of content classrooms have revealed that subject content can provide a good resource for 'positive evidence' or meaningful input for comprehension, production and internalization of an L2 (e.g. Swain, 1985, 1991; Harley, 1989, 1993; Shah, 1999; Boyd-Kletzander, 2000; Pica, 2002). Such evidence can be found in the form of samples of the second language available in such disparate media as written passages, spoken announcements, television and radio transmissions and conversational exchanges that provide meaningful input for comprehension, production and internalization of an L2. Through their reading and listening, learners can master content and acquire a large inventory of lexical items and grammatical forms, with progress especially notable on L2 features that are abundant and functionally transparent in their texts and lessons. Many professional resources describe and explain approaches that can integrate linguistic and academic skills and strategies across the subject curriculum (see, for example, Cantoni-Harvey,

1987; Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 1989; Chamot and O'Malley, 1994; Palley, 2000). These volumes serve as a basis for teachers to help their students to master the language they need, to understand subject content and as a foundation for the students to further study the L2 needed to communicate this content effectively.

That further study of the L2 is needed has been made evident through findings on what happens to grammatical development when learners attempt to coordinate their learning of a language and new content encoded in that language. Grammatical forms go unnoticed as the learners are consumed with grasping subject content. Especially affected are those language features that are limited in perceptual salience, lacking in communicative transparency or complex in form and function (Harley, 1993; Long, 1996). Bound grammatical morphemes are often impossible to hear in connected speech, and forms that mark grammatical gender and systems of reference, whether form or word order based, carry little communicative transparency. Mastery of these forms is a critical component of spoken and written competence in the content areas due to their frequent occurrence and multiple functions across the content areas.

This lack of noticing is related not only to the L2 characteristics that make so many forms difficult to notice, but also to the discourse characteristics of subject-content classrooms. As Pica (2002) has revealed, teachers and classmates are more likely to correct content, supply factual answers or explain vocabulary than correct, supply or explain linguistic forms and their functions. An emphasis on content comprehensibility and accuracy takes precedence over the precision of grammatical features or formation of complex linguistic structures (see again, e.g. Boyd-Kletzander, 2000; Pica, 2002, 2005; Shah, 1999; Swain, 1985, 1991).

Although it was assumed originally that exposure to comprehensible, meaningful input in the content areas could provide ample evidence for constructing an L2 grammar, the research that followed revealed that such input was not always sufficient in this regard. Many instructional treatments and interventions have since been examined in light of this concern. One approach has been to repeat or reformulate the input that contains the features or to slow down its rate of delivery (see Ellis, 1999). Another approach has been to visually highlight or underline the written encodings of the features or to say their spoken versions with greater stress or loudness (also reviewed in Ellis, 1999).

While these adjustments to L2 features appear to be a logical way to improve their perceptual saliency, studies on their classroom application have had to be viewed with caution. Findings show that in the short term, learners notice the features better; however they continue to produce them inaccurately unless given long-term follow up (see again Ellis, 1999). It is only when the adjusted features are kept abundant and visually identifiable through their repeated, long term use in teachers' classroom input or their bolding or underlining in student texts that learners are likely to incorporate them into their L2 grammar (e.g. Day and Shapson, 1991). Time is a commodity in short supply for many learners and the programs that serve them. If however, time is abundant and available, enhanced and adjusted input can be a minimally intrusive way to guide language learning as learners transact the content curriculum (Doughty and Williams, 1998).

What does appear to work more quickly than input that supplies positive evidence of L2 forms and features is input that supplies ‘negative evidence’ of the learner’s production of forms and features that are *not* in the L2. Sources of negative evidence include corrective feedback, formal instruction, and requests for the learner to clarify or repeat a message. As Schmidt discovered first hand, these interventions help learners ‘notice the gap’ between their own errors and correct counterparts, and serve as a springboard for further development and eventually, more accurate production and internalization (Schmidt and Frota, 1986; Schmidt, 1990).

When negative evidence or corrective information is provided to learners on their misunderstandings of message meaning or inappropriate use of L2 forms and features, teachers, classmates, and other interlocutors often do so through requests for clarification or confirmation about the meanings they thought they understood or those they intended to convey. In making such requests about meaning, these interlocutors often reformulate the learners’ messages, and in so doing help the learners compare an L2 reformulation with their own erroneous versions. An interlocutor request can also serve as what Lyster and Mori (2006) refer to as a ‘prompt’, that invites a learner response. This is illustrated in the following exchange, which is prompted by a need to achieve accuracy in message meaning:

1. Learner: My grass broken

Interlocutor: Your glasses? Are your glasses broken?

(Request with Reformulation, serving as a Prompt)

Learner: Yes, glasses

(Response)

Negative evidence can also be provided through recasts, in which teachers and other interlocutors restate what they believe to be the meaning of the learner’s message, doing so with an accurate reformulation. In this sense, recasts offer both positive evidence in the form of models of the target the learner is striving to acquire as well as negative evidence in the form of a contrast with the utterance the learner had originally produced. As shown in the exchange below, the recast response provides further input for learning, and its proximity to the learner’s error helps the learner notice the gap in form between their original message and the recast one.

2. Learner: My grass broken

Interlocutor: Your glasses are broken.

(Recast)

These brief, but frequent interludes help learners to ‘focus on form’ (Long, 1991; Doughty and Williams, 1998) by shifting attention from the meaning of the message to possible problems with its sounds, words and structures. They also

provide an opportunity for learners to produce and modify their output towards both comprehensibility and accuracy (Swain, 1985, 1991).

In sum, research carried out on these input, feedback and production processes has shown that each has a contribution to make towards developing an effective approach to the integration of content and language. Research on their implementation in content-based contexts has illustrated successful ways in which these interventions have played a role in L2 learning outcomes. As noted above, positive results have been revealed when learners participated in ongoing content-focused activities in which needed forms were made more salient and available (e.g. Day and Shapson, 1991). Positive results have also been found in studies of content-focused exchanges in which errors of form were negotiated (Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Mackey, 1999; Mackey and MacDonough, 2000), were followed by recasts (e.g. Doughty and Varela, 1998; Mackey and Philp, 1998; Iwashita, 1999, 2003), or were the focus of learner collaboration and modified production (Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen, 2001; Swain and Lapkin, 2001).

As revealed throughout this small, but growing body of research, form-focused interventions can fit comfortably in content-based exchanges and have an impact on the L2 learning process. They serve as an effective instructional strategy that requires no pre-planning, and can be used spontaneously in the context of a classroom activity. However, these interventions are potentially limited in the scope of their impact on the learner and the learning process. This is because they are primarily teacher-directed, rather than learner-generated, and are targeted to individual input, feedback, production and attention processes, more so than to everyone at the same time. The charge to the researcher and to the teacher is to develop integrative activities effective at two kinds of integration—one that connects content and language and another that links together multiple L2 learning processes.

Language focused, content-based tasks hold much promise in this regard. They can be carried out by learners themselves, and can help them help each other to address their L2 needs. Although there is an abundance of tasks commercially and readily available for classroom use, many of these tasks are designed for learners to practice L2 communication rather than to focus on L2 form and content learning. In other words, they are designed for learners to talk but not necessarily to talk about language. A task that asks learners to list five differences in two pictures of a restaurant is less language-focused than one that asks them to list five differences in what customers and waitstaff are doing at the restaurant. This latter type of task is more likely to draw learners' attention to verb formation and agreement (see, for example, Pica, Lincoln-Porter-Paninos and Linnell, 1996). It is possible for an L2 focus to arise incidentally during communication; however, this phenomenon is more likely to occur with respect to vocabulary items and phonological features rather than grammatical endings or gender case markings. Learners might negotiate over whether they need a 'pin' or a 'pen' for their writing task, but are unlikely to discuss whether they need 'a' sheet of paper or 'the' sheet of paper in getting it done.

Those tasks that succeed in targeting learners' L2 needs have characteristic differences that will be described in the following sections. As such, they need

careful planning in order for teachers, learners and researchers to find them useful and effective. The content selected for the task must provide a compatible context for the forms that learners must acquire. Task directions need to be reliable, easy to follow, and not intrusive to the classroom. The tasks, themselves, must be perceived as goal oriented activities, authentic to everyday classroom life, and by all means they must show results, i.e. promote goal-oriented language and content learning.

4.3 Tasks as Instruments for Teaching, Learning and Research

Tasks have had a long and gainful history in teaching and research. Tasks that engage language learners in meaningful, goal-oriented communication in order to solve problems, complete projects, and reach decisions have been used for a broad range of instructional purposes. They have served, for example, as units of course syllabi, activities for structure or function practice, and language focusing enhancements to meaning-based curricula. With respect to syllabi, for example, Prabhu (1987) advanced a procedural syllabus consisting of problem-solving tasks that were free of explicit language features. Process syllabi (e.g. Breen, 1987; Candlin and Murphy, 1987) encouraged the use of language-focused tasks, motivated by learners' needs and wishes, and their own contributions to task design. Long and Crookes (1992) have argued for a task-based syllabus based on an analysis of learner needs, and corresponding to real world tasks that reflect those needs.

J. Willis (1996) and Willis and Willis (1987) have advanced procedures for carrying out tasks as part of the classroom curriculum. The first phase consists of topic-oriented, input-rich pre-task activities, during which small groups of students get ready for their main task, with teacher support. This is followed by a planning phase in which the groups carry out the task as well as draft and practise a report on their task work. In the third phase, the learners share their report with their classmates. Similarly, Samuda (2001) has developed a classroom program that uses tasks to guide learners through an input stage, an operation stage, and a stage of consolidation and reflection. In so doing she distinguishes tasks which engage learners in constructing knowledge and building awareness of new forms from those which push them to draw on their language resources to retrieve, activate, and use emerging forms in ways that convey more precise message meaning.

Connections between task activity and communicative uses of the L2 inside and outside the classroom have made tasks attractive to educators and their students. Tasks have had great and growing appeal to researchers as well. As noted above, demands on learners' attention, comprehension, and production as they carry out a task can lead them to obtain feedback, draw inferences, and test hypotheses about L2 forms and features, and produce more accurate and developmentally advanced output. Observing and measuring these task behaviors provide researchers with further insight into the processes of L2 learning.

Many of the tasks used in research have been taken directly or adapted from professional references (e.g. Brumfit and Johnson, 1979; Ur, 1988), scholarly publications (e.g. Nunan, 1989a, b; Ellis, 2003) and student textbooks (e.g. Harmer and Surguine, 1987; Helgesen et al., 2000). As such, then, they have use in classrooms where both teaching and research can be implemented together. Among the tasks most widely used are those that require learners to exchange information in order to solve a problem, reach a decision or reconstruct a story. Many of these have a much longer pre-history in the L1 language improvement programs of the 1970s, e.g. *Concept 7-9* (Wight et al., 1972) and *Talk Reform* (Gahagan and Gahagan, 1970; Cook, 2008, personal communication)). There are several variations: all of the learners can be asked to draw from the same information pool; one learner can be asked to transfer a totality of information to another learner, as in a picture drawing task; or individual learner can be asked to share uniquely held portions of their information, as in a story reconstruction task; tasks carried out under this latter condition are often referred to as information gap tasks because they have a built in requirement for information exchange. Each learner has crucial information that must be shared in order for all learners to complete the task (see Pica, Kanagy and Falodun, 1993 for an overview and examples of individual studies).

Information exchange and information gap tasks can be structured so that only one outcome or answer is considered possible, appropriate or correct. Reaching this end point requires a verbal exchange of content information, the use of checks and responses for clarity and the kinds of rephrasing, replacement and manipulation of phonological and structural features that focus attention on L2 form. Such single, convergent goal tasks are therefore well suited for L2 acquisition (see Ellis, 2003 and Pica, 2005, for examples and review). Those that have been shown to fit compatibly into the context of content-based discourse are *Spot the Difference* (e.g. Long, 1980), *Jigsaw* (e.g. Pica, Holliday, Lewis, and Morgenthaler, 1989) and *Grammar Communication* (e.g., Fotos and Ellis, 1991).

Versions of these tasks have also appeared in popular student textbooks as well as resource books often used by teachers (e.g., Ur, 1988). Researchers have used them in a variety of formats and with a range of L2 learners, to study modified input and interaction, feedback and the production of modified output. Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993), for example, used tasks that required learners to exchange information about pictures and drawings in order to reproduce them accurately. In so doing, the learners needed to seek and provide clarification about these items. Their linguistic and communicative adjustments provided the researchers with data on modified output. Similarly, tasks designed by Pica et al. (1996) required one learner to choose pictures as another learner narrated a story that the pictures depicted. The researchers then studied the ways in which the narrators were able to linguistically modify their marking of past time as they responded to requests for clarity in their story narration.

Although tasks need not require the use of specific L2 forms for their implementation and success, this design feature can help learners who must be able to convey subject content such as history or science that suits a particular genre, or whose competence in content knowledge is assessed through papers and projects

that must comply with a written standard. Task directions need to specify what learners must do with and to their content in order to notice the forms or features and reach the task goal. The curriculum for a geography course, for example, might include a supplementary task in which learners read a comparison of two locations in a country, in which *-er* and *more* were used to describe differences between the weather, vegetation and soil composition of the locations. Teams of learners might be asked to construct a poster that incorporated all of the information from the passage, or compete to be the first to state or write 10 of the differences on a timed task.

Until recently, the construct of task-obligatory language was a theoretical ideal, with only a handful of applications (see Loschky and Bley-Vroman, 1993). This is because the richness, redundancy and variety of language can often provide several options for content encoding. In the geography comparison tasks described above, for example, learners could avoid troublesome *-er* inflections, and opt for descriptive statements with verbs and adjectives such as *differ* and *different* and connectors such as *but*, *however* and *whereas*. However, the notion that a task might be designed to promote the use of forms that learners need to master for their competence in a content area, has turned into a reality, as increasingly researchers design and implement form-focused tasks to study learners as they access, manipulate and further develop L2 forms and features that are difficult for them to notice on their own. Ellis (2003) and others have come to refer to these as 'focused tasks'.

Muranoi (2000), for example, designed problem-solving, role-play tasks that required article suppliance for their completion. She used the tasks to look for ways in which learners produced and modified their production of articles as they negotiated their plan for solving the problems. Researchers have also developed focused tasks to serve as treatments for learner development of difficult-to-notice features. Among them, Iwashita (2003) developed tasks that provided a context for researcher recasts, and guided learners to notice, as well as further develop, particles in Japanese. Leeman (2003) did likewise for features of Spanish agreement; Mackey and McDonough (2000) for Thai noun classifiers; Newton and Kennedy (1996) for English prepositions and conjunctions. Researchers have also developed focused tasks to draw learners' attention to constructions such as English questions and relative clauses (e.g. Mackey and Philp, 1998; Spada and Lightbown, 1999; Izumi, 2002; Mackey and Oliver, 2002; McDonough, 2005). These items are somewhat easy to notice, but highly complex to master.

Tasks designed to help learners prepare to meet the challenges of form and content competence should be based on content that contains those linguistic features over which the learner already has some control, but needs to improve and has yet to master (Doughty and Williams, 1998; Lightbown, 1998). Such readiness for improvement or mastery can be gauged in two principal ways: by referring to developmental stage information, or by reviewing learner speech and writing and locating contexts of inconsistent form accuracy and suppliance. Thus, social studies learners who use fronting in their *wh*- questions might be ready to take on biographical interview tasks that bring their attention to the process of inversion.

Mathematics learners with *don't + verb* negation in 3rd person singular contexts might be ready for acceptance and refusal tasks that direct their attention to *don't* and *doesn't*. Learners in a biology course whose noun phrase construction varies between accurate and inaccurate suppliance of *the*, *a*, and *zero article* might be given an inventory task that requires them to sort count and non-count species and identify them by name.

4.4 Designing Language-focused Tasks for the Content-based Classroom

As was illustrated in the previous section, focused tasks with their integration of language and content, can be effective tools for the learner's mastery of language and content. However, since mastery is a long-term process, focused tasks must have a format that can be integrated into the everyday life of a classroom as well. A good task for SLA must also be a welcome one to classroom participants. Its attractiveness for communication cannot be offset by its inconsistency with the activities and lessons of the classroom curriculum.

As Pica et al. (2006) found in several pilot studies, when they entered a classroom to try out a new battery of *Spot the Difference*, *Jigsaw* and *Grammar Communication* tasks, some of the learners said that the tasks felt more like tests than learning activities. They were willing to carry out a few of the tasks over the short term, but lost interest in them over time. Pica et al. (2007) found that some of the learners whom they invited to try out an integrated curriculum on American culture enjoyed the spontaneity of their content reading and discussion activities, but grew tired of the many steps and structured format of the focused tasks.

L2 classrooms are first and foremost environments for teaching and learning, and classroom participants are generally more comfortable when they can adhere to the types of books, materials and curricula with which they are familiar (Nunan, 1989b). In addition, curriculum content and its rate of coverage are often set by policy makers, school administrators or other authorities, who exercise considerable authority over the extent to which the curriculum is being implemented. This is especially the case in countries where Ministries of Education set standards and issue materials that are standardized across schools and classrooms. This sets up additional barriers for both an introduction of tasks and their ongoing, steady implementation over time.

Classrooms have been the site of a good deal of SLA research. However, much of the research has aimed to describe instructional practices and the ways in which they make input available to the learner (see, for example, Doughty and Pica, 1986). Recent studies have expanded the role of the classroom as an environment to study the effects of task interventions on SLA processes and outcomes (e.g. Harley, 1998). Among the most successful studies are those in which a researcher has worked collaboratively with a classroom teacher in designing and implementing task treatments and in making sure they were consistent with the everyday instructional curriculum, and not intrusive to the schedule and format that

students had come to expect (see, for example, Day and Shapson, 1991; Doughty and Varela, 1998; Swain, 1998).

To enhance their authenticity and insure their long-term use for teaching, learning and research, therefore, tasks need to be integrated into curriculum texts, topics and assignments at the outset of a course, and have enough variety to warrant sustained participation. With this in mind, Pica et al. (2006) and Pica et al. (2007) based their tasks on the texts students were asked to read and discuss in courses they were taking to improve their use of academic English as they learned about culture and communication in the USA. In keeping with the emphasis on academic English, task directions began with a purpose statement, i.e. that the task would help the learners become 'more accurate and precise' in their speaking and writing in areas such as reviewing, editing, organizing and reporting information. Teacher, researcher and learner involvement was ongoing in task design, piloting and revision. Through numerous pilot runs, which, as noted above, were sobering and instructive, directions were reworded and revised, and amounts of reading and writing were reduced, and steps were shortened in number and length.

The tasks that emerged from this process were simple to implement and consistent with the content of the classroom curriculum. Such preparation, though labour intensive, was considered an investment by the researchers, affording the opportunity to gain the support of teachers and learners, as well as to target specific L2 features and study the learners' development of these features over time. These tasks and findings on their implementation are discussed in the following sections.

4.5 Focused Tasks: Design and Implementation for Teaching, Learning and Research

Drawing on research findings and using the guidelines for focused task design described in the previous section, Pica (2005), Pica et al. (2006) and Pica et al. (2007) adapted two courses that integrated content and language to help intermediate and advanced English language learners with their development and production of English articles, verb endings and modal forms. These linguistic features were not possible for the learners to master from transactions with their course content alone. All three studies have been described elsewhere, but the latter two are summarized below, in order to point out the challenges the researchers needed to confront as well as those that remain in this area.

Pica et al. (2006) selected plot summaries and reviews of films that intermediate and advanced level learners read for a course on American culture. These passages were filled with *the*, *a*, and *zero* articles as well as verb past and third person singular endings and modals. They then manipulated these linguistic features to create two versions of the passages for *Spot the Difference*, *Jigsaw* and *Grammar Communication*. In carrying out the tasks, the learners were asked to work together, compare, choose, evaluate and reconstruct the passage features, sentences and texts. They were told that the tasks were helping them with academic skills such as

proofreading and editing. Their interaction was found to generate a good deal of negotiation, noticing and awareness of these features.

In their *Spot the Difference* task, for example, pairs of learners read and discussed the same original passage, and then each learner was given a version of the passage, with slight modifications to the articles or verbs in its sentences. For example, if *the table* appeared in a sentence in the original passage, this phrase appeared as *a table* in one learner's version, while the original phrase, *the table*, was retained in the other learner's version. For verbs, *she helped out* in the original passage would appear in one learner's version, while the other version would contain *she helps out*. Each version had a mix of the original phrases and their modified counterparts. The learners were asked to find differences between the sentences of their versions, select which of the two sentences they thought was 'better', and justify their selections. Then, without looking back at the original passage or either of their versions, they had to jointly reconstruct the original passage. The phrases were grammatically correct, and appropriate at the sentence level; however only one was correct in terms of its consistency with the original passage the learners had read and its appropriateness with respect to the broader context of the passage. An excerpt from the two versions of a passage from a review (Ebert, 1997) of the film *The Joy Luck Club* (Wang, 1993), given to learners in a *Spot the Difference* task is shown in Figure 4.1.

As shown in Versions 1 and 2 of Figure 4.1, the second sentence of the passages differs slightly. Version 1 displays the original, and therefore correct sentence, 'The story focuses on four Chinese immigrant women, who meet every week to play a Chinese game of mah-jongg' whereas Version 2 displays a sentence that begins with 'A story'. The sentence is grammatically well formed but it is inappropriate with respect to the sentence that preceded it, which was 'The Joy Luck Club' was written by Amy Tan, who was born in 1952, after her parents had immigrated to America.

Version 1	Version 2
'The Joy Luck Club' was written by Amy Tan, who was born in 1952, after her parents had immigrated to America. The story focuses on four Chinese immigrant women, who meet every week to play a Chinese game of mah-jongg. The daughters have abandoned the traditions of their Chinese mothers. One of the daughters has been asked to fill a seat at the mah-jongg table. Their seat traditionally was occupied by her mother, who recently died.	'The Joy Luck Club' was written by Amy Tan, who was born in 1952, after her parents had immigrated to America. A story focuses on four Chinese immigrant women, who meet every week to play the Chinese game of mah-jongg. Their daughters have abandoned the traditions of their Chinese mothers. One of the daughters has been asked to fill the seat at the mah-jongg table. This seat traditionally was occupied by her mother, who recently died.

Figure 4.1 Excerpts from two versions of review of *The Joy Luck Club* (Ebert, 1997: 394), from a *Spot the Difference* task

Other types of grammar focused tasks in this collection asked the learners to re-order sentences to match those of an original passage, (for *Jigsaw*), or fill in blanks to make the sentences complete (for *Grammar Communication*). Excerpts from the two versions of the passages given to the learners who carried out the *Jigsaw* and *Grammar Communication* tasks are shown in Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

All three types of tasks were effective in drawing the learners' attention to the targeted forms and retaining them during text reconstruction over the short duration of the studies. Thus, as shown in Figure 4.4, from a task following the reading of a passage from Ebert's (1997) review of the film *Philadelphia* (Demme, 1993), the learners often debated over the use of a form in the original passage in comparing and making choices from their own versions. And, as shown in Figure 4.5, they further discussed these forms as they tried to reconstruct the original passage.

In a subsequent three-week study, Pica et al. (2007) compared the impact on SLA of three types of focused tasks, used in another content-based language course on contemporary American culture. The purpose of the study was to see if learners could improve their ability to notice, produce or build knowledge of English articles as an outcome of their task participation over a three-week period. Throughout the course, intermediate-level learners read, discussed and debated the content of articles and essays on American culture from authentic newspapers, magazines and books. They also worked in pairs assigned to what the researchers called 'Implicit', 'Explicit', or 'Incidental' *Spot the Difference* task sessions. The focus

Learner 1	Learner 2
'The Joy Luck Club' was written by Amy Tan, who was born in 1952, after her parents had immigrated to America.	'The Joy Luck Club' was written by Amy Tan, who was born in 1952, after her parents had immigrated to America.
___The daughters have abandoned the traditions of their Chinese mothers.	___Their daughters have abandoned the traditions of their Chinese mothers.
___One of the daughters has been asked to fill a seat at the mah-jongg table.	___One of the daughters has been asked to fill the seat at the mah-jongg table.
___Their seat traditionally was occupied by her mother, who recently died.	___This seat traditionally was occupied by her mother, who recently died.
___The story focuses on four Chinese immigrant women, who meet every week to play a Chinese game of mah-jongg.	___A story focuses on four Chinese immigrant women, who meet every week to play the Chinese game of mah-jongg.

Figure 4.2 Excerpts from two versions of a review of *The Joy Luck Club* (Ebert, 1997: 394), for a *Jigsaw* task

Learner 1	Learner 2
'The Joy Luck Club' was written by Amy Tan, who was born in 1952, after her parents had immigrated to America. 1. _____ focuses on	'The Joy Luck Club' was written by Amy Tan, who was born in 1952, after her parents had immigrated to America. 1. _____ focuses on
Their story	The story
This story	A story
four Chinese immigrant women who meet every week to play the Chinese	four Chinese immigrant women who meet every week to play the Chinese
game of mah-jongg. 2. _____ have	game of mah-jongg. 2. _____ have
Some daughters	The daughters
These daughters	Their daughters
abandoned the traditions of their Chinese mothers. One of the daughters has been asked to fill 3. _____ at the mah-jongg	abandoned the traditions of their Chinese mothers. One of the daughters has been asked to fill 3. _____ at the mah-jongg
the seat	a seat
their seat	this seat
table. 4. _____ traditionally was	table. 4. _____ traditionally was
The seat	A seat
Their seat	This seat
occupied by her mother, who recently died.	occupied by her mother, who recently died.

Figure 4.3 Excerpts from two versions of a review of *The Joy Luck Club* (Ebert, 1997: 394), for a *Grammar Communication* task

Learner 1	Learner 2
Just this. Um, and <i>some day some day</i> is	
Yeah... the previous yeah. If we use <i>some day</i> this means perhaps this will be happen in the future. In the one day or future.	<i>One day</i> just mention uh, on certain day, or

Figure 4.4 Learners compared and made choices regarding forms in their versions of a review of *Philadelphia* (Ebert, 1997: 593–594), on a *Spot the Difference* task

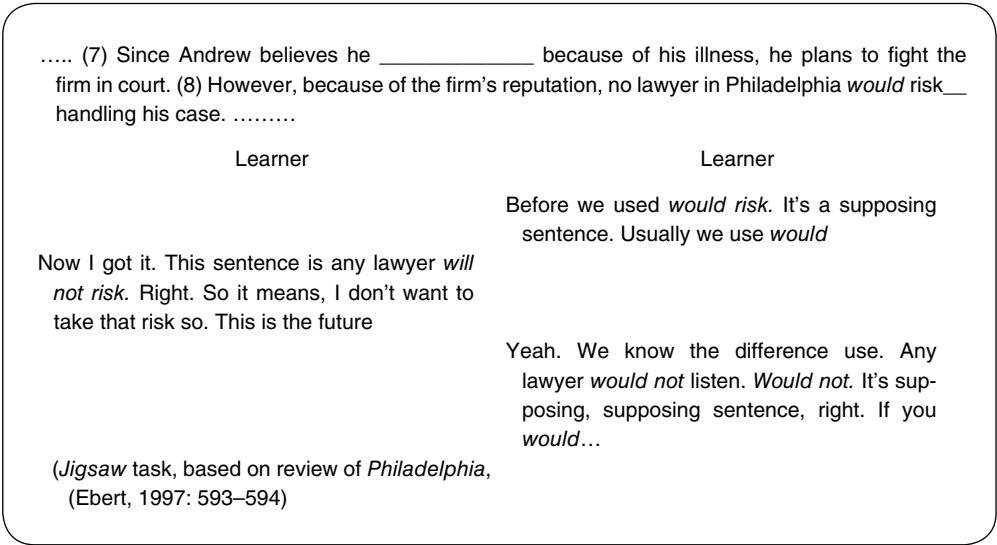


Figure 4.5 Learners recalled forms, connected them to function and meaning while reconstructing passage from a review of *Philadelphia* (Ebert, 1997: 593–594), on a *jigsaw* task

was on definite, indefinite and zero articles, which were ubiquitous in the course readings and had generated numerous contexts for suppliance during the course discussions and debates. A Control pair participated in the readings, discussions and debates throughout the course, but they spent the treatment time reading and discussing expanded versions of the passages used in the tasks.

In keeping with the format of the *Spot the Difference* task described above for Pica et al. (2006) all pairs read passages from their course materials and then individual pair members read separate versions of the passage that contained a mix of the same and slightly modified phrases as the original. The pairs then worked together, locating and comparing the phrases in their versions, and selecting the phrases that conveyed the meaning of the original text. Then they reconstructed a cloze version of the unseen original, compared their reconstruction with the original, and listed the discrepancies their comparison revealed.

The learners in the Implicit pair participated in a *Spot the Difference* task based on the principles of focused task design, described above. The learners in the Explicit pair participated in the same *Spot the Difference* task format as the Implicit learners, but after they located the differences between their cloze version and the original, they were given form-focused instruction on the differences. The format of the instruction was a chart in which the Explicit learners were told to locate the sentences of the original that differed from their own sentences and to find the rule that they should have followed. An excerpt of this chart is shown in Figure 4.6.

The Incidental learners compared noun phrases from the original passage with slightly modified ones as well, but the articles were maintained in the noun phrases,

Sentence	If you and your partner used:	<i>instead of the</i> correct, underlined answer:	You didn't follow this rule for using articles:
	2 article <i>a</i> , or no article at all	in <i>the</i> McDonald's in Bombay, India.	Use article <i>the</i> with words that are defined or described by new words that follow them. In sentence 2, <i>the McDonald's</i> is followed by <i>in Bombay, India</i> .
	3 article <i>a</i> or no article at all	<i>the</i> large Hindu population	Use article <i>the</i> with words that are related to words mentioned already. In Sentence 3, <i>the large Hindu population</i> is related to Bombay, India, which was mentioned in Sentence 2.

Figure 4.6 Excerpt from a chart in which learners were to locate sentences of original passage that differed from own sentences of reconstructed version

while their adjective modifiers were manipulated. For example 'a new clock' from the original passage would be retained in the version given to one Incidental learner, while 'a nice clock' would appear in the other version.

Pre-, interim, and post-testing was conducted on the learners' ability to notice articles, and to increase their knowledge and accurate production of article. The noticing test asked the learners to read passages from their course textbook and then recall their noun phrases in cloze versions. This was based on the definition of Schmidt (1990) that noticing is determined by what learners retain in their working memory. As such, the working memory was based on a definition by Baddeley and Hitch (1974) that included directing attention to relevant information, maintaining that information in the short-term with eventual integration with the memory systems.

The knowledge test was a passage level variation of a grammaticality judgement test in which the learners were asked to read versions of passages from their course textbook in which some of the sentences had been altered to include incorrect usage of articles. The learners had to choose the sentences that were correct. The production test asked the learners to read course passages from which the researchers had deleted all articles, and then to insert *the*, *a* or *an* or omit them wherever they thought it was appropriate to do so. Metalanguage was kept to a minimum throughout all test directions, as learners were told to choose or write the answer they thought was 'better'.

Findings revealed that the learners in each pair made weekly progress, but the Implicit and Explicit learners outperformed the Incidental and Control learners,

particularly on noticing and knowledge. The Explicit and Incidental learners appeared to be slightly better than the others on production. These findings were considered very tentative and limited in generalizability, due to the small number of learners in each task treatment and the brevity of treatment time.

At three weeks of task treatment duration, Pica et al. (2007) was one of the longest task-treatment studies to date. However, this was simply not sufficient for intermediate level learners to make notable changes in their interlanguage article system. The two longest task-focused studies to date are those of Doughty and Varela (1998), which took place over a 4-week period of 5 sessions per week, and Iwashita (1999), whose learners participated in 12 weeks of one session per week treatments.

Many task-based studies are lengthy as well, but that is largely because they have employed delayed post testing rather than an extended treatment time. The task treatment itself was often completed within two or three sessions, with delayed post testing several weeks or months following the treatment. Thus, for example, Spada and Lightbown (1999), Takashima and Ellis (1999), Muranoi (2000), McDonough (2005) and Smith (2005) could count as lengthy studies of 6 to 8 week duration, if delayed post testing were considered. However, their actual treatment time was restricted to several sessions.

A recurrent theme in SLA research has been that in many studies where an intervention did not yield anticipated results, it was the duration and extension of the intervention that was crucial for learning. Chen (1996), for example, using computer-based activities that included explicit feedback, found that their impact on acquisition of Chinese quantifiers and measure words, observed in immediate post testing, decreased after this treatment was removed. He speculated that the extent of the treatment was not sufficient to stabilize these items for the learner.

Findings from other studies offer additional reasons why the effects of an L2 intervention might not hold up over time. For example, the L2 form that was highlighted in the intervention might not be available in subsequent input (L. White, 1991); the intervention learners might regress or their controls catch up (Harley, 1989); or the effects of the intervention might be overtaken by processes of natural development, so that even study participants who did not receive a special intervention or treatment were affected by their L2 exposure over time (J. White, 1998).

Occasionally, it is not the disappearance of treatment effects that is of concern, but the time they take to appear. As Mackey (1999) discovered, the impact of recasts on her subjects' question formation was not seen until delayed post testing, which was carried out well after the treatment was over. Muranoi (2000) found similar results for English articles, as did van den Branden (1997) for developmental complexity and verbosity.

All of these studies, along with those described in this chapter hold promise for the integration of content and language in learning through the integration of curriculum content and tasks. However, the field begs for longitudinal research both on a practical level as teachers and their students struggle to reach their

goals, and on a theoretical level, as claims continue to be advanced about the superiority of content-based and task-based approaches to teaching and learning, amidst criticism that there is not enough supportive evidence behind them (Swan, 2005).

4.6 Concluding Remarks

Throughout North America, and increasingly in the countries of Japan and South Korea, current and growing demands have been placed on teachers to help their students learn subject content in an L2 they have yet to master, as well as be able to use the forms and features of that L2 in their spoken and written communication. As instructional activities that can integrate language and content, focused tasks help teachers promote L2 learning in their classrooms, as they meet academic and professional requirements for content coverage. As shown throughout this chapter, tasks can integrate many of the strategies that teachers use to provide learners with adjusted input, feedback, negotiation, direct instruction, opportunities for modified production of output. These strategies are in themselves also of interest, as they can be used during lessons, discussions, debates and other activities in the content classroom. Tasks are just one vehicle for their classroom implementation. As SLA researchers continue to identify approaches and strategies that learners can use in responding to their needs and those of their classmates, and that teachers can apply in addressing their broader educational goals, their commitment to the fields of education and applied linguistics is evident, and that bodes well for future contributions of an even greater magnitude.

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CHAPTER

5

New Roles for L2 Vocabulary?

Paul Nation

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on bridging the gap between simplified and unsimplified text. Simplified text is material that is written within a completely controlled vocabulary. Its most common occurrence is as graded readers – books are written at various levels for learners of English. For example, the Heinle Cengage Foundation Series has 12 texts with the easiest level consisting of books written within a 100 word vocabulary. Learners who know around 100 words can read all of the texts written at this level. Unfortunately each publisher has his own scheme of vocabulary levels, but they share the feature of being predominantly frequency-based, with the beginning levels mainly consisting of the most frequent, widely used words of the language. The beauty of graded readers is that, at any level of language proficiency, learners can find interesting reading texts that are at the right language level for them, where there is likely to be no more than one unknown word in every 50 running words. Counting running words or tokens involves counting every word in the text regardless of whether it is a repetition of a previously counted word. Most graded reading schemes are around the 2,000 to 3,000 word level.

The chapter begins by looking at the size of this gap, that is, the gap between the highest level of graded readers and the vocabulary demands of academic text and unsimplified novels. Having determined the size of this gap, then several suggestions are made to help learners deal with it. These include the use of specially prepared graded readers with glosses beyond the 3,000 word level, deliberate learning using word cards and computer-assisted vocabulary learning. These various ways of dealing with vocabulary are not alternatives, but need to be seen as complementary ways of providing a balanced set of opportunities for learning.

5.2 The Gap between Simplified and Unsimplified Text

In factor analytic studies of reading, vocabulary, not surprisingly, is a major factor. Studies of the vocabulary load of texts show that a vocabulary of around 8,000–9,000 words (Nation, 2006) is needed to get the 98 per cent coverage of the running words or tokens in an unsimplified text that is a pre-requisite

for comprehension of the text (Hu and Nation, 2000). This is far beyond the 2,000–3,000 word level where most graded reading series end. The aim of this chapter is to look at ways of bridging the gap between currently available simplified text and unsimplified text. Initially we will consider ways of supporting learners with the vocabulary of difficult texts using glossing and examining the amount of support and adaptation of text that is needed to help learners deal with the vocabulary in texts that are beyond the level of most graded reading schemes. As a result of this investigation, a set of guidelines will be outlined for preparing texts for advanced learners. These guidelines suggest new growth points for pedagogy, materials preparation and research focused on vocabulary.

The Longman Bridge Series of adapted texts was an attempt to deal with the gap between graded readers and unsimplified texts.

The *Bridge Series* is intended for students of English as a second or foreign language who have progressed beyond the elementary graded readers and the *Longman Simplified English Series* but are not yet sufficiently advanced to read works of literature in their original form.

The books in the *Bridge Series* are moderately simplified in vocabulary and often slightly reduced in length, but with little change in syntax. The purpose of the texts is to give practice in understanding fairly advanced sentence patterns and to help in the appreciation of English style. We hope that they will prove enjoyable to read for their own sake and that they will at the same time help students to reach the final objective of reading original works of literature in English with full understanding and appreciation.

Technical Note

In the *Bridge Series* words outside the commonest 7,000 (in Thorndike and Lorge: *A Teacher's Handbook of 30,000 Words*, 1944) have usually been replaced by commoner and more generally useful words. Words used which are outside the first 3,000 of the list are explained in a glossary and are so distributed throughout the book that they do not occur at a greater density than 25 per running 1,000 words. (from the introduction to the Bridge Series edition of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, 1945)

The fly-leaf of the Bridge Series version of *Animal Farm* lists 31 other texts which were adapted for the series including fiction and non-fiction titles; more were added later.

As we shall see, there is a sensible idea behind the series, which involved a reasonable amount of glossing (the glossary is in the form of a list with definitions at the back of the book) and a small amount of adaptation. The glossary for *Animal Farm* contains around 880 words which probably cover around 3.3 per cent of the running words in the text. Other glossaries range from 120 words to 600. The number of glossed words for *Animal Farm* is high because no words were replaced in the text.

Having an extensive glossary at the back of the book could interrupt the flow of reading. However, glossed words in the Bridge Series were not bolded or marked in any way in the text. Learners looked up words when they needed to.

There are three ways of dealing with the unknown words in a text – (1) replace them with known words, (2) provide support in the form of glosses, elaboration (Yano, Long and Ross, 1994), easification (Bhatia, 1983) or dictionary look-up and (3) allow the words to be guessed from context. The guessing option at best could apply to around 2 per cent of the tokens. This 2 per cent figure is based on Hu and Nation (2000), where it was found that good comprehension could be achieved if no more than 2 per cent of the running words were unknown. Deciding on the balance between supporting and replacing depends on the ease of replacement and readers' tolerance of support and we will look at this in more detail later in this chapter. Elaboration of text involves adding explanation into the text, usually in the form of definitions to explain unknown vocabulary. The elaborated text is thus longer than the original text, but all of the original text is contained in it.

original

At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already *ensconced* on his bed of straw . . .

elaborated

At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already *well settled in ensconced* on his bed of straw . . .

Easification involves providing support around the text in the form of headings, summaries, glosses, pictures and diagrams. Providing a concordance for an unknown word in the text to help guessing is also a form of easification. Concordances consisting of example sentences containing the word have been used in computer-assisted reading (Cobb, 2007) to help guessing from context. Here is part of a concordance for *ensconced*.

When the unsuspecting man was safely *ensconced* in a deep slumber,

Forest policies, securely *ensconced* in an effective and enforceable legislative infrastructure,

It seemed a long wait. Ramsay *ensconced* himself in the upper storey of the mill building,

That monarch was undoubtedly comfortably *ensconced* up in Berwick Castle,

Not only did the Belgian Army remain threateningly *ensconced* in Antwerp,

Once Thierry of Alsace was safely *ensconced* as count, he could hardly subvert their position.

Now, *ensconced* in the Lords, he is keen not to remain a backbencher.

5.3 Glossing

Glossing involves providing a context-relevant meaning of the unknown word and, along with dictionary use, is the most adaptable and most well researched of the

various support options. The least intrusive on reading is the superscript gloss in the first language. Glossing in the margin however may be the most effective for vocabulary learning. There is now a reasonable amount of research on glossing and this can provide a guide to its use when adapting texts.

Under appropriate conditions glosses can help learners read a text more fluently, can raise comprehension of the text, and can increase vocabulary learning. Glossing can be used with both hardcopy and computerized texts. Moreover, readers tend to have positive attitudes towards glosses.

Glosses can have the goals of improving comprehension and helping vocabulary learning and these two goals can be separated from each other depending on the type of vocabulary that is glossed. From a vocabulary perspective, if glossing is used to get low-frequency words out of the way, then the major goal is comprehension of the text and vocabulary learning is of no great interest. If glossing is used to help learn high-frequency words, or the next level of words that the learners should be focusing on, then both the comprehension and vocabulary learning goals are important.

In order to help comprehension, glossing should not disrupt reading, so glosses near the glossed word are preferable. These can be in brackets after the word, in the margin, in superscript above the word, or in a hyperlink to the word. The gloss should also be easy to understand, which with lower proficiency learners means it may need to be in the learners' L1.

In order to help vocabulary learning, glossing should encourage thoughtful processing. There are several ways in which this can happen, (1) through the placement of the gloss, and (2) through the nature of the gloss. The major effects of glossing on vocabulary learning are likely to occur because, first, glossing is a more sure way of providing an accurate meaning for a word than guessing is, secondly, glossing adds a deliberate, intentional element to what otherwise would be largely incidental learning, and thirdly this deliberate element can involve thoughtful processing.

5.3.1 The Placement of the Gloss

The gloss can be placed in the margin next to the line where the glossed word occurs.

lying comfortably	At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already <i>ensconced</i> on his bed of straw . . .
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Long (cited in Watanabe, 1997: 301) suggests that this involves looking at the unknown word, holding the form in memory, looking at the gloss, and then looking back at the word in the text again. This gives sustained or repeated attention to both form and meaning.

Having a hyperlink to the gloss provides the opportunity for mental retrieval with feedback for words that are glossed more than once. That is, on the second or

later meeting with the word, the reader has a chance to try to remember (retrieve) what its previous gloss was before confirming it by clicking on the hyperlink.

It may be that superscript glosses above the words, which may be very efficient for comprehension, take attention away from the form of the word, and do not involve retrieval or thoughtful processing, although this remains to be researched.

At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already

lying comfortably

ensconced on his bed of straw . . .

Hulstijn, Hollander and Greidanus (1996) argue that glossing helps learning in that it makes sure an unknown word is not ignored, and this deliberate attention can mean that later unglossed occurrences of the word can build on the previous meetings.

5.3.2 The Nature of the Gloss

In the margin, some researchers have used multiple-choice glosses (Hulstijn, 1992; Hulstijn et al., 1996; Watanabe, 1997; Rott, 2005) rather than simple glosses like those exemplified above to encourage thoughtful processing of the gloss. That is, the learners have to choose the right gloss from the choices.

a) lying comfortably	At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already <i>ensconced</i> on his bed of straw . . .
b) talking softly	

Gettys et al., (2001) used glosses where the morphological form of the gloss did not exactly match the glossed word. That is the gloss involved the stem or dictionary form of the inflected word in the text. This required more thoughtful processing because the learner had to mentally adjust the gloss to suit the form in the text. It would be possible to take this a step further by glossing the word with the underlying core meaning of the word rather than the contextual meaning of the word.

settled firmly or comfortably	At one end of the big barn, on a sort of raised platform, Major was already <i>ensconced</i> on his bed of straw . . .
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The gloss may be in the first or second language. Presuming that both of these kinds of glosses are comprehensible, it is likely that an L2 gloss would require more thoughtful processing, although this may be less so for very proficient learners.

If glosses are used with the two goals of helping comprehension and helping vocabulary learning, there needs to be a balance between reducing disruption of

reading and encouraging thoughtful processing. Several compromises are possible, but the following guidelines gain some support from research.

1. Use glosses. Both online glosses and hardcopy margin glosses can help comprehension and vocabulary learning.
2. For hardcopy materials use marginal glosses (Jacobs et al., 1994). For computerized materials use hyperlink glosses. Learners like these two forms of glossing (Jacobs et al., 1994; Myong, 2005), and both these involve only a small level of disruption of the flow of reading and encourage thoughtful processing.
3. Use L1 glosses for learners with a vocabulary of less than 2,000 words. It is not easy to write sensible L2 glosses using less than the 2,000 most common words of English. For more advanced learners, either L1 or L2 glosses are fine.
4. Use simple glosses rather than multiple-choice glosses, particularly if the glossed words are repeated in the text. Simple glosses are easier to make, and are less disruptive. Multiple-choice glosses are not strongly supported by research (Hulstijn, 1992; Watanabe, 1997).
5. Where possible, use glosses which draw on the underlying core meaning of the word. This encourages thoughtful processing. However, it may result in awkward glosses.

5.3.3 The Density of Glosses

How much glossing should there be in a text? In most of the experimental studies somewhere around 5 per cent to 2 per cent of the running words were glossed. In a hardcopy text, assuming around 10 words per line, this is one gloss for every two to five lines. Certainly glossing two or more words per line using margin glosses would strongly affect the layout of the text.

There is probably a density where glossing becomes too disruptive and although we do not have experimental or observational data on this, it is best to assume that the highest density of glossing should be no more than 5 per cent, and preferably around 3 per cent, of the running words.

We have looked at the research on glossing to see how this provides guidelines for adapting texts. There is another very important source of information to guide adaptation, namely vocabulary frequency and density data from actual texts. That is, if learners have a certain vocabulary size, how much adaptation of text is needed to make it more manageable? We will now look at an example of a non-fiction academic text and an example of a fiction text to look at the vocabulary load and to see how much replacement and glossing of vocabulary may need to be done. Because most graded reader series stop around the 2,500 to 3,000 word levels (Nation and Wang, 1999) we will focus on learners with a receptive vocabulary knowledge of 3,000 words or higher.

5.4 The Vocabulary Demands of Academic Text

Table 5.1 looks at the coverage of a series of 20 word lists made by counting word family range and frequency in the British National Corpus (Nation, 2004) on an

Table 5.1 Tokens, types and families at each of twenty 1,000 word family levels in an Applied Linguistics academic text

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Word list</i>	<i>Tokens/%</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Types/%</i>	<i>Families</i>
+ proper				
1 st 1,000	74,747/79.30	80.60	2,111/41.63	831
2 nd 1,000	10,652/11.30	91.90	1,039/20.49	506
3 rd 1,000	2,514/2.67	94.57	480/9.47	310
4 th 1,000	1,163/1.23	95.80	275/5.42	193
5 th 1,000	1,204/1.28	97.08	139/2.74	109
6 th 1,000	392/0.42	97.50	119/2.35	97
7 th 1,000	174/0.18	97.68	76/1.50	64
8 th 1,000	285/0.30	97.98	71/1.40	59
9 th 1,000	146/0.15	98.13	34/0.67	30
10 th 1,000	53/0.06	—	35/0.69	31
11 th 1,000	5/0.04	—	17/0.34	16
12 th 1,000	34/0.04	—	10/0.20	9
13 th 1,000	76/0.08	—	14/0.28	12
14 th 1,000	8/0.01	—	7/0.14	7
15 th 1,000	68/0.07	—	11/0.22	10
16 th 1,000	6/0.01	—	6/0.12	6
17 th 1,000	128/0.14	—	21/0.41	17
18 th 1,000	73/0.08	—	11/0.22	9
19 th 1,000	27/0.03	—	9/0.18	9
20 th 1,000	77/0.08	—	10/0.20	8
not in the lists	1,150/1.24	—	233/4.60	208
Proper noun	1,197/1.27	—	330/6.51	330
Hesitations, etc.	30/0.03	—	13/0.26	3
Total	94,259	—	5,071	2,882

academic text in applied linguistics. The British National Corpus is a collection of a variety of texts (10 per cent spoken, 90 per cent written) totalling 100 million tokens. Each of the word lists consists of 1,000 word families and they are ordered according to the frequency and range of the words, with word list one containing the widest range and highest frequency words based on occurrence in the British National Corpus. There is also a large list of proper names, and a list of marginal words like hesitations, exclamations, and representations of sounds like *whee*, *gosh*, *aaah*. A word family consists of a head word and its closely related family members. Here is an example of the word family of *absent*.

ABSENT

ABSENTED

ABSENTING

ABSENTS

ABSENTEE

ABSENTEES

ABSENTEEISM

ABSENTLY

Notice that both inflected and derived forms are members of the same family. Bauer and Nation (1993) defined a hierarchy of word families based on the criteria of frequency, regularity, productivity and transparency of prefixes and suffixes. The idea behind using word families as the unit for counting for reading is that knowledge of at least one of the family members and knowledge of the most common, regular and productive prefixes and suffixes makes other family members understandable when met in context. Each member of a word family is a word type (see Column 4 in Table 5.1), and every time a type or family member occurs in a text it is counted as a token (see Column 2 in Table 5.1).

This study assumes that most proper nouns do not need to be supported and can be included in words already known. It also assumes that the words are learned in the order of the frequency lists used for this study. Although these are both rather shaky assumptions, they are not unreasonable and there is some evidence for the frequency assumption (Read, 1988).

In Table 5.1, we can see that the first 1,000 word families of English account for 74,747 or 79.3 per cent of the tokens or running words in the academic text (column 2). When proper nouns and hesitations, etc. are added to these, then the first 1,000 covers 80.6 per cent of the text. 74,747 tokens consist of 2,111 different word forms or types. These 2,111 types consist of 831 word families.

Column 3 gives the cumulative coverage of tokens including proper nouns and hesitations up to 98 per cent coverage. So, the most common 3,000 words of English plus proper nouns give 94.57 per cent coverage.

The Applied Linguistics text is just over 94,000 tokens long. A vocabulary of around 4,000 word families gives over 95 per cent coverage. A vocabulary of between 8,000 and 9,000 word families is needed to get 98 per cent coverage. This percentage includes proper nouns. Many of the words not in the lists in this text are abbreviations such as MLAT, PLAB, CALP, IH, and L2 which could all be considered technical terms in applied linguistics. There are also some slightly unusual derived forms not in the lists which are used with a technical sense. These include *acquisitional*, *denotive*, *dialogic* and *inferential*. Also included in the words not in the lists are technical terms like *interlanguage* and *dictogloss*. Technical vocabulary makes up about 20 per cent of the tokens in this text (Chung and Nation, 2003) and much of this technical vocabulary consists of words which are not peculiar to the field of applied linguistics, such as *baseline*, *negotiate*, *uptake*, and *aptitude*. Familiarity with the technical vocabulary of the field would go a long way to reducing the vocabulary load of this text. Nonetheless, because much of the technical vocabulary of applied linguistics is within the most frequent 9,000 words of English (Chung and Nation, 2003), a vocabulary of 8,000–9,000 words is needed to read this text without outside assistance.

There is now a test available to measure total vocabulary size, so that teachers can see how near learners are to this goal of 9,000 words (Nation and Beglar, 2007). The test is also available in a Chinese bilingual version (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx>, www.lexutor.ca) and other bilingual versions are in preparation.

5.5 The Vocabulary Demands of a Novel

Let us now look at a novel in a similar way, but with the purpose of seeing how much vocabulary support would need to be provided to help learners cope with it. A novel was chosen because most graded readers consist of fiction texts, and a large number of them are adaptations of the classics like *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Emma* and *Lord Jim*.

Three kinds of vocabulary are involved – the words that learners already know, the next words for them to learn (target vocabulary), and the words beyond these two levels which would need to be replaced or removed from an unsimplified text to make a simplified or adapted text. This study attempts to calculate how many words in an unsimplified novel would need to be replaced in some way or other to bring it within the level of a learner with a certain vocabulary size. It also tries to calculate how many target words would need to be supported through the use of glosses, superscript, etc.

The novel chosen for this analysis was *Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad which is available as a text file in the Project Gutenberg archive (<http://promo.net/pg/>). It is assumed that this novel is typical of other novels and there is some data to support this (Nation, 2006). The analysis was done using the Range program and the British National Corpus word family lists, available from <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx>.

Table 5.2 Tokens, types and families at each of twenty 1,000 word family levels in the novel *Lord Jim*

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Word list</i>	<i>Tokens/%</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>	<i>Types/%</i>	<i>Families</i>
1 st 1,000	106,014/80.06	81.32	2,503/23.88	912
2 nd 1,000	9,267/7.00	88.32	1,719/16.40	780
3 rd 1,000	5,087/3.84	92.16	1,362/12.99	681
4 th 1,000	2,772/2.09	94.25	915/8.73	516
5 th 1,000	1,854/1.40	95.65	732/6.98	440
6 th 1,000	1,201/0.91	96.56	523/4.99	357
7 th 1,000	846/0.64	97.20	428/4.08	306
8 th 1,000	721/0.54	97.74	346/3.30	262
9 th 1,000	542/0.41	98.15	303/2.89	230
10 th 1,000	419/0.32	—	250/2.38	208
11 th 1,000	342/0.26	—	202/1.93	173
12 th 1,000	250/0.19	—	143/1.36	127
13 th 1,000	235/0.18	—	140/1.34	121
14 th 1,000	208/0.16	—	128/1.22	108
15 th 1,000	94/0.07	—	54/0.52	50
16 th 1,000	76/0.06	—	54/0.52	52
17 th 1,000	78/0.06	—	30/0.29	28
18 th 1,000	43/0.03	—	32/0.31	32
19 th 1,000	33/0.02	—	23/0.22	22
20 th 1,000	23/0.02	—	15/0.14	13
not in the lists	635/0.48	—	423/4.04	420
Total	132,413	—	10,483	6,004
Proper nouns	1,523/1.15	—	142/1.35	142
Hesitations	150/0.11	—	16/0.15	4

All the data in Table 5.3 are derived from Table 5.2.

In Table 5.2, Column 1 indicates the 20 word family lists used in the study. Each contains one thousand word families. Column 2 gives the number of tokens and percentage of total tokens covered by each 1,000 word family list. Column 3 gives the cumulative percentage of tokens starting with the first 1,000. In Column 3, proper nouns (1.15 per cent) and hesitations, exclamations, etc. (0.11 per cent) are included in the coverage by the 1st 1,000 word families. Column 4 gives the number and percentage of word types at each 1,000 word family level. This shows how many different word forms make up the number of tokens in column 2. So we can see that for the 3rd 1,000 word families, 1,362 different word types account for 5,087 word tokens at that level. On average each word type at this level occurs almost four times (5,087 divided by 1,362). Column 5 groups word types into word families. On average, at the 3rd 1,000 level in *Lord Jim*, two of these family members occur for each family (1,362 types divided by 681 families).

Table 5.3 Percentage of target words to support and words to replace in *Lord Jim* at various levels of previous knowledge

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Assumed known</i>	<i>% Coverage by known</i>	<i>% Target words to gloss</i>	<i>% To replace</i>	<i>Total %</i>
2,000	88.32	5.0	6.68	100
3,000	92.16	5.0	2.84	100
4,000	94.25	5.0	0.75	100
5,000	95.65	4.35	0	100
6,000	96.56	3.44	0	100
7,000	97.20	2.80	0	100
8,000	97.74	2.26	0	100
9,000	98.15	1.85	0	100

In column 3 of Table 5.3, the ‘target words to gloss’ is arbitrarily set at 5 per cent. If this percentage is lowered, then the percentage in Column 4 needs to be increased. Several unknown words will be easy to guess from context, and words which are easy to guess should not be chosen for replacement. The lowest frequency level words are replaced unless they are repeated within the text and/or they are easy to guess. Guessing may also be supported (or easified) for electronic texts by mini-concordances (see Tom Cobb’s www.lex tutor.ca *Read with resources*).

Table 5.3 shows that once the most common 4,000 words of English are known, only a small amount of replacement and support is needed and once the most common 5,000 words are known, glossing becomes less than 5 per cent with virtually no replacements needed. That is, the text does not need to be changed.

Lord Jim consists of 132,413 running words (tokens). If proper nouns and hesitations are taken away from these, there are 130,740 running words. 5 per cent of these is 6,537 tokens. This is the actual number of words to gloss. This is around 3,825 different word types or 2,549 word families because some of the 5 per cent tokens are repeated words. This is a lot of glosses to make or words to replace, but this number drops when learners know 5,000 words.

If it is assumed that the learners know the most frequent 3,000 words, then 7.84 per cent of the running words need to be dealt with. Guessing can be used for 2 per cent of these, reducing the percentage to 5.84 per cent, or 1 unknown word in every 17. The words beyond the 9,000 level should definitely be replaced except where they are closely related to the subject matter of the text or are repeated. The words beyond the 9,000 word level account for 1.85 per cent of the running words, leaving a total of 3.99 per cent of the running words, or one word in 25 to be glossed. There are only three words outside the first 9,000 which occur more than 20 times – *schooner* (28 occurrences), *stockade* (34), *rajah* (53), and these cover 0.09 per cent of the text. These words need not be replaced.

Here is an example of part of *Lord Jim* adapted for learners who know 3,000 words of English. For such learners, as Table 5.3 shows, 5 per cent of the running words will be glossed, and 2.84 per cent replaced. Roughly speaking, the glossed words will come from the fourth 1,000 to seventh 1,000 levels inclusive, because as Table 5.2 shows these four levels (fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh) cover 5.04 per cent ($2.09 + 1.40 + 0.91 + 0.64$) of the running words of *Lord Jim*. Words from the eighth 1,000 level on will be replaced unless they are very easy to guess or are repeated more than five times in the book (see *chandler* below). The dictionary used to help gloss the meanings is *Collins COBUILD Advanced Dictionary of American English* (2007). All the glosses are within the first 3,000 words of English and are not meant to be precise definitions, but should be enough to help the learner connect with a meaning in their first language and to deal with the word in its context.

lowering	He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight {7} <i>stoop</i> of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull. His voice was deep, loud, and his manner displayed a kind of {7} <i>dogged</i> self-assertion which had nothing aggressive in it. It seemed a {4} <i>necessity</i> , and it was directed apparently as much at himself as at anybody else. He was spotlessly neat, {14} <i>clothed (apparelled)</i> in {6} <i>immaculate</i> white from shoes to hat, and in the various eastern ports where he got his living as ship-{8} <i>chandler's</i> water-clerk he was very popular. A water-clerk need not pass an examination in anything under the sun, but he must have ability in the abstract and demonstrate it practically. His work consists in racing under sail, steam, or {10} his own energy (<i>oars</i>) against other water-clerks for any ship about to {5} <i>anchor</i> , greeting her captain cheerily, forcing upon him a card – the business card of the ship-{8} <i>chandler</i> – and on his first visit on shore piloting him firmly but <i>gently</i> {13} (<i>without ostentation</i>) to a vast, {8} <i>cave(cavern)-like</i> shop which is full of things that are eaten and drunk on board ship; where you can get everything to make her {!} <i>ready to sail (seaworthy)</i> and beautiful, from a set of chain-hooks for her cable to a book of gold-leaf for the carvings of her {5} <i>stern</i> ; and where her commander is received like a brother by a ship-{8} <i>chandler</i> he has never seen before. There is a cool {6} <i>parlour</i> , easy-chairs, bottles, {6} <i>cigars</i> , writing implements, a copy of harbour regulations, and a warmth of welcome that {4} <i>melts</i> the salt of a three months' passage out of a seaman's heart.
showing determination	
necessary thing	
very clean and neat	
shop-keeper for ships	
put down the anchor (picture) to stop the ship	
back part of the ship	
sitting-room	
large brown cigarettes	
turn into water	

Figure 5.1 An adapted and glossed section of *Lord Jim* for learners who know 3,000 words

In the above text, the number in curly brackets, e.g. {8}, indicates the 1,000 level of the word. {!} means that the following word is not in the twenty 1,000 word lists. Words in brackets and italics (*apparelled*) are to be replaced. Glossed words are in

bold. In the text for the learners, the items in curly or ordinary brackets would not be shown.

We have looked at two kinds of texts, an academic text and a novel, and have found that a vocabulary of around 8,000 to 9,000 words is needed to cope with the vocabulary of these texts without some kind of support.

This means that for a learner with a vocabulary size of 3,000 word families, there are around 5,000–6,000 word families to learn in order to be a truly independent reader. There are also clearly diminishing returns for the effort of learning these words in terms of the coverage they provide. Learning the eighth 1,000 words results in an increase of 0.30 per cent coverage of academic text and 0.54 per cent coverage of a novel (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2). That is, an increase of around one to two more familiar words per 300 word page.

We have looked in detail at the design of texts, like those in the Bridge Series, to help learners pick up this vocabulary through supported reading. Calculating from the right-most column of Table 5.2, there are 2,111 of the 6,000 word families from the fourth to ninth 1,000s inclusive that would be met when reading *Lord Jim*. To meet every one of the 6,000 families (let alone learn them) it would be necessary to read at least ten long novels or around 2,000,000 words of text of various kinds. Clearly other complementary approaches to learning would be useful.

So far we have looked at opportunities for learning through assisted reading. A well-balanced language course provides opportunities for learning through input, through output, and through deliberate learning (Nation, 2007). It could be argued that providing glosses is adding a deliberate element to what otherwise would be incidental learning. Let us now look at using a highly effective form of deliberate learning to expand vocabulary knowledge.

5.6 Deliberate Learning of Vocabulary

The most obvious way to speed up the learning involves deliberate learning using word cards. There is a long history of research on deliberate learning which has shown the effectiveness of such learning in gaining explicit knowledge of vocabulary. This research has also provided support for useful guidelines about how such learning is best carried out (Nation, 2001: 296–316). Deliberate learning, however, is open to two criticisms. First, learning from word cards involves decontextualized learning which may mean that many aspects of what is involved in knowing a word – its use in particular – may not be learnt. Second, deliberate, intentional learning may not result in the implicit knowledge which is needed for normal receptive language use, that is, the ability to subconsciously and fluently access the meaning of the word forms met in reading or listening. There is now research evidence to refute both of these criticisms.

Webb (2003) compared the effects of learning words in isolation with learning words in a sentence context. Knowledge of each word was measured using many different test items for each word which measured knowledge of spoken and written form, collocations, meaning, grammar, restrictions on use and associations. Webb found that even learning words in isolation resulted in knowledge of aspects

such as collocations, spoken form and associations and that the only measurable difference between words learnt in isolation and in a sentence context was a very small benefit for grammatical knowledge. Even though deliberate learning provides knowledge of a range of aspects involved in knowing a word, it would be foolish to rely on this as the only kind of learning. Deliberate learning is a way of quickly boosting knowledge that is then helpful in meaning-focused use of the language.

Elgort (2007) looked at the effect of words deliberately learnt using word cards on the ability of those words to prime other related or unrelated known words. Typically priming involves fast subconscious access to lexical networks, and these features are considered to be features of implicit knowledge. Elgort found that deliberately learnt words performed well as primes. Deliberate learning of vocabulary, unlike grammar, can result in both explicit and implicit knowledge.

Thus the criticisms of deliberate learning are not well founded and these criticisms go against the findings of research.

Deliberate learning is an important option to consider when looking at how to bridge the vocabulary gap between simplified and unsimplified text. In a well-balanced language course there needs to be a balance of the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development (Nation, 2007). Deliberate vocabulary learning should not be seen as being in competition with incidental learning through reading or listening. Both are useful ways of learning and are mutually reinforcing.

5.7 Morphologically-related Forms

An area of second language vocabulary learning that surprisingly has not been well explored is how knowledge of the high-frequency words of English can benefit the learning of lower frequency words. To be specific, what proportion of low-frequency words are related morphologically to the first 2,000 or 3,000 word families of English?

Descriptions of these kinds of relationships exist in various forms in dictionaries, etymological dictionaries, and in morpheme counts, but this information has not been gathered together in a form that is useful for teachers and learners, and has not been usefully quantified.

For example, we can find low frequency words like *cognizant*, *equity* and *rank* which are related to words in the first 2,000 word lists. Knowing that *cognizant* contains the same root as *recognize*, and that this root means ‘to know’ in both words, should make the learning of the lower frequency word *cognizant* easier. Similarly, *rank* is related to the *-rang-* root in the high-frequency word *arrange*, and *equity* is related to *equal*.

5.8 Computer-assisted Learning

An increasingly important way of bridging the gap between simplified and unsimplified text is making use of computer-based resources for reading. The foremost

researcher in this area is Tom Cobb and his website at www.lex tutor.ca contains a wealth of resources. Not only has Cobb developed these ingenious and effective ways of helping learners read difficult text, he has also written about them (Cobb, 2007), and researched their effectiveness (Cobb, 1997; Cobb et al., 2001).

To make use of these resources, the learners turn their text into a hypertext using a tool on the website, and then get help with reading the text in the following ways. All of the aids provided can be considered forms of easification, because the text itself is not changed as it is with simplified or elaborated texts, but it is supported by various tools.

5.8.1 Concordance Data to Help Guessing

By double-clicking on a word in the text, the learner is given a concordance which consists of several instances of the word occurring in context. In effect this provides the learner with a variety of contexts and thus makes guessing from context much more informed. The learner is able to choose which corpus the concordance comes from. The concordance can be made from the text itself if that text is long enough to give enough instances of the word.

5.8.2 Spoken Input to Help Recognition

By clicking on a word in the text, the learner hears the spoken form of that word. This can have several important effects. First, having a consistent pronunciation for a word is very useful to help a word enter long-term memory because it allows an item to enter the phonological loop (Baddeley, 1990). Second, if learners have a large spoken vocabulary, but are poor at reading this can help them to recognize the written form.

5.8.3 Dictionary Look-up to Get the Meaning

Any word in the text can also be looked up in an electronic dictionary while reading the text. This kind of look up is much faster than looking up in a hard copy dictionary because the computer finds the entry for the word. This is not as fast as glossing and requires searching among the meanings in the entry, but it probably involves more thoughtful processing than a gloss would normally involve.

5.8.4 Gathering Words for Later Study

While reading, the learner is able to choose words from the text and place them in a word box at the top of the screen. After reading the learner can return to the items in this word box and create exercises from them using programs available on Tom Cobb's website. These include gap-filling activities in the form of a concordance quiz, retrieval activities and spelling activities.

These various forms of computerized support allow learners to read text that normally would be too difficult for them, and help them to increase their vocabulary during and after reading.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the gap between simplified and unsimplified texts, finding that it is a large gap, both in terms of words to learn and the proportion of unknown running words in a text. It has been argued that a series of adapted texts like the Bridge Series needs to be revived or re-created to help learners bridge this gap by learning through meaning-focused input. The format of the old Bridge Series could be improved by using marginal glosses for hard copy texts, and hyper-link glosses for computerized texts. Software now exists for quickly identifying the words to be replaced or glossed, and thus the job of adaptation is much easier than it used to be.

Learning through reading on its own however is not sufficient and needs to be complemented by deliberate learning. Cobb (2007: 38) argues that 'free or wide reading alone is not a sufficient source of vocabulary knowledge for reading' because a plausible amount of reading does not provide a sufficient number of encounters with each word from the third 1,000 onwards. We have looked at three options – reading adapted texts, word card learning, and computer-assisted language learning. There are however other options, for example, learning through listening, intensive reading, conversation activities, learning through writing and doing vocabulary learning activities. I have focused on the three options because these seem to me to be likely to be the most effective and to draw most strongly on existing research. However options for learning are not in competition with each other. Providing a balanced range of learning opportunities is more sensible and effective than choosing just two or three wonder cures.

At present, teaching, reading and materials do not take learners far enough in their vocabulary knowledge. Graded readers stop long before they should, and deliberate vocabulary learning needs to be encouraged and supported even for advanced learners. We thus need to rediscover the past in the form of readers like those in the Bridge Series, and in the form of the traditional way of learning from word cards. We also need to make effective use of the very adaptable computer resources we now have available to support reading and to help vocabulary learning. The tools and knowledge are there, we now need to make use of them.

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CHAPTER 6 We Do Need Methods

Michael Swan

Language teaching is subject to a perennial centrifugal dynamic, whereby a concern with specific aims is easily displaced by a focus on activities which may or may not constitute effective methods of achieving these aims. In recent decades, this tendency has received a powerful boost from communicative teaching theory, with its emphasis on language in use. Attention has also been diverted from the linguistic ‘centre’ by the increasing interest of applied linguistic researchers in matters which are peripheral or ancillary to teaching language itself, and by ‘post-method’ views which tend to discourage concern with questions of methodology. For language teaching to be effective, however, we need to return to the linguistic centre, and to look at methods in terms of their value for solving specific problems, rather than on the basis of their conformity or otherwise with macro-strategic doctrines. Methodological areas which are particularly in need of theoretical attention are those involving the principled selection of high-priority language elements for teaching, and their integration into the overall architecture of language courses: matters which are at present largely the concern of practitioners. The complexity of these operations means that effective full-scale language courses cannot be produced, as is often believed, by teachers working on a do-it-yourself basis. Progress, at least in the short term, may depend as much on our making better use of the methodological resources we already have at our command, as on the development of new technological resources and the expansion of our professional knowledge.

6.1 Method, Methods, Postmethod

6.1.1 Introduction: Definitions

Learning languages is a notoriously complex business, involving the mastery of several different kinds of knowledge and skill. Over the years, language teachers have developed numerous ways of imparting these various aspects of language competence, drawing on research, individual exploration and the accumulated wisdom of the profession. Since learning and competence are difficult to measure, there is inevitably substantial room for differing opinions about the value of one or other method of achieving a particular goal.

Such opinions range from the general to the particular. Some claims seem intended to apply to all of the multifarious activities that constitute language instruction: ‘The mother-tongue must never be used in foreign-language teaching’; ‘Learning can only be effective if it involves genuine communication’; ‘Comprehensible input provides all that is necessary for effective acquisition’. Others relate to more specific aspects of a language teacher’s work; for instance the belief that learners need training in reading skills; or that linguistic regularities are best learnt inductively; or that new lexis must always be contextualized; or that teaching phoneme discrimination by the use of minimal pairs helps to improve pronunciation; or that recasts are (or are not) more effective than explicit correction.

Methodological views have been categorized in differing ways by scholars from Anthony (1963) to Richards and Rodgers (2001: 18–34). There is consequently some terminological confusion both in the professional literature and in more general usage as to what it is and is not appropriate to call a ‘method’, and how or whether ‘method’ is to be distinguished from ‘approach’. While it can be helpful to distinguish levels of generality, attempts to establish watertight categories suffer from the usual problem of trying to draw lines on a continuum. In what follows, I shall bypass the problem, using these terms in accordance with normal informal practice without attempting rigorous definitions or distinctions.

6.1.2 The So-called ‘Postmethod’ Condition

Discussion of methodology is currently further complicated by the frequently-heard claim that language teaching has moved into a ‘postmethod’ era (e.g. Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Up till fairly recently, the story goes, there have been successive and often contradictory views about how best to teach languages. These have tended to harden into relatively systematic sets of precepts or ‘methods’, often going into considerable detail about the optimum design of syllabuses, materials and activity types. Such methods have not delivered what they promised, due largely to the limited views of language, teaching and learning which they embodied. Methods are, we are told, top-down and prescriptive. Their efficacy cannot be demonstrated as they are not testable against each other. The role of the individual teacher is minimized. Methods fail to address the broader contexts of language teaching. ‘By concentrating excessively on method, we have ignored several other factors that govern classroom processes and practices – factors such as teacher cognition, learner perception, societal needs, cultural contexts, political exigencies, economic imperatives . . .’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 165). Autonomy, self-fulfilment and personal development are precluded by an outcome/objectives approach (Finney, 2002: 72). Methods, indeed, may carry (undesirable) sociopolitical agendas (Brown, 2002: 10; Finney, 2002: 71).

Now, however, it is claimed, we are freeing ourselves from the constraints of one or other method, and are able to adopt a more open and promising approach to language teaching which can take into account all of the factors – linguistic,

psychological and sociological – that shape our activity and that of our learners. Kumaravadivelu (2006: 201) lists ten ‘macrostrategies’ which characterize postmethod language teaching, and from which teachers can generate situation-specific need-based microstrategies or teaching techniques. They are:

1. Maximize learning opportunities
2. Facilitate negotiated interaction
3. Minimize perceptual mismatches
4. Activate intuitive heuristics
5. Foster language awareness
6. Contextualize linguistic input
7. Integrate language skills
8. Promote learner autonomy
9. Ensure social relevance
10. Raise cultural consciousness.

6.1.3 How Method-bound Has Language Teaching Really Been?

Large-scale methodological views which embody, so to speak, a whole instructional philosophy may certainly impose directions and constraints at a level of considerable detail, so that the whole business of language teaching can be seen as taking on the colour of this or that ‘approach’. The old ‘Direct Method’ requirement that all language teaching should be mediated through the target language caused generations of teachers to go through contortions to avoid translation, and to forbid their students to use bilingual dictionaries (as some still do, discredited though the belief now is). Some teachers and course designers who followed hard-core varieties of the audiolingual approach tried to make as many aspects of their teaching as possible conform to the behaviourist principles of ‘mimicry-memorization’ and ‘overlearning’ through drilling. The fringe methods which became popular in the 1970s, such as Suggestopaedia, Counselling Learning or Silent Way, sometimes required an almost religious type of observance from their devotees. Similarly, some versions of the ‘communicative approach’ have severely discouraged specific teaching activities which are seen as not mirroring ‘real-life’ communication: for example, asking students questions to which the teacher already knows the answer, or practising grammar through decontextualized sentence-level drills.

However, I suspect that the ‘postmethod’ account of language teaching history, whereby monolithic approaches have generally and comprehensively dictated the shape of courses, materials and teaching techniques, may be somewhat oversimplified. It is debatable how far such approaches usually constrain everything that is done. The term ‘grammar-translation’, for instance, which is commonly used as a derogatory label for a certain way of teaching languages, really only characterizes one aspect of classroom activity: dealing with morphology and syntax by teaching explicit rules and making students practise them by translating phrases

or sentences. Whatever the drawbacks or inadequacies of this kind of approach, it does not necessarily spill over into other aspects of language learning such as reading or writing practice. This probably goes for any other ‘named’ method, audio-lingual, communicative or whatever: as is often clear when one looks at the relevant coursebooks, the philosophical umbrella may in practice cover a good deal of eclecticism. Our familiar view of the succession of approaches that has seemed to characterize the last hundred years or so is perhaps therefore in part a convenient myth. Possibly a more realistic view would be that some parts of some methods have dictated, through syllabus, materials and test design, what some teachers have done, and continue to do, in some parts of their teaching. The successive rejection of one method by another may thus amount, in practice, to the replacement of what does not quite happen by something else that does not quite happen either.

6.1.4 How Postmethod is the Postmethod Condition?

A brief look at the characterizations of ‘postmethod’ teaching cited above is enough to show, as Bell (2003) makes abundantly clear, that we have not in fact moved into the broad sunlit uplands of a new era, unconstrained by the limiting perspectives of one or other method or approach. Postmethod thinking is not at all methodologically neutral. On the contrary, like its predecessors, it can carry a heavy weight of sociopolitical and educational-philosophical baggage. Kumara-avadivelu’s ten ‘macrostrategies’ legislate in favour of negotiated interaction, learner autonomy, intuitive heuristics, social relevance and the raising of cultural consciousness. On the other hand, they have nothing at all to say about, for example, the selection of high-priority linguistic input, the organization of input material into progressive syllabuses, the role of systematic practice in learning, the value of memorization, the need for teachers to have a detailed explicit knowledge of the grammar, phonology and lexis of the languages they are teaching, or many other things that might be regarded by some teachers as centrally important for language teaching.

It is not my purpose here to argue pointlessly for one perspective as against another: both are obviously relevant to our work. In language teaching and learning, there is an eternal and inevitable pendulum-swing backwards and forwards between form and meaning, control and freedom, imitation and expression, knowledge and skill, learning and using. But clearly the ‘postmethod condition’, as described in the citations above, is well towards the meaning-freedom-expression-communication end. In this, it is simply another offshoot of the ‘communicative approach’ of the last 30 years which it is promoted as supplanting, with the same strengths and weaknesses, and with the same empirically unsupported methodological value-judgements and dichotomies (Swan, 1985a, 1985b, 2005). In so far as it is distinguished from other versions of the communicative approach, it is so principally by virtue of its greater focus on socio-political-cultural concerns.

Despite the fine words, then, we are not in anything so grand as a ‘postmethod condition’. What we are in, I would suggest, is a complex centrifugal muddle.

6.2 The Centrifugal Muddle

6.2.1 *Doing Things and Teaching Things*

In order to teach the forms of the target language, the conventions for their use, and the receptive and productive skills necessary for their effective retrieval and deployment, teachers need interesting and engaging presentation and practice activities. As students learn more language, more general fluency-practice activities also take on increasing importance. Unfortunately, this increased focus on doing things can bring with it a correspondingly reduced focus on the specific knowledge and skills which learners need to acquire and consolidate by means of the activities. Unconsciously, teachers can be drawn into a centrifugal dynamic whereby they move further and further away from the linguistic centre, activities become paramount, and the language the activities are supposed to teach is lost sight of. Doing things is easier, and more fun, than teaching things. Activities such as getting students to prepare a mock radio programme, to give each other lectures on their academic specialities, or to discuss something that is in the news, can seem to be their own justification, with no requirement that there be an identifiable linguistic payoff for the time and energy invested.

Spoken or written texts, in this mind-set, may no longer be seen as vehicles for teaching and consolidating high-priority new language, or promoting receptive fluency. They can simply become a given, there because they are there, to be 'gone through' because that is what language students do, along with answering 'comprehension questions' of uncertain value.

We do not believe that it is necessary for students to understand or translate every word of a reading or listening text. If students complete the task we set – answering a certain number of questions, marking a given number of sentences true or false – we feel that they have read or listened successfully. (Bowler and Parminter, 2002: 59)

The key question, of course, is not whether students 'have read or listened successfully', but what, if anything, they have learnt in the process. Teachers' journals often contain articles on ways of using texts, as if the text was primary and uses had to be found for it. But this is like approaching household repairs by picking up a hammer and wondering what one can do with it, rather than starting by assessing what needs doing and then considering what tools are most appropriate. There seems in fact to be a widespread act of faith that any kind of engagement with texts is bound to teach language. This is by no means necessarily the case.

6.2.2 *The Communicative Bias*

The centrifugal dynamic has been greatly encouraged in recent decades by theoretical views according to which instructed language learning should attempt

to simulate the conditions of ‘natural’ acquisition, and distance itself from the traditional form-focused teacher-dominated classroom.¹ If exposure to comprehensible input is all that is required for effective language acquisition (Krashen, 1981: 107–108), or if communicative tasks incorporating incidental focus on form provide more or less everything that learners need (Long and Robinson, 1998), then appropriate activities become the central element in language teaching; language itself is no longer at the centre, and ‘language-based’ teaching methods are misguided (Robinson, 2001: 292). Activity-related concepts that are universally approved of and automatically assented to in this framework – the applied linguistic equivalents of democracy and motherhood – include ‘learner-centred’, ‘meaning-based’, ‘holistic’, ‘discourse’, ‘discovery’, ‘process’, ‘interaction’, ‘negotiation’ and ‘strategy’. On the other side of the communicative fence, concepts related to ‘bad’ pedagogic attitudes felt to be discredited and undesirable include ‘teacher-dominated’, ‘form-based’, ‘discrete’, ‘sentence-level’, ‘transmission model’, ‘product’, ‘memorization’, ‘repetition’ and ‘drill’.

Systematic syllabus-based grammar teaching is naturally disfavoured by this approach; pronunciation has also been elbowed out. Behaviourist-oriented language teaching often incorporated early and systematic study of the phoneme distinctions and suprasegmental features of the target language. Perhaps because it is difficult to make phonological features ‘communicative’ in any very interesting sense, this kind of work has now largely disappeared. Similarly, communicative approaches to teaching ‘listening comprehension’, from Blundell and Stokes (1981) to Ellis (2003), typically focus on getting students to extract meaning from texts, rather than on training them to become better at perceiving and decoding the phonetic features – for example difficult consonant clusters, voicing or vowel rounding – that may be making it difficult for them to access the meaning in the first place (Ur, 1984; Field, 1998).

Large numbers of language teachers, particularly those whose training has been influenced by currently fashionable applied linguistic theory, now take the communicative natural acquisition bias for granted.

In the 21st century, it is not necessary to defend the premise that learning a foreign language should be based on a communicative approach which prioritizes meaning over the form in which this meaning is communicated. (Irún-Chavarria, 2005: 20)

But of course it *is* necessary to defend this premise – and equally necessary to contest it, along with others like it. It is by no means obvious why ‘meaning’ should be prioritized over ‘form’ (whatever that means exactly); or, for example, why learner-directed process should necessarily take precedence over teacher-directed product. Assertions about ‘communicative’ teaching of the kind under discussion are not generally based on empirical evidence as to the efficacy of the teaching approaches they promote (Sheen, 1993, 1994, 2002; Swan, 2005). Such approaches are ideological in nature: they belong to the category which Richards (2002: 21–23) characterizes as based on ‘theory-philosophy conceptions’, views of what

ought to work or what is right, what stands to reason, what is self-evident, or what is believed to be psychologically or sociologically desirable.

6.2.3 Other Biases

The centrifugal dynamic is, I believe, fuelled by several additional biases, both academic and practical, which can encourage a focus on activity in classrooms in preference to the study of language itself.

The innovation imperative Young applied linguists naturally want to carry out original research, publish articles, make their mark and climb the professional ladder. It is certainly possible to do this while investigating the teaching and acquisition of language forms and their uses, and a good deal of distinguished work takes place in this area. But there is perhaps more glory in coming up with exciting findings drawn from a new and unexplored area of research, remote from the central and perhaps intractable-seeming problems that so many researchers have already worked on.

The ESL bias A further bias may arise from the fact that many of those applied linguists whose views contribute to language teaching theory have typically gained their classroom experience either in second-language situations, where learners have rich exposure to the target language outside the classroom, or at university level in other environments. In both of these situations, learners may benefit from teaching programmes with a heavy emphasis on guided communicative activities, and a correspondingly reduced emphasis on the systematic study of language forms. Unconsciously, writers on language teaching theory can easily extend generalizations which are valid for the situations they are most familiar with to others where these principles are less applicable.

The nature of English The applied linguistic research and theorizing which form the basis of current thinking and practice relate overwhelmingly to the teaching and learning of English. Now English, as it happens, is a morphologically light language. Although the grammar presents beginners with some syntactic and semantic problems, a good deal of the structure can be picked up easily from exposure and practice. Beginners in English are, then, not faced with a very heavy formal learning load, and can move quickly towards a working knowledge of the language. It is interesting to speculate what current language-teaching theory would look like if the reference language were, say, Russian. Russian has a formidable array of inflectional grammar, with nouns, verbs, adjectives and pronouns all having a wide range of only partly predictable endings signalling grammatical relations. A beginning or elementary student of Russian has to pay a great deal of attention to these forms if he or she wants a moderate level of grammatical accuracy, they cannot easily be picked up from simple exposure to the limited input available to most students, and there is a powerful case for learning tables of inflections by heart. It is not at all certain that the centrifugal drift from form to activity, or the act of faith whereby forms are taken to be learnable largely by simply using language, would be possible if Russian were the focus of language teaching theory to the extent that English is.

Native speaking teachers and grammar At a more practical level, a bias away from grammar can arise in the common situation where native speakers of English are involved in teacher training or course design. Such teachers are less likely to have studied the details of English grammar during their training than their non-native speaking counterparts, and some may therefore feel sufficiently insecure about their knowledge to favour approaches which avoid explicit grammar study.

6.2.4 *The Expanding Periphery*

I do not of course wish to suggest that theorists, researchers and practitioners no longer have any concern at all with the 'linguistic centre'. Applied linguistics journals commonly publish articles reporting research on the teaching of at least some aspects of language form; at the more practical end of the scale, teachers' magazines such as *Modern English Teacher* and *English Teaching Professional* devote considerable space to discussing grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. None the less, it seems clear that there is a real and substantial swing towards a concern, both theoretical and practical, with matters that are ancillary or peripheral to language teaching itself. These include learner characteristics and perceptions, societal needs, cultural contexts, economic imperatives, autonomy, teacher cognition, self-fulfilment and personal development.

While confidence in specific methods has declined, interest in individual learner differences, such as motivation, aptitude, family background, has noticeably increased . . . If what I do in class depends mainly on who I am as a person, then I must develop myself as much as I can if I wish to improve as a teacher. (Sowden, 2007: 304–308)

At the first annual conference of what is now the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (then ATEFL) in 1967, participants discussed the following topics:

- teaching methodology
- the pros and cons of structure drilling and language labs
- ways of improving testing
- how to design teaching programmes for different contexts (especially immigrant education)
- the training of EFL teachers.

At the 40th IATEFL conference in 2006, the titles of talks listed in the programme included references to:

anxiety, CALL, classroom research, collaborative learning, consciousness-raising, critical discourse analysis, critical reading, cultural awareness, developing teacher reflection, innovation management, interactivity, intercultural

competence, internet, IT, kinaesthetic learners, learner differences, learner independence, learner preferences, learner training, learner's self-concept, metaphor, motivation, multiple intelligences, negotiated interaction, new technologies, pragmatics, professional development, reflective practice, scaffolding, strategy training, teacher's role.

Among this proliferation of non-central concerns, there are no doubt matters that do require attention. Language teaching is not just teaching language, as Richards and Renandya remind us in their list (2002: 2) of 'Key issues that shape the design and delivery of [English] language teaching':

- understanding learners and their roles, rights, needs, motivations, strategies, and the processes they employ in second language learning
- understanding the nature of language teaching and learning and the roles teachers, teaching methods and teaching materials play in facilitating successful learning
- understanding how English functions in the lives of learners, the way the English language works, the particular difficulties it poses for second language learners, and how learners can best achieve their goals in learning English
- understanding how schools, classrooms, communities, and the language teaching profession can best support the teaching and learning of English.

However, a balance is needed between ancillary concerns and the central language teaching priorities that they are ancillary to. In the limit, communicative or postmethod philosophy can actually seem to be in danger of losing contact with language teaching altogether and replacing it by other things. Allwright (2003: 114) makes the remarkable statement that according to the principles of 'exploratory practice' we should 'above our concern for instructional efficiency, prioritize the quality of life in the language classroom'. And Ellis, arguing for a full-scale task-based approach to language teaching, says that the blurring of the distinction between syllabus and methodology is an 'attractive feature' of task-based work, and that a central tenet of the approach is arguably the idea that 'no attempt is made to specify what learners will learn, only how they will learn' (2003: 30–31).

There is not very much time for language teaching in most instructional situations, and peripheral matters cannot be allowed to divert scarce resources from the teaching of what is more central. Prioritization is important; so (to invoke a non-academic concept) is common sense. The quality of life in the language classroom is not insignificant, but it is certainly not more important than instructional efficiency. To make a virtue of not specifying at all what learners will learn is a very strange approach to the teaching of language, music, mathematics, history or anything else. What a normal teacher does in class surely depends even more on what he/she is teaching than on his or her state of personal development. Language teaching is not only teaching language, but that is its central business. The complexity underlying this deceptively simple-sounding fact is no excuse for substituting ill-directed activity, excessive concern with peripheral topics, or complacent

references to a ‘postmethod condition’ for hard thinking about what to teach and how it can best be taught: that is to say, for decisions about method.

6.3 Language Teaching and the Need for Methods

6.3.1 *‘I don’t know how to say he had.’*

Macaro (2001: 146) describes a study in which English-speaking secondary school learners of French were being trained in strategy use. At one point in the study one of the children, who was trying to draft a letter to an imaginary French contact, was clearly too overwhelmed by the task to make constructive use of the strategies that might have helped her, failing for instance to attend to part-of-speech information in her dictionary. In any case, strategies did not seem to be her most important gap: at one point in her ordeal she confessed that she could not remember how to say *he had* in French. Now it may well be important and cost-effective to teach selected learning and communication strategies, and there is certainly no reason why a researcher should not investigate their use in whatever situation he or she chooses. But if a pupil who has been learning French for over three years does not know the equivalent of *he had*, there is something wrong, and strategy use is peripheral to the problem. Without knowing more about the individual case, it is impossible to know exactly what was the source of the child’s difficulty. But a reasonable hypothesis, in the light of Macaro’s transcripts and what one knows about the approach to foreign language teaching popular in many British schools, is that the girl’s class had done a good deal of work on chunk-learning and ‘scripts’ (describing one’s family, home or pets, recounting one’s holidays, discussing one’s plans for the future, writing an introductory letter to a penfriend, etc.), but had done relatively little work on fundamental grammar. That is to say, the teaching is likely to have used one and the same kind of activity both for fostering fluent use of what was known, and for building up basic knowledge. Not surprisingly, the method worked better for one than the other.

The main problem with large-scale language teaching approaches (‘methods’ in the wider sense) is not, it seems to me, that they fail to take into account the complex nature of society, culture, human psychology or interpersonal relations. It is that they do not take into account the complexity of language itself. Discussion of methods can only be really constructive if given a tighter focus, looking at separate aspects of language and asking for each ‘how can this best be taught?’ Just as one can talk about good and bad ways of putting a hinge on a door, organizing a tennis tournament or training a sheepdog, one can talk about good and bad ways of teaching German technical vocabulary, demonstrating Chinese tones, introducing English question formation to beginners, organizing role play in groups, planning a three-week intensive Spanish course for tourist guides, or indeed teaching the French for *he had*. Language is very many different things, very many different types of activity are involved in learning and teaching it, and considerations of method are relevant to all of these. Teachers, where they are not too influenced by

theoretical fashion, are of course generally well aware of this; few teachers seem persuaded that methods are dead (Thornbury, 1998; Block, 2001; Bell, 2007).

6.3.2 *The Components of Language Instruction*

Any course of language instruction must provide the learner with an appropriate knowledge and skills base. This necessarily means addressing four problems:

- *selection and presentation* The language elements that learners most need must be identified and made available for learning.
- *establishment of a knowledge base* The forms and use of these elements must be fixed in learners' long-term memory.
- *development of recall and deployment* New material, once learnt, must become efficiently retrievable for comprehension or production. Where language use involves not only recall but also computation (for example applying a morphological or syntactic rule, matching a grammatical form to a meaning or situation), learners must acquire the ability to perform the operations required with reasonable accuracy in real time.
- *course architecture* The syllabus components – the different language elements and skills selected for teaching – need to be fitted together into a coherent smoothly functioning package: a course. This must link different elements together efficiently and economically, while exploiting the interpersonal dynamics of the instructional situation to the best advantage, and allowing for adaptation and variation in the light of individual differences and local conditions.

In each of these areas, questions of method arise at various scales. How can we best select material for learning, by identifying both the highest-priority forms, and the most important functions, notions and skills for which appropriate forms must be taught? (These are not the same question; they are two different questions with complementary answers: see Swan, 1985b: 79.) For each language element that we have identified, what is the most appropriate presentation vehicle, and how can this element best be fixed in long-term memory and made efficiently retrievable and available for fluent use? What principles are relevant to linking items of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation into packages (lessons) and deciding what kinds of activity will at the same time teach these items and practise more general skills? How can we provide adequate opportunity for realistic communicative practice of the different kinds of thing that have been learnt? Does a given skill need to be taught, or will learners access it naturally in due course by virtue of already being able to deploy it in their mother tongues (Walter, 2007)? What can best be learnt through extensive reading or listening, what through intensive input, and what through analysed (form-focused) input? What is most usefully presented or practised in a whole-class format, what is better handled through group work, and what lends itself best to individual study? Do learners have easy access to extensive input, and if not, how do we provide it? What can be learnt

outside the instructional situation, and by what routes? What cannot? What can be learnt through discovery and what is more efficiently taught by more directive methods?

For the central formal aspects of language, questions of method may need to be considered virtually on an item-specific basis. Definition, paraphrase, contextualization, illustration, mime and translation are all viable vocabulary-teaching strategies; but they would not all be equally effective for teaching each of the lexical items *thanks, elephant, solution, curly, in principle, mortgage, jump, hang on* and *gearbox*. The same applies to grammar. How you can best teach a point – and indeed whether you need to teach it, or can teach it – depends very much on what you are teaching. Japanese question formation? The position of French object pronouns? Spanish tense use? English noun compounding? Russian noun morphology? In Hulstijn's words (1995): 'Not all grammar rules are equal'.

6.3.3 *'Method' is an Obstacle to Methods*

Questions of this kind, then, cannot be answered by reference to the kind of sweeping generalization that often dictates methodological stances, and such generalizations can in fact seriously hamper what we are doing. 'Method' can get in the way of methods. Of course, we need to pay attention to what theory and research have to tell us about learning, language acquisition, social behaviour and so on. But from an ideological point of view, language-teaching methodology is, and must be allowed to be, neutral. If we wish to decide whether language laboratory-type pattern repetition will help Mandarin speakers to master English conditional structures, we cannot settle the question by appealing to current views on behaviourism; we must try it and see what happens. The same goes for such activities as practising French rounded vowels in front of a mirror, committing to memory a table of Polish case-endings, learning a bilingual vocabulary list, translating a foreign text into one's own language and back, filling gaps in sentences or mining a corpus for authentic usage examples. These may or may not be useful things to do, but the issue cannot be decided on the basis of their conformity with current views about, for instance, the importance for learning of interaction and meaningful communication. Such views may well be relevant to some aspects of language teaching and learning; for other aspects, they are not necessarily any more applicable than they are to teaching learner drivers to reverse into parking spaces, training novice skiers to execute snow-plough turns, or showing mathematics students how to solve simultaneous equations. Interaction with other learners in a controlled role-play task may be an excellent way of increasing one's fluent command of a particular range of speech functions, and an extremely inefficient way of mastering the grammar of relative clauses. The same goes for learner-directed work or 'learning to learn': these approaches work for some things and not for others. Sentence-level grammar practice (to take one of the activities instanced above) is condemned by many scholars on the grounds that it isolates structural elements from their use in 'discourse': the larger-scale structuring of

language for effective communication (see for example Celce-Murcia, 2007). But discourse is not some kind of absolute value to which homage must always be paid. Some grammar is discourse-oriented (for example Italian word order); much of it is not (for example the use of a dative case after the German equivalent of *to help*, or the syntax of English questions). And in general, the fact that grammatical knowledge needs to be integrated into fluent communicative production does not mean that there is no place for less meaning-focused teaching activities. 'What we need is an appropriate balance between exercises that help learners come to grips with grammatical forms, and tasks for exploring the use of those forms to communicate effectively' (Nunan, 1998: 109).

This rejection of ideological stances is not just a matter of principle. In many areas it has solid empirical justification. Despite the standard condemnation of 'traditional' approaches in much academic writing about second language acquisition, there is persuasive evidence, as Sheen reminds us (1993, 1994, 2002), for the superiority of 'traditional' against 'communicative' approaches for some aspects of language teaching. Consciously repeating learnt material in practice activities is condemned for instance by Robinson (2001: 291) and Skehan (1998: 123), who calls it 'regurgitating'. But as Tomasello (2003: 66) points out, we have good research evidence for the importance of repetitive and scripted exchanges for mother-tongue vocabulary learning, and it is at least highly plausible (Cook, 2000; Swan, 2006) that such activities play an equally essential part in L2 learning. Similarly, translation has been shown to aid vocabulary learning (Ramachandran and Rahim, 2004; Folse, 2004), despite its general rejection as a teaching technique by successive methodological doctrines.

6.3.4 *Syllabus Content and Design: The Theory–Practice Gap*

The methodological area where contemporary theorists and practitioners diverge most, it seems to me, is that defined by the first and fourth of the problems listed at the beginning of Section 6.3.2: the selection of language elements for teaching, and their integration into courses.

Since languages are vast, and time for learning them is usually very limited, the principled selection of input material is crucial. An hour spent learning low-priority words, structures, pronunciation features or skills is an hour that is not available for other more urgent matters. At different times in the last hundred years or so, language teaching theory has therefore concerned itself with one or other aspect of selection. Word frequency, grammatical structures, pronunciation, situational language, speech functions and their exponents, skills, strategies and discourse structure have all received considerable attention. Unfortunately, focus on one element has often entailed lack of concern for others. My first German textbook (a reprint of a very old course) made a reasonable job of sequencing the structures of the language, but vocabulary selection was subordinated to the exigencies of a plot-line based on German mythology: one of the first nouns I learnt was *der Greif*: 'the gryphon'. Vocabulary selection based on frequency

counts came in later, to the considerable benefit of language teaching, as did a rather short-lived concern with the systematic teaching of phonology. Communicative approaches to syllabus design brought language functions into focus at the expense of language forms: Munby's exhaustive work on needs analysis (1978) does not have an index entry for 'grammar'. Systematic vocabulary selection has been given a renewed boost in recent years with the explosion of corpus-based research: Willis (1990: vi) stresses that satisfactory lexical coverage in language teaching can only be ensured with the aid of a frequency-informed lexical syllabus. Currently, however, as ever, there appears to be little concern by theorists in general to survey synoptically the various areas where selection might be relevant. Indeed, much recent academic writing on instructed language acquisition simply has nothing to say about the principles involved in the pedagogical selection of central language elements of any kind. Brown's list of 12 principles on which 'viable current approaches to language teaching are based' (2002: 12–13) says nothing whatever about the selection of material. An interesting exception to the general pattern is Ellis (2006: 87–88), who offers detailed, if incomplete, criteria for the selection of grammar points for teaching, while however making the bizarre claim that course-book writers and the authors of grammar practice materials are unaware of these criteria and 'try to teach the whole of the grammar'.

The present relative lack of concern, at an academic level, for selection criteria is accompanied by a similar failure to address the overall design of teaching programmes. While there has been a good deal of discussion of syllabus types over the last two or three decades, this has rarely extended to the consideration of what I have called course architecture. This is, however, a crucial matter. When language elements have been chosen for presentation and practice, they are not usually presented in an isolated fashion one by one; it is generally considered desirable to integrate them. So, for instance, a course writer might (1) create, edit or reproduce a reading text – let us say a narrative, while (2) ensuring that it contained both high-priority vocabulary and selected structures – for instance past progressives, and/or descriptive and defining noun phrase structures, and at the same time (3) building in work on a pronunciation point – the weak pronunciation of *was/were* would fit in well here. Learners would study the text, work on the elements presented in it by means of various types of controlled and free practice activity, and perhaps finish the input–output cycle by using the new language to write a similar kind of narrative themselves. A typical mainstream language course for use in class is built up, as everyone knows, of successive units of this kind together with testing and revision material, commonly packaged into a student's book, teacher's book, workbook and set of recordings. Producing such material – interweaving different syllabus components into the complex architecture of a language course – is a highly skilled activity to which a number of theoretical issues are relevant. In other words, there must be such a thing as a theory of language course construction. It is, however, hard to locate such a theory: discussion in this area is not common in the applied linguistics literature. While there are certainly exceptions (e.g. Tomlinson, 2003; Cook, 2008; Johnson, 2008), it does seem as if the design principles of language courses are not a matter for widespread

academic attention. A typical paper on the role of materials in the language classroom (Crawford, 2002), for instance, makes no mention at all of the textbook as a selection and presentation vehicle.

There are millions of language learners in the world. Most of these learners follow syllabuses that are instantiated in courses. The courses are created by experienced professionals who typically spend years at the job, and who build on a developing tradition established by their predecessors over centuries. And yet it seems as if these thousands of creative practitioners, perhaps because they do not often contribute to learned journals, are effectively invisible in the academic world – although names such as Alexander, O'Neill, Abbs, Freebairn or Soars have probably become known to more people worldwide, with good reason, than those of almost any contemporary novelist. There is an excellent collection of important papers on cognition and second language instruction (Robinson (ed.), 2001) in which many of the authors, in the nature of things, touch on language syllabus design. The bibliography at the end of the book contains 1,025 references; writers cited include two evolutionary biologists and two philosophers of science. Six of the 1,025 references are to work by language-teaching practitioners; none of the six is a course designer. It is true that the papers are at a theoretical level some distance removed from the classroom. But it would be odd to find a collection of essays on, say, the neurophysiological basis for learning and playing the piano, which (a) recommended new approaches, and (b) did not mention a single practising pianist. Are the principles underlying the work of practising course designers really not worth the attention of those scholars who specialize in the theory of instructed language acquisition?

6.3.5 *Home-made Materials*

The perennial lack of concern for the work of course designers is reinforced by a widespread contemporary belief that language courses can be produced on a 'do it yourself' basis. Allwright (1981) criticizes published materials for making decisions that, in his view, could be made by the teacher and/or students; the idea that syllabuses should be negotiated between teachers and learners is a commonplace of communicative and postmethod thinking; it is clear from internet discussion forums such as the TESL-L list that many teachers feel that they can provide better courses for their students than are available between the covers of published textbooks.

It is certainly true that, where students have limited and closely defined needs (for example for fluency practice or special-purpose vocabulary), hard-working and gifted teachers may be able to provide materials or activities which are better attuned to their students than any externally produced course can hope to be. However, in the more typical situation where students need a general course which will teach them all the highest-priority elements of a new language, matters are very different. To put together a cost-effective full-scale language course with adequate coverage, a materials writer needs a great deal of specialist linguistic and

pedagogic knowledge, together with access to reliable inventories, graded by frequency and usefulness, of vocabulary items, structures, functions and notions (and their exponents), situational language, discourse features, and any number of other things. The work of selecting language elements for teaching and incorporating them into appropriate presentation material, described above, is enormously time-consuming, and can take up to two years' full-time work for one level of a course. The notion that a teacher, or a teacher and students acting in concert, can somehow substitute for this in their spare time, is quite unrealistic. Course production is a specialist activity drawing on quite different skills from those that are required for teaching. To expect the average working teacher, however gifted, to write a viable general language course is like expecting the first violinist to compose the whole of the orchestra's repertoire in his or her evenings off.

6.4 The Future

How can we expect language-teaching methodology to develop in the future? Obviously all that we can sensibly say is that we don't know. Two things, however, seem to me to be reasonably certain. One is that we will make progress. Just as we have made very considerable improvements over the last half century, we can expect to make further advances as we benefit from technological innovations, and as we find out more about language and how it is learnt. Textbook-based classroom learning is likely to be at least partly superseded by far more flexible and varied approaches to the delivery and practice of the elements of a foreign language, to our considerable benefit. What also seems certain, however, is that progress, though real, will never be spectacular. Foreign languages are very hard for most people to learn well after childhood, and they will continue to be hard. There are no miracle methods waiting to be discovered.

Progress is likely to be faster if we are able to remove some of the obstacles that we have allowed to stand in our way. Repeatedly disillusioned by our failure to bring students close to a native-speaker level of accuracy, we have been all too ready to throw out the methods we have been using, like a bewildered dictatorship executing its minister of agriculture because of the collapse of yet another unworkable five-year plan. In replacing old methods by new ones, we have often allowed new and promising-looking macrostrategical stances to dictate our acceptance or rejection of micromethods, whose value should in fact be judged solely by their efficacy. And in recent years we have allowed our interest in learner-centred, naturalistic, activity-based learning to fill much of the horizon, so that teaching language has all too easily been replaced by doing things with it.

I believe that quite substantial progress in most language teaching environments would be possible immediately, simply by making more intelligent use of all the resources we have at our disposal. It seems to me that our knowledge of both formal and functional aspects of language, our growing understanding of acquisitional processes, and the vast range of methodology and materials that we have developed over the last century or so, provide all the necessary ingredients for a balanced and effective model of instructed second-language learning. What

we need, perhaps, is therefore not so much to find new methods, as to take stock of the existing ones and integrate them into more ideologically neutral and comprehensive approaches.

6.5 Conclusion: A Plea for Common Sense

Common sense is an unreliable faculty with no scientific standing. There are, however, times when it can usefully be appealed to. In the face of some of the more extravagant methodological views which are currently in the air, we need perhaps to bring our feet back into contact with the ground. I have always felt that language teaching theorists would do well to consider how they would respond themselves to the kind of methodology that they recommend. Speaking purely for myself, if I imagine (to take one common type of language-learning context among many) that I have just enrolled in a London school for a beginners' course in, say, Hungarian:

- I do not wish to negotiate with the teacher in order to decide what aspects of a language about which I know little it is or is not useful for me to learn. If I hire a guide to take me up Mont Blanc, I do not expect him or her to consult me about the route.
- I do not want to be taught reading skills. I have reading skills. What I want is some Hungarian to deploy them on.
- I do not want to work out Hungarian grammar for myself. Trying to establish the regularities underlying examples of usage is difficult and time-consuming, with no guarantee of success, even in one's first language. I know: this is one of the things I do for a living.
- Nor do I want to learn Hungarian grammar by 'negotiating meaning' with other beginners.
- I am not receptive to the idea that I can pick up complexities such as the Hungarian definite and indefinite tense inflection system by incidental focus on form during communicative activity. My previous language learning experience suggests that this is unlikely.
- I do not want to be deprived of information about the grammar until I reach intermediate level, as advised for example by Ellis (2003: 32).
- I do not want to learn by working on texts and activities that the teacher has devised in his/her spare time. These might well reflect my interests and those of the other students to perfection, but the chance of their also providing well-planned coverage of high-priority Hungarian forms and their functions is remote.
- I do not want concern with my 'identity'. If the teacher remembers my name, keeps track of my progress and has some sense of my strengths and weaknesses as a learner and a linguist, that will do very well.
- If I want self-fulfilment, I will not go to a language classroom; I can think of much better places. Nor do I want my personality developed. For better or worse, my personality is probably about as developed as it is going to be. In any case,

if I thought improvement was possible, I would go to a specialist in these matters, not to a language teacher. I don't ask a hairdresser to fix my central heating.

In short, I do not wish to be told that I should be happy to substitute process for product. Product is exactly what I want: a working knowledge of Hungarian, delivered in a focused and cost-effective way by the methods most appropriate to provide it.

Note

- 1 I feel impelled to point out, if only in a spirit of mischief, that the two strands of this ideological stance run in opposite directions. If instructed language learning is to be a socially egalitarian, learner-directed matter, liberated from the authority of the traditional directive teacher figure, then it cannot also proceed according to the principles of 'natural' first language acquisition, since first language learners (babies) are in a situation that is anything but egalitarian and authority-free. You can have one or the other; not both.

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CHAPTER

7

Interlanguage and Fossilization: Towards an Analytic Model

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7.1 Introduction

The process of learning a second language (L2) is characteristically non-linear and fragmentary, marked by a mixed landscape of rapid progression in certain areas but slow movement, incubation or even permanent stagnation in others. Such a process results in a linguistic system known as ‘interlanguage’ (Selinker, 1972), which, to varying degrees, approximates that of the target language (TL). In the earliest conception (Corder, 1967; Nemser, 1971; Selinker, 1972), interlanguage is metaphorically a halfway house between the first language (L1) and the TL, hence ‘inter’. The L1 is purportedly the source language that provides the initial building materials to be gradually blended with materials taken from the TL, resulting in new forms that are neither in the L1, nor in the TL. This conception, though lacking in sophistication in the view of many contemporary L2 researchers, identifies a defining characteristic of L2 learning, initially known as ‘fossilization’ (Selinker, 1972) and later on broadly referred to as ‘incompleteness’ (Schachter, 1988, 1996), relative to the ideal version of a monolingual native grammar. It has been claimed that the notion of fossilization is what ‘spurs’ the field of second language acquisition (SLA) into existence (Han and Selinker, 2005; Long, 2003).

Thus, a fundamental concern in L2 research has been that learners typically stop short of target-like attainment, i.e., the monolingual native speaker’s competence, in some or all linguistic domains, even in environments where input seems abundant, motivation appears strong, and opportunity for communicative practice is plentiful. This concern has motivated, over the past three and a half decades, multiple strands of direct and indirect theoretical and empirical inquiries into fossilization, a linguistic phenomenon manifested as:

linguistic items, rules, and sub-systems which speakers of a particular L1 tend to keep in their interlanguage relative to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the TL. (Selinker, 1972: 215)

Definitions (and conceptions, for that matter) of fossilization since Selinker (1972) have been various, as discussed in Han (2004). Nevertheless, in general, they have

attended to some or all of the following properties: (i) persistent deviation, (ii) resistance to external influence, including instruction and corrective feedback, and (iii) being out of the learner's control. Furthermore, most, if not all, of the extant definitions have focused on a *trend* towards, rather than a fact of, permanent partial or incomplete acquisition.

Fossilization has subsequently been reported for L2 children (Plann, 1977), adolescent (Besser, 2002), and adult learners (Lardiere, 2007); for L2 naturalistic (Klein and Perdue, 1997) and instructed learners (Besser, 2002); and for second (Lennon, 1991) and foreign language learners (Mukattash, 1986). This pervasiveness of the phenomenon creates a wide concern among researchers and practitioners, and in consequence, has led to abundant speculations on its causal factors (see Han, 2004: Chapter 3). The putative factors cover an extensive spectrum, from restrictive access to memory (Ullman, 2001) and to the development and use of a private pidgin, for example, a language shared by a husband and a wife that is characterized by stable code-mixing (Tillman, 2006). Yet, the most frequently and extensively cited factors are of two general classes: L1 interference and satisfaction of communicative needs. By and large, the former has amounted to the understanding that 'The price we pay for successful L1 acquisition (LIA) is the inability to acquire an L2' (Eubank and Gregg, 1999: 92) and that 'language transfer is a *necessary* factor' in setting up fossilization (Selinker and Lakshmanan, 1992: 198; emphasis added). The other factor, that is to say, satisfaction of communicative needs, on the other hand, has been functioning as a chief explanation for fossilization occurring primarily in learners with abundant exposure to TL (Besser, 2002; Corder, 1978; Klein and Perdue, 1997; Plann, 1977). Rich exposure to TL may enable the development of a functional competence but *not* native-like proficiency:

... a learner, having learned enough to fulfill his [communicative] needs, will stop learning, and will thereafter always speak an interlanguage with fossils. (Plann, 1977: 223)

It is generally felt that lack of linguistic precision and accuracy is what sets functional competence apart from native-like proficiency.

Importantly, however, it has also been widely and repeatedly noted that the lack of precision and accuracy is in effect *selective*; it appears in some, rather than all, subsystems of the interlanguage (Han, 2004; Hawkins, 2000; Sorace, 2005). In other words, individual learners do not seem to get stuck or undergo fossilization in all aspects of language learning. Selinker (personal communication, March 2008) comments that 'To me, the evidence is so compelling that the idea that fossilization is selective has moved from hypothesis to fact; not much else like this in SLA!' Even in the domain of morphosyntax, where fossilization has hitherto been studied the most, learners are reported to be *selectively* unable to fully acquire certain target features, although they may acquire other things than the expected target. The questions then arise as to (a) which subsystems tend to fossilize for which individuals, and (b) why interlanguage systems fossilize selectively the way

they do. These two cover questions have been the central themes around which much of the interlanguage research has been carried out to date.

7.2 What Drives Selectivity of Fossilization?

Theoretical perspectives on interlanguage have multiplied since the early days of SLA research (for example VanPatten and Williams, 2007). The field has made major advances, both on its own, through accumulation of empirical findings, and through increasingly interfacing with other disciplines, notably, theoretical linguistics and cognitive psychology. Consequently, a greater understanding has been achieved with regard to fossilization, reviewed in Han (2003, 2004). The discussion in the rest of this chapter draws primarily on the UG-L2 perspective to elucidate the issue of selective fossilization. A caveat, however, is in order. Because the UG paradigm has shifted over the years, the rhetoric and syntactic devices used in describing the earlier, UG-L2 research may sound conflicting with current perspectives in linguistics (Cook and Newson, 2007).

7.2.1 UG-L2 Perspective

UG-L2, as the name has it, pursues Universal Grammar – a putatively innate specification of universal linguistic principles that underlies first language (L1) acquisition – as a descriptive and explanatory framework for the nature and acquisition of interlanguage competence. Hence, the following presuppositions are made, among others. First, interlanguage competence is an abstract, unconscious system of mental representations (a grammar encompassing syntax, morphology, phonology and semantics), which underlies the L2 learner's or user's comprehension and production of TL. Second, interlanguage competence is constrained by the same universal linguistic principles governing the monolingual native-speaker competence. Third, UG is both a resource supplying an inventory of possible grammatical categories and features, whether syntactic, semantic or phonological, and a constraint delimiting the possible operations and options such as the presence or absence of the subject. Fourth, the task of an L2 learner, like that of any L1 learner, is to (re)acquire features that are unique to a given TL.

With these assumptions, UG-L2 research, like its L1 counterpart, has focused on resolving the so-called logical problem of language acquisition (Hornstein and Lightfoot, 1981), namely, the gap between the linguistic system developed by the learner and the learner's exposure to linguistic experience. Empirical evidence has been found, amassed and accrued in support of the continuous functioning of UG, resulting in the understanding that UG is still available in L2 acquisition, as seen *passim* in the *Second Language Research* journal.

However, this empirical database appears *peculiar*, even to the most naked eye. Most striking is that it is highly selective in that, while evidence has been found of interlanguage conforming to UG principles overall, that is, operating within UG constraints, in several cases the options that interlanguage adopts vis-à-vis certain

parameters are not the ones sanctioned by the TL. In other words, in those cases *the interlanguage system does not seem to accommodate or account for the input to which the learner has been exposed*. Two phenomena, among others, are worthy of note. First, the system contains stabilized interlanguage forms that show resemblance to the L1 but not to the L2, for instance Franceschina (2005). Second, the system contains stabilized interlanguage forms that bear resemblance neither to the L1 nor to the L2, as shown in, say, Schwartz and Sprouse (1994). These, however, are only one facet of the selectivity noted.

A second facet of the selectivity issue is implicated in White's observation and hence her apt questions of 'why some learners "fossilize" with . . . divergent interlanguage grammars, whereas others successfully attain a native-like grammar; why some parameters are successfully reset whereas others are not, why positive input is only sometimes successful as a trigger for grammar change' (White, 1996: 115). These questions allude to both inter-learner and intra-learner variations in interlanguage fossilization, and for that matter, acquisition. The two above noted facets of selectivity alone would warrant the conclusion that UG does not function in the same way in L2 acquisition as it does in L1 acquisition.

Indeed, such kind of conclusion not only exists but is also readily corroborated by several other observations. For example, a comparison between the initial and end states for L2 acquisition versus L1 acquisition shows that:

First, adult learners already know (at least) one other language: the *initial state* of the child and of the adult are not the same (e.g., Schwartz, 1998; Schwartz and Eubank, 1996; Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994); second, unlike children, who reach perfect mastery of whatever language they are exposed to, many adults after periods of exposure to a second language display varying degrees of 'imperfection' (by monolingual native standards), and even those who are capable of native-like performance often have knowledge representations that differ considerably from those of native speakers (Sorace, 1993). So not only the initial state but also the *final state* of the child and of the adult learner are different. (Sorace, 2003: 130)

With regard to this purported end-state, Gregg (1996) asserts that whereas L1 acquisition shows homogeneous ultimate attainment of a steady/end-state or 'uniform success', L2 acquisition exhibits miscellaneous end-states, often divergent from one another, and from the TL. He interprets this scenario in terms of differences along learnability factors, in particular, the initial state, input and learning mechanism. Thus, in terms of the initial state, whereas UG is uncontroversially what supplies the initial hypotheses for L1 acquisition, in the case of L2 acquisition, 'the L2 learner has already internalized a grammar of a specific natural language' (Gregg, 1996: 57). In terms of input, L1 acquirers interact only with primary linguistic data (PLD), that is, natural exemplars of the language, but in L2 acquisition, input consists of both PLD (to a lesser extent) and negative evidence (to a greater extent), i.e., information about what is not possible in the target language (cf. White, 1996). Finally, in terms of learning mechanism, in L1

acquisition, input is analysed through a UG-based computational system, and this may not be the case in L2 acquisition, due to the pre-existing L1 experience.

Hitherto, the most comprehensive account of L2/L1 acquisition differences is to be found in Bley-Vroman's (1989) Fundamental Difference Hypothesis, which emphasizes nine characteristics of L2 acquisition as follows: (1) lack of success, (2) general failure, (3) variation in success, (4) variation in goals, (5) fossilization, (6) indeterminate intuitions, as seen for instance in Johnson et al., (1996) and Sorace (1988), (7) the importance of instruction, (8) the need for negative evidence and (9) the role of affective factors such as anxiety and motivation. Thus, in addition to representing generic differences between L2 and L1 acquisition, this account, importantly, points up possible sources of variation, or rather, factors – unattested in L1 acquisition – that may compromise the function of UG in L2, thereby suggesting that alternative mechanisms are needed to explain L2 acquisition.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to evaluate or duplicate the historical UG debate on whether it is the domain-specific language faculty or domain-general cognitive mechanisms that drive L2 acquisition. Nonetheless, it is relevant and important to stress that the differences between L1 acquisition and L2 acquisition that are identified not only by generative researchers but also by those with other orientations (MacWhinney, 2006) point to greater complexity for L2 acquisition relative to L1 acquisition and to the likelihood that the capacity of UG in L2 acquisition is tempered by a host of confounding factors, not the least of which is the L1.

Hence, in spite of available research evidence confirming the presence of UG effects in L2 acquisition, it is likely that UG has a highly circumscribed role in L2 acquisition such that it is only partially available to the L2 learner, or it may be that 'structures attainable in the L2 are not only constrained by UG but by the narrower constraints imposed by the grammar of the learner's L1', as Ritchie and Bhatia (1996: 27) have claimed.

Recently, there has been increasing evidence in favour of the latter view. Work into the L2 initial and end-states examining the nature of interlanguage competence (i.e., addressing the logical problem), as well as work investigating parameter resetting in learners *en route* (i.e., addressing the developmental problem) have amply shown that L1 may function alongside UG in interaction with input, determining interlanguage competence and guiding its course of development. As will be shown below in a select review of empirical studies, L1 may interfere with the analysis of L2 input, resulting in 'partial parses of PLD' (Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994) and thereby difficulty and, potentially, fossilization, in parameter resetting, as described by Flynn (1987) and White (1991a).

7.2.2 Evidence from the L2 Initial State

The term 'initial state', and its assumed existence, refer to 'the kind of unconscious linguistic knowledge that the L2 learner starts out with in advance of

[exposure to] the L2 input' (White, 2003a: 58). Several studies such as Haznedar (1997), Schwartz and Sprouse (1994) and White (1985) have independently shown that L1 grammar, in part or in whole, provides the L2 initial state, which subsequently changes as a result of the learner interacting with TL input. However, the restructuring process can be selective. By way of illustration, an analysis Schwartz and Sprouse (1994) performed of data longitudinally sampled from an L1-Turkish speaker of German interlanguage reveals that with respect to German word order, the subject started off with direct syntactic transfer of L1 Turkish (i.e., SOV), which was then followed by restructuring (SVX, XSV, XVS) to gradually approximate the target word order (XVS), that is to say Verb Second. However, it was noted also that one particular interim-stage word order, XSV, stabilized. In other words, it was never 'delearned' (Gubala-Ryzak, 1992; Schwartz and Gubala-Ryzak, 1992; White, 1992). The selectivity of restructuring in this case, Schwartz and Sprouse argue, by no means suggests that UG (and learning principles) was inoperative but rather, that UG was applied in conjunction with the L1 grammar. Importantly, the study intimated an understanding that 'what works as "triggering data" in L1 acquisition may not necessarily be triggering data in L2 acquisition' (Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994: 356), and that the lack of triggering data (i.e., TL utterances that exemplify a given grammatical feature) appropriate for L2 acquisition may be a source of fossilization. Schwartz and Sprouse further point out that 'what counts as triggering data is never absolute' (ibid.: 356), suggesting, *inter alia*, that the function of input may be modulated by the learner's L1, even when UG is operative, and that when this scenario takes place, fossilization is likely to obtain.

As another illustration, White (1985) undertook a cross-sectional study of the pro-drop (alias null subject) parameter (Chomsky, 1981; Jaeggli, 1982) in L2 acquisition of English by native speakers of Spanish and French. Via a grammaticality judgement task, White examined three putative clustering properties of the parameter:

- (i) omission of subject pronouns (e.g., *Anda muy ocupada*/**Is very busy*),
- (ii) free inversion of subject and verb in declarative sentences (e.g., *Vino Juan*/**Came Juan*)
- (iii) so-called 'that-trace' effects (e.g., *Quien dijiste que vino?*/**Who did you say that came?*).

Two findings are of particular relevance. First, speakers of Spanish, a language that contrasts with English with respect to the three properties, exhibited evidence of transfer, in particular, in relation to property (i), wherein 'beginners were most inclined to accept missing subjects in English and . . . there was a gradual improvement in ability to recognize the ungrammaticality . . .' (White, 1985: 53). Thus, as seen in the Schwartz and Sprouse study referred to above, the initial hypothesis in this case was L1-based and there was a subsequent restructuring in accordance with UG and input. A second relevant finding is that participants' acquisition of the three properties was *asynchronous* (see also Liceras, 1989), hence yielding selectivity. Specifically, their acquisition of one property, namely (ii) subject-verb

inversion, outpaced the omission of subject pronouns (i) or 'that-trace' (iii). This therefore provides evidence contrary to the default UG-based prediction. Although methodological shortcomings, such as the participants being instructed learners, may have contributed to this finding, as White has speculated, it is nevertheless likely that the L1 had differentially entered an interaction with input and UG, thereby variably tempering the functioning of UG and input.

Granting the default presence of UG in L2 acquisition, it may further be hypothesized that the selectivity of acquisition (and for that matter, fossilization) depends largely (a) on the status of the L1 feature (exerting an influence on interlanguage), which can be marked or unmarked, and (b) on the nature of the input, that is to say, the potential triggering data, which can be robust or non-robust. 'Markedness' is, in turn, determined by frequency and variability (i.e., consistency), and similarly, 'robustness' by frequency and variability. Thus, an unmarked feature is one that is both frequent and consistent; input that is robust is frequent and consistent; and so on. In this light, omission of subject pronouns (i) or, strictly speaking, the presence of the empty category *pro* in the L1 (Spanish) is quite unmarked, that is to say, frequent yet variable to a considerable extent since Spanish allows non-omission of subject pronouns, and the L2 input (English) quite robust, viz., frequent but somewhat variable, since in informal English, one may occasionally encounter utterances containing ellipsis such as *Hope you are well*. Subject-verb inversion (ii) in the L1 is quite unmarked in that it is frequent but quite variable, and the L2 input with respect to this property is robust because it is frequent and invariable. Finally, the 'that-trace' property in the L1 is unmarked, viz., frequent and invariable, and the L2 input is not very robust because it is generally infrequent though invariable. This conception is schematized in Figures 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3. Based on the combined L1-L2 characteristics vis-à-vis each of the three parametric properties (i, ii, iii), it can be predicted that for Spanish speakers learning English as the L2, it will be easier to reset parametric value (ii) than (i),

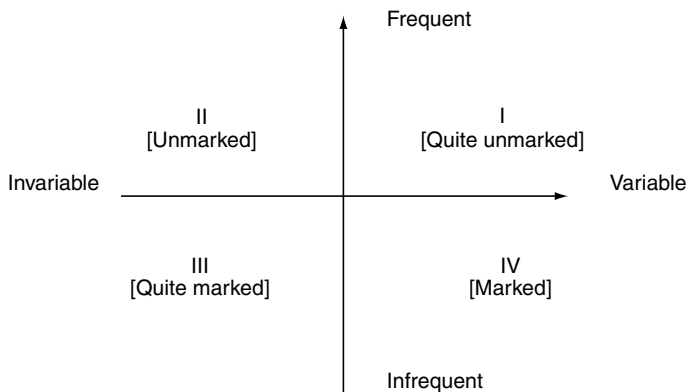


Figure 7.1 L1 markedness

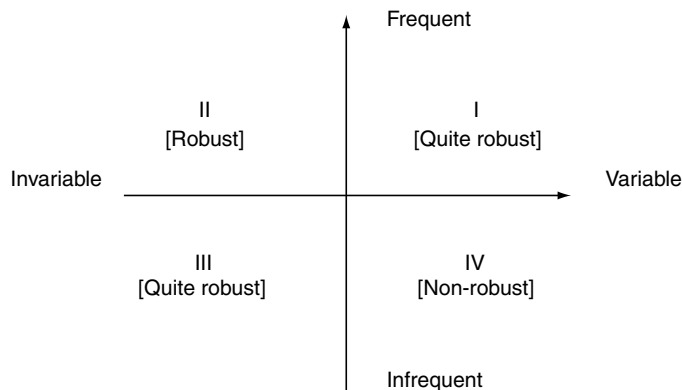


Figure 7.2 L2 input robustness

with (iii) being the hardest. Underlying this prediction, as can be inferred, is the assumption that the influence of input may prevail over the influence of the L1 when the two compete against each other. In other words, robust input may curb the tendency driven by the L1 towards a particular parametric setting. However, by the same token, non-robust input may lose to the latter, as demonstrated in White (1991a, 1991b).

Figure 7.1 shows the relationship between frequency and variability in two independent dimensions associated with L1 markedness. The horizontal axis indicates a continuum of variability, with the left end being invariable (i.e., consistent) and the right end variable (i.e., inconsistent). The vertical axis shows the continuum for frequency, going from low at the bottom to high at the top. The crossing of the two axes creates four broad categories of L1 markedness: Type I (quite unmarked: frequent but variable), Type II (unmarked: frequent and invariable), Type III (quite marked: invariable and infrequent), and Type IV (marked: infrequent and variable).

Similarly, Figure 7.2 shows the relationship between frequency and variability in two independent dimensions associated with the robustness of the L2 input. The horizontal axis indicates a continuum of variability with the left end being invariable (i.e., consistent) and the right end variable (i.e., inconsistent). The vertical axis goes from low frequency at the bottom end to high frequency at the top. The crossing of the two axes creates four broad categories of L2 input robustness: Type I (quite robust: frequent but variable), Type II (robust: frequent and invariable), Type III (quite robust: invariable but infrequent), and Type IV (non-robust: infrequent and inconsistent).

Figure 7.3 integrates Figures 7.1 and 7.2 by showing the interaction between L1 markedness and L2 input robustness, leading to four possible scenarios for L2 acquisition. These are: Type I, where the L1 is unmarked and the L2 input robust; Type II, where the L2 input is robust and the L1 marked; Type III, where the L1 is marked and the L2 input non-robust; and Type IV, where the L2 input is

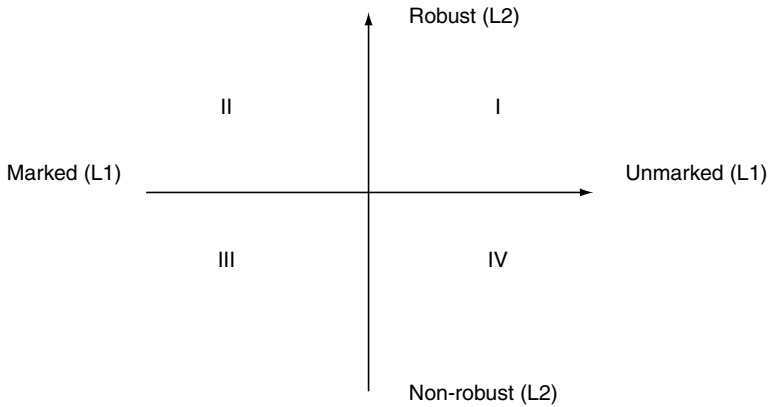


Figure 7.3 Interaction of L2 input robustness and L1 markedness

non-robust and the L1 unmarked. Each scenario may carry a different prognosis about acquisition or fossilization, a point to which I will return, after examining further empirical evidence.

7.2.3 Evidence from L2 Learners En Route

White (1991a, 1991b) set out to investigate the verb-raising parameter (Chomsky, 1989; Pollock, 1989) among child native speakers of French acquiring English as the L2, in particular, adverb placement. The verb-raising parameter has three clustering properties:

- (i) adverb placement;
- (ii) negative placement;
- (iii) question formation.

In terms of adverb placement, English and French are similar in some ways, such as ASVO and SVOA orders, but differ conspicuously in two aspects. First, English allows SAV, *John often kisses Mary*, whereas French does not, **Jean souvent embrasse Marie/John often kisses Mary*. Second, in French, SVAO is a permissible word order; that is, the adverb can be placed between the verb and its direct object, *Jean embrasse souvent Marie/John kisses often Mary*, but the same word order is not grammatical in English, **John kisses often Mary*. From a learnability point of view, there is positive evidence in the L2 exemplifying the SAV order, but absence of evidence to show the ungrammaticality of SVAO.

The purpose of White's (1991a) study is two-fold: first, to see whether contrived input, meaning instruction entailing specially designed positive and negative evidence, may help parameter resetting, in general, and shedding the SVAO word order, in particular; second, to see whether instruction focusing on one

parametric property, namely question formation, would trigger the learning of another, adverb placement. Subjects were learners *en route*, so to speak, who had been attending an intensive English program for three months and who were native speakers of French (ages 10–12). Two experimental groups were formed out of intact classes, the adverb group and the question group, each receiving two weeks of instruction on their specific structure. In addition, a group of native speakers served as controls. Pretests and posttests, involving a battery of three test tasks consisting of a grammaticality judgement task, a preference task and a manipulation task, were administered before and after the treatment, followed by a delayed posttest five weeks after. Results show (i) that instruction on question formation did not lead to much learning of adverb placement – some learning of SAV but little with respect to SVAO – hence White’s conclusion that ‘supplying positive evidence from one of a cluster of properties relating to a parameter does not have extensive effects on the L2 acquisition of other aspects of the cluster’ (White, 1991a: 356); and (ii) that instruction on adverb placement led to both the learning of SAV and restructuring of SVAO. However, this learning did not last a year, as a follow-up study indicated: ‘Subjects instructed on adverb placement revert to the behavior they showed at pretesting, accepting and producing SVAO order’ (ibid.: 356). In short, subjects in the adverb group learned, through instruction, that SAVO, *Linda always takes the metro*, is a permissible order in English but not that SVAO is ungrammatical, **Linda takes always the metro*.

What, then, explains the selectivity attested in the adverb group? Other than the learnability difference noted above, following the hypothesis I postulated earlier (see Figures 7.1, 7.2, 7.3), SAV would fall, if anywhere, off the marked end of the L1 axis, since it does not exist in French, and on the robust end of the L2 input axis. It is, therefore, a Zone II feature (see Figure 7.3), which should be relatively easy to acquire, even without instruction. Conversely, SVAO is ‘most common in French’ (White, 1989), thus falling on the unmarked end of the L1 axis, and, if anywhere, off the non-robust end of the L2 input axis, as the word order is non-existent in the L2. As a Zone IV feature, then, SVAO is predicted to be fossilizable. Indeed, prior research such as Sheen (1980) and White (1989) has established that ‘French learners of English have problems with adverb placement, persistently producing and accepting [SVOA] sentences . . . even when they are at advanced levels’ (White, 1991a: 342).

The selective learning of SAV versus SVAO was further investigated by Trahey and White (1993), using, this time, only PLD to stimulate learning. Specifically, a technique called ‘input flood’ was employed to provide, hopefully, abundant triggering data. However, the results were virtually the same as from White’s (1991a, 1991b) study, only with ‘backsliding’ (Selinker, 1972) happening even sooner. Subjects showed signs of learning vis-à-vis SVAO but those signs started disappearing just three weeks after the period of input flood. The study led to the conclusion that:

exposure to the input flood did not permit the subjects to learn that SVAO is impossible in English; in other words, ample exposure to primary linguistic data

did not result in the mastery of the rules of adverb placement in English. (Trahey, 1996: 116)

A follow-up study a year later (Trahey, 1996) was undertaken to assess the durability of the effects of input flood (PLD) and to also compare the effects of input flood to those of instruction (rule explanation and negative evidence). Two results are particularly worth noting. First, input flood allowed the retention of the earlier noted differential effects on SAV versus SVAO. Second, input flood was more effective than explicit instruction in causing learners to retain their knowledge of SAV, but not any more effective in its ability to induce the knowledge that SVOA is ungrammatical. Therefore, both the initial and longer-term follow-up studies have confirmed the prediction that SAV is learnable through exposure to PLD, but that SVAO is largely unlearnable, whether from explicit instruction or from PLD. Moreover, the available findings have discounted not only the usefulness of externally construed triggering data but also the possibility of learning from indirect negative evidence (i.e., absence of SVAO in the input).

Returning to my hypothesis on the synergy of L1 markedness and L2 input robustness as a determinant of selective acquisition/fossilization, Figure 7.4 illustrates the possibility that features that fall within the same zone may be acquired or fossilize differentially. This is indicated by circles separating out one linguistic feature from another. The outer circle, therefore, connotes 'greater degree of'. Thus, with respect to Zone IV, the outmost circle indicates the greatest possibility of fossilization.

What would be the features that stand in the outer circle of the fossilization zone (IV), then? An answer to this question must be sought from the strand of research examining L2 ultimate attainment, for whatever structural deviance lingers into that final stage presents the strongest case of fossilization.

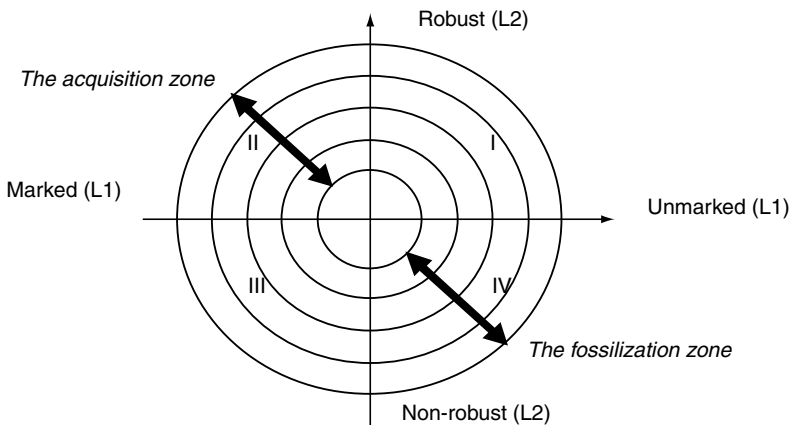


Figure 7.4 Prognoses about acquisition and fossilization

7.2.4 Evidence from the L2 End-state

UG-L2 research on the purported ultimate attainment or end-state, characteristically, focuses either on learners with long immersion (> five years) in the TL (Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b) or on learners who are near-native speakers (Sorace, 1993). The latter population usually consists of learners whose performance is judged indistinguishable from that of native speakers in certain domains of discourse. Sorace (2005: 58) states that:

Adult learners who have reached the near-native level, and continue to benefit from full exposure to the L2, can be assumed to have progressed to the furthest attainable competence level: if there are differences between their grammar and the target grammar, these differences may therefore be considered as permanent.

Extant studies conducted with this population generally confirm the conclusion that fossilization is selective. Lardiere's (1998a, 1998b) longitudinal case study, for example, showed that the subject, Patty, an L1 speaker of Chinese with English as the L2, had fully acquired syntactic features such as nominative case marking and proper English value of the verb-raising parameter, but only partially acquired morphological features such as past-tense marking and 3rd person singular *-s* marking of thematic verbs. Similarly, Coppieters (1987) observed that his near-native speakers of French (from a variety of L1 backgrounds) exhibited native-like competence with regard to formal features such as the so-called A-over-A constraint seen in *Cet homme, dont j'admire le tableau, est venu ici hier/This man, whose painting I admire, came here yesterday*, but nonnative intuitions in relation to functional or cognitive aspects of grammar such as the semantic contrasts as in *J'ai rencontré {une gentile petite fille/une petite fille gentile}/I met a nice little girl* (see, however, Birdsong, 1992). White's (2003b) case study on SD, an adult L1-Turkish speaker of L2-English, shows that selectivity may occur even within the same domain, in this case, inflectional morphology, to the extent that SD displayed a better control over verbal inflection than nominal inflection.

Further, and more subtle, evidence of selective fossilization can be found in Sorace's work with near-natives. In her (1993) study, Sorace convincingly showed that both French and English near-native speakers of Italian stopped short of complete acquisition of Italian unaccusatives, though the manifestations from the two groups were different (*divergence* for the French and *incompleteness* for the English). Regardless, however, both were attributable to the influence of the respective L1 grammar (for discussion, see Sorace, 1993). From a similar L1-English population, Sorace (1999, 2003) cited instances of overproduction of overt referential subject pronouns in the near-native Italian grammar, for instance:

A: *Perché Lucia non ha preso le chiavi/Why did Lucia not have taken the keys?*

B: *Perché lei pensava di trovarti a casa/Because she thought she would find you at home.*

attributing it again to the L1 interference. Three preliminary points are worth making on these interlanguage structures: First, they remain as options in the interlanguage grammar that surface only under certain circumstances. In other words, the interlanguage grammar in question does contain target-like variants, which, however, never reach a stable state. Second, the non-target-like variants all have exact correspondences in the relevant L1. Often, the L1 counterparts are unmarked, meaning that they are frequent and invariable in the L1. Third, they all are so-called ‘interface features’, interacting, in particular, with domains such as semantics and pragmatics, a point to which I return shortly. Sorace (1999, 2003) refers to these interlanguage structures as examples of ‘residual optionality’, a phenomenon, found at L2 ultimate attainment, whereby ‘a steady state is reached in which the target option is strongly but not categorically preferred and the non-target option surfaces in some circumstances’ (Sorace, 2003: 140). In addition to the L1 genesis, the lack of robust L2 input, in tandem with L2 learners’ attenuating capacity for implicit learning (learning from PLD alone; DeKeyser, 2000), is assumed to account for the phenomenon.

This explanation fits rather neatly with my own hypothesis (see Figures 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4), according to which, the above-noted interface features fall squarely in the fossilization zone (Zone IV). They are unmarked in the L1 and there is no robust input in the L2 to preempt them. Take the overt subject marking as an example. In English, the L1, overt subject marking is an obligatory feature but is optional in Italian, the TL, determined largely by discourse – pragmatic conditions such as [$\pm$ topic shift].

Zone IV features also appear to be a case *par excellence* of ‘transfer to somewhere’ as it is termed by Andersen (1983), who hypothesizes that:

A grammatical form or structure will occur consistently and to a significant extent in the interlanguage as a result of transfer *if and only if* (a) natural acquisitional principles are consistent with the L1 structure or (b) there already exists within the L2 input the potential for (mis)generalization from the input to produce the same form or structure. (Andersen, 1983: 182; emphasis in original)

Relating this hypothesis to overproduction of overt subject marking as seen in the interlanguage of L1-English near-native speakers of Italian, here is what might have happened: somewhere in the course of development, there is a need to learn word order in Italian, in which case, L1-English SVO supplies the initial prop (Schwartz and Sprouse, 1994) and eventually becomes the ‘default’ in the interlanguage – induced and reinforced by exemplars experienced of the SVO order in the TL input (Italian), which, at the ‘near-native’ stage, is to be resorted to only under ‘critical’ circumstances.

7.3 Fossilizable Features

To date, UG-L2 studies, particularly those on ultimate attainment, appear to have converged on two types of fossilizable features: so-called ‘interface syntactic

properties’ and functional categories. First, with respect to interface features, Sorace (2005) proposes a useful distinction between pure structural constraints, which she refers to as ‘hard’ properties, and interface constraints that are governed by interpretive conditions at the interface of syntax and semantics, pragmatics, or informational structure, which she refers to as ‘soft’ properties (cf. Jakubowicz, 2002). She argues that the former can be fully acquired, whereas the latter are susceptible to residual optionality, that is, they may never be completely acquired. Once again, take the null subject or pro-drop parameter and near-natives of Italian as an example:

Near-native speakers of Italian overgeneralize overt subject pronouns and preverbal subjects to contexts which require null subjects and postverbal subjects in native Italian, but they do not do the reverse, namely they do not extend null and postverbal subjects to inappropriate contexts. (Sorace, 2005: 61)

While the above statement may sound too abstract to some and too simple to others, Figure 7.5 provides an illustration of the complex scenario of the selective acquisition/fossilization involved.

Figure 7.5 shows that the null subject parameter as instantiated in Italian is a soft feature; that is, its syntactic expressions interface with discourse-pragmatic factors. Selective fossilization, in this case, is discerned from the fact that in terms of syntax, there is full correspondence between the TL and the interlanguage. As Sorace (2005: 67) puts it, ‘The computational features of syntax responsible for the licensing of null subjects are acquired completely’. However, in terms of usage, the interlanguage shows overgeneralization of overt subject marking and preverbal subjects to contexts requiring null subjects or postverbal subjects for fulfilling discourse-pragmatic conditions of [-topic shift] and [+focus]. Both structures are dominant in the L1, English, and importantly, fulfil both [±topic] conditions as well as both [±focus] conditions. In other words, as instantiated in English, the null subject parameter is a hard rather than a soft feature. Hence, while there is

UG property	TL/IL syntax	TL discourse-pragmatics	IL discourse-pragmatics	Selective fossilization
Null subject parameter	Overt subject marking	[+ topic shift]	[+ topic shift] [- topic shift]	a. <i>Perchè Maria non ha parlato con nessuno?</i> b. <i>Perchè lei è troppo timida.</i>
	Null subjects	[- topic shift]	[- topic shift]	
	Preverbal subjects	[- focus]	[- focus] [+ focus]	a. <i>Che cosa è successo?</i> b. <i>Gianni è arrivato.</i>
	Postverbal subjects	[+ focus]	[+ focus]	

Figure 7.5 Selective fossilization vis-à-vis null subject parameter

some overlap between the L1 and the TL in this case, the TL is more complex than the L1, both in terms of the syntax and its discourse distribution.

Sorace's point about interface features prone to residual problems is corroborated by an increasing number of studies such as Coppieters (1987), Hopp (2004) and Montrul and Slabakova (2003), and in consequence, research is moving towards a more granular understanding: The scope of interface has now broadened in SLA research to include the syntax-lexicon interface, the syntax-semantics interface, the syntax-phonology interface, and so forth. White (2007) differentiates between grammar-internal interfaces (e.g., syntax-morphology) and grammar-external interfaces (e.g., syntax-discourse), pointing out that not all interfaces are equal. While future research will undoubtedly seek to ascertain the effects of the different types of interface on acquisition, it is relevant to the purposes of this chapter to raise another question: Are functional categories, such as determiners and grammatical morphemes, hard or soft features? As noted earlier, this is another category of fossilizable features that UG-L2 research on ultimate attainment has identified (Jakubowicz, 2002).

To address this question, let us first turn to an observation made by White (2003a: 192):

L2 learners of various languages show relatively inconsistent, though by no means random, use of certain kinds of morphology while being very accurate on related syntactic properties which depend on properties of Infl, such as nominative case, the requirement for overt subjects, and presence or absence of verb raising. These characteristics appear to be true of initial and end-state grammars, as well as grammars undergoing development.

Studies on L2 putative end-state grammar, for instance those by Lardiere (1998a, 1998b) and White (2003), have established the following facts: first, there is variability – often manifested as co-occurrence of target-like and non-target-like tokens – in suppliance of grammatical morphemes in obligatory contexts. Second, there is dissociation between syntax and morphological marking, with the latter 'lagging behind'. Third, there is strong persistence of the non-target-like usage. These facts are best exemplified in the subject in Lardiere (1998a, 1998b, 2007), Patty, an adult speaker of L1 Chinese and an end-state speaker of L2 English. Audio recordings of her spontaneous production over a span of 10 years consistently show (a) low and variable incidence of verbal inflections in obligatory contexts, in spite of her more than 10 years of full immersion prior and on-going, and yet (b) complete control of associated syntactic structures. This incidence of selective fossilization is explicable in terms of interference from Patty's L1, Chinese, which displays absence of verbal inflections (cf. White, 2003b).

The observed dissociation between syntax and morphology described above can serve as an evidential basis for arguing that morphological variability is not due to representational deficits, but rather, to processing inadequacy. Such arguments indeed exist. For one, the Missing Surface Inflection Hypothesis (Haznedar and Schwartz, 1997; Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Prévost and White, 2000)

associates the absence of verbal morphology with the absence of surface manifestation of inflection, stressing that the related abstract syntactic representations are intact and appropriate. Simply put, this hypothesis ascribes the problem to one of mapping from abstract morphosyntactic categories and features to their surface morphological realizations. This position is, however, called into question by Hawkins (2000), Franceschina (2005) and Hawkins and Chan (1997), among others. Emphasizing the persistent and highly circumscribed scope of the problem in the end-state of adult L2A, Hawkins argues, in the name of his Failed Formal (Functional) Features Hypothesis later known as the Representational Deficit Hypothesis, that there is a critical period for the selection of parameterized formal features, and hence that specific features of functional categories, those that were not instantiated during L1 acquisition, may permanently be either absent or defective in adult L2 acquisition. This hypothesis therefore relegates persistent morphological variability to a representational deficit.

Whether the morphological problem is one of processing or representation, it is quite clear that within the UG-L2 camp, functional categories such as grammatical morphemes and determiners have generally been treated as grammar-internal, hard properties interfacing between syntax and lexicon. As such, they are considered by some to be learnable in an additive fashion, just like words (Gess and Herschensohn, 2001; Herschensohn, 2000), though Goad and White (2005) and White (2003b) advance a Prosodic Transfer Hypothesis. A notable exception, however, is the Computational Complexity Hypothesis (Jakubowicz, 2002) which differentiates functional categories that are syntactically necessary and those that are semantically and conceptually motivated, predicting that:

syntactically necessary functional categories are easier to compute than semantically modifying functional categories. The former develop earlier . . . Functional categories that are only projected when required by semantic-conceptual considerations develop later. (Jakubowicz, 2002: 170)

The hypothesis thereby provides an explanation for why a delay can be experienced in the acquisition of certain functional categories, and, by extension, for selective fossilization in this domain. Coppieters (1987) aptly notes that grammatical features (functional categories included) of which near-native speakers and native speakers show markedly divergent intuitions tend not only to be the ones that involve semantic contrasts but also prove ‘to be those where transfer/interference from the native language are most likely to occur’ (ibid.: 568). These views, taken together, suggest that there can be an interaction between certain L2 functional categories and an L1-based semantic-conceptual system.

Interestingly, a similar view is entertained by researchers outside the UG-L2 camp, who have begun to relate the morphology problem to the L1-based conceptual system. From a linguistic relativity perspective, for example, Han (2008) makes a case about English plural *-s* interfacing with the conceptual system, arguing that *persistent* non-target-like plural marking (and grammatical morphemes, for that

matter) in L2 production stems from the influence of an L1-based semantic and conceptual system, which hinders acquisition of discourse-distributional properties of the target form. Drawing on findings from L2 research on instructed learning, Han points out a contingency between the lack of desired efficacy of *focus on form* (Long, 1991) – a type of pedagogical intervention – for grammatical morpheme problems and its lack of attention on the semantic and conceptual basis of interlanguage, stating that:

Inasmuch as acquisition consists, broadly, of form-meaning associations, meaning can be a greater source of difficulty than form, and in that vein, grammatical morphemes encoding abstract notions are likely a long-lasting learnability problem for most L2 learners, due to the underlying interference of their L1-based semantic and conceptual systems. (Han, 2008: 77)

On this account, then, full acquisition of grammatical morphemes hinges on conceptual restructuring from the L1 to the L2, a long and arduous, if not impossible, process for the majority of L2 learners. According to Slobin (1996: 89),

Each native language has trained its speakers to pay different kinds of attention to events and experiences when talking about them. This training is carried out in childhood and is exceptionally resistant to restructuring in adult second-language acquisition.

Slobin goes a step further to point out that grammatical categories that are independent of ‘our perceptual, sensorimotor, and practical dealings with the world’ (ibid.: 91), such as aspect, definiteness and voice, are particularly resistant to restructuring.

Tying this perspective into the Selective Fossilization Hypothesis I have pursued (see Figure 7.4), it is clear that the issue of what constitutes the markedness status of the associated L1 form needs to be further clarified. To be sure, in assessing the fossilizability of soft features, be they syntactic properties or morphological, it is not enough to try only to ascertain their surface status in the L1 by looking at their frequency; rather, it is important to consider their discourse distributional properties. In other words, what goes into the calibration of their markedness should not only be their frequency but also their discourse-semantic and discourse-pragmatic scope. This consideration can, in fact, take place while assessing variability, the other variable of L1 markedness, for, as one can assume, the more complex the forms are in the way they are determined by discourse-semantic and discourse-pragmatic conditions, the more variable they should appear to be. Jakubowicz’s (2002) conception of syntactic complexity, discussed in Sorace (2005), is schematized in Figure 7.6. It is helpful here in figuring out what it means to say that one form is more variable than another.

As shown in Figure 7.6, complexity is conceptualized as a continuum, with the left end marking low complexity and the right end high complexity. Grammatical

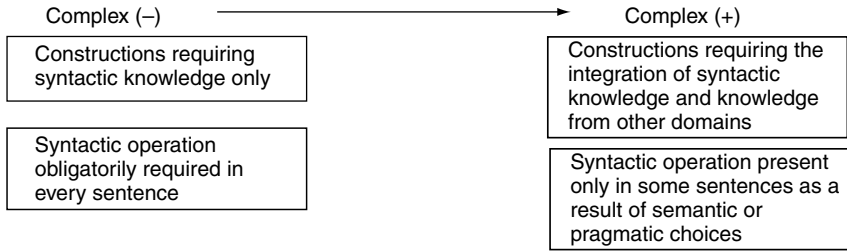


Figure 7.6 Jakubowicz's conception of complexity

constructions with low complexity require syntactic knowledge only, whereas those with high complexity require the integration of syntactic knowledge and knowledge from other domains. Similarly, syntactic operations that are required in every sentence are not as complex as those that are optionally present for semantic and pragmatic reasons.

Thus, in light of Jakubowicz's notion of complexity, there can be a contingency between complexity and variability such that forms that are more complex are also more variable. Thus, as shown in Figure 7.6, hard properties (see the left-hand boxes) are less complex and hence should be less variable than soft properties (see the right-hand boxes), and vice versa. This line of thinking is extendable to assessing L2 input robustness, specifically, its variability dimension (Figure 7.2). Likewise, therefore, one can argue that soft properties are more variable than hard properties.

To recapitulate the discussion so far, the UG-L2 research has generated the most systematic database of fossilization to date, within which evidence can be found for interlanguage grammars involving a variety of L1s and L2s, from the initial stage through the end stage. More profoundly, this strand of research has provided crucial insights into selective fossilization. Among them, the intersection of two factors, L1 serving as the substrate and L2 input being non-robust, seems able to account for almost every incidence of fossilization reported so far in this literature, and elsewhere (Han, 1998, 2000, 2006).

As a result of accumulative findings from UG-L2 research on ultimate attainment and similar research done within other cognitive paradigms (Han, 2000, 2006), an important trend has emerged towards conceptualizing fossilization not as an isolated, performance-only phenomenon, but rather, as a competence phenomenon whose behavioural manifestations may surface only at the discourse level (Han, 2006). It follows, then, that fossilization is particularly apt to arise from that part of interlanguage competence relating to knowledge of distributional properties of soft features that are regulated by discourse-pragmatic factors. Often, on these features, the near-native speaker displays native-like syntactic knowledge yet imperfect knowledge of discourse-pragmatic constraints, hence asymmetric (selective) competence. However, theoretical speculations are likely to continue on whether the observed persistent non-target-like behaviours are reflections of a problem with representation or processing for years to come.

Leaving aside the vexed issue of representation and processing, in the next section I will first recapitulate the hypothesis on selective fossilization that I put forth based on my analysis of some of the UG-L2 findings, and then suggest a programme of research.

7.4 An Analytical Model

Based on systematic findings from the UG-L2 research, I have hypothesized that L1 markedness and L2 input robustness may be combined in different ways, creating zones of fossilization and acquisition respectively (see IV vs. II in Figure 7.4) as well as zones where either may occur (see I and III in Figure 7.4). Under this hypothesis, L1 markedness is conceived of as a composite of two sub-variables, frequency and variability. The former simply refers to the number of times the particular form appears or is used in the L1, hence a surface, and relatively static, attribute, while the latter refers to the number of variants with which the form may be associated, which I argue, can be linked to its distributional patterns in discourse, hence a deeper attribute. An example of the latter is determiners in English whose use is largely determined by discourse and pragmatic considerations. Similarly, the L2 input robustness variable comprises two dimensions, frequency and variability. It must be emphasized, however, that both dimensions here are different from their counterparts for L1 markedness: they are meant to capture the dynamic as well as relative nature of a given form in L2 input, since, often, a static attribute of the L2 may not manifest itself in the input to which a given L2 learner is exposed. As such, the L2 input robustness variable as a whole is also different from L2 robustness, the latter speaking only to static characteristics of the TL. Put simply, the frequency and variability dimensions of L2 input robustness apply to what the learner experiences rather than what is in the TL generically.

Fossilization is known to be an idiosyncratic phenomenon (Han, 2004; Selinker, 1992), which means that it affects individuals differently. As Lardiere (2007: 211) states, 'After all, different constructions, areas, and sub-areas of an L2 grammar may fossilize in different ways for different learners who . . . have very different initial-state conditions and learning situations'. In the present hypothesis, individual differences are taken account of in two ways. First, through the L2 input robustness variable. Simply, input can be different for individuals in both quantity and quality. This variable input produces different learning conditions for individual learners, in and of itself, as well as in interaction with L1 markedness. Second, Zones I and III (see Figure 7.4) are hypothesized to be 'grey areas'. Features that fall into these areas can or cannot be fully acquired, depending on the nature of interaction between the two major variables (L1 markedness and L2 input robustness) and individuals' abilities such as sensitivity to input (Han, 2003; Lardiere, 2007; Long, 2003; Schnitzer, 1993).

A strength of this hypothesis is that it provides a principled perspective on how linguistic features *to be acquired* may differ from one another within the same, and/or across different, domains and subsystems. This may, in turn, enable gradient judgements to be made on the fossilizability of features falling in Zone IV, and by

the same token, acquisition potential in Zone II. An intended benefit of the hypothesis is that it would allow predictions to be made on (i) which interlanguage elements are prone to fossilization, and (ii) which ones have greater susceptibility to it, the questions key to an understanding of selective fossilization. Moreover, it is hopeful that predictions can be made both *prior to* learning via analysis of the input and the L1 (assuming both are known *a priori*) and *during* learning by examining incidence of ‘premature stabilization’ in the interlanguage (Long, 2003).

Evidently, before any such predictions can be made, the hypothesis itself must be substantiated. To that end and first of all, the four sub-variables within L1 markedness and L2 input robustness must be subjected to rigorous investigation, separately and in combination, in isolation and in context. Both conceptual and empirical work is needed: conceptually, what each of these variables means, what it entails, what contributions it makes to acquisition, and how it relates to the other variables would have to be spelled out; empirically, the weight that each of the sub-variables carries in L2 acquisition would need to be figured out, *in a numerical sense*. In other words, benchmark values must be set up, against which the real values could then be assigned, assessed and compared. It is highly unlikely that there is only one set value for all the variables; rather, each variable may have one of its own.

Corpus analysis is critical to obtaining these values. Consider, as an example, English determiners and plural morphology for L1-Turkish speakers. Previous research has established both features to be challenging for this population (White, 2003b). Through corpus analysis of the input that the learner experiences, one should be able to tell whether the input is more or less robust vis-à-vis the two linguistic features. Then, a similar analysis can be carried out on the learner’s L1, Turkish, to establish the markedness of these features. Next, the results can be plotted on a graph similar to that shown in Figure 7.4 to locate the zone area for each feature. Predictions can subsequently be made on its fossilization potential.

The approach illustrated above, however, would be the conventional way of testing a hypothesis, and this is how SLA research has largely been conducted to date. An unconventional approach, which is what I will suggest below, would move the fossilization research in a more scientific direction. This approach would adopt a problem-solving strategy typically employed in physics research whereby ‘boundary conditions’ are identified and used as a basis for setting parameters in order to produce a numerical model. This procedure would translate into the following for the research concerned here. First, the Selective Fossilization Hypothesis holds two parameters (in the sense of dimensions) accountable, L1 markedness and L2 input robustness, and can be most simply described in formula (1):

$$P_{foss} = \alpha/M_{l1} - \beta R_{l2} \quad (1)$$

where $\alpha > 0$ and $\beta > 0$, and where P_{foss} stands for the potential for fossilization, M_{l1} for L1 markedness, R_{l2} for L2 input robustness, and α and β for the weight each parameter carries. Notice that this formula assumes that M_{l1} (i.e., L1 markedness) positively contributes to fossilization and R_{l2} (i.e., L2 input robustness) negatively. In other words, the more unmarked the L1 form, the greater contribution it makes

to fossilization of the interlanguage form. Conversely, the less robust the L2 input is, the more it contributes to fossilization. The empirical instances of fossilization discussed in the previous sections may serve as 'boundary conditions' from which numerical values can be tentatively set for P_{foss} , M_{L1} and R_{L2} , in order to derive the weight of α and β . Once α and β are set, formula (1) can then be run on new data to be further tuned, and so on.

Formula (1), however, cannot operate on its own, because it is, in turn, dependent on formulas (2) and (3), as M_{L1} and R_{L2} are each composed of two parameters. First, I hypothesize that

$$M_{L1} = \gamma F + \delta(1/V) \quad (2)$$

where $\gamma > 0$ and $\delta > 0$, and where M_{L1} stands for L1 markedness, F for frequency, V for variability, and γ and δ for their respective weights. As expressed in (2), M_{L1} is proportional to F and inversely proportional to V . Similarly, a starting point for deriving numerical values for γ and δ is through identifying 'boundary conditions', viz. prototypical, marked and unmarked instances. Second, I propose that

$$R_{L2} = \kappa F + \lambda(1/V) \quad (3)$$

where $\kappa > 0$ and $\lambda > 0$, and where R_{L2} stands for L2 input robustness, F for frequency, V for variability, κ and λ for their respective weights. As expressed in (3), R_{L2} is proportional to F and inversely proportional to V . Numerical values for κ and λ can be obtained through inputting values deduced from 'boundary conditions', that is to say, prototypical instances of robust or non-robust input.

7.5 Conclusion

It goes without saying that, in its present formulation, the numerical model proposed above is nothing but the crudest approximation to a most complex learnability puzzle. As work on identifying boundary conditions gets underway and substantiated, the formulas will, however, receive adjustments, resulting, potentially, in more complex equations. For example, it may be that the relationship, as expressed in (1), between input characteristics and probability of fossilization turns out to be non-linear and, therefore, that some of the variables need to be raised to some power or expressed as having logarithmic functions. Similarly, the inverse linear relationship as hypothesized in (2) and (3) may require revision. Nonetheless, the model presented here is a necessary first step, as is true for any scientific inquiry into a complex yet much unknown phenomenon, to serve as a springboard.

Clearly, the amount of work that ensues from any pursuit of the numerical model cannot be estimated. Among other things, large amounts of corpus analysis will have to be undertaken, and a sufficient number of 'boundary conditions' identified from extant SLA research, particularly, studies on fossilization. Yet, such endeavour seems crucial for moving fossilization research beyond its hitherto

primarily argumentative basis, which, by far, has only led to a probabilistic, if not fuzzy, understanding of the phenomenon, and towards employing scientific means to achieve a more tangible and precise understanding.

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CHAPTER

8

Perception, Attitude and Motivation

Jean-Marc Dewaele

8.1 Introduction

In this contribution I will focus on one of the most fascinating and messy areas of applied linguistic inquiry, namely the perceptions that people have of their own language(s) and foreign languages, the attitudes that they develop towards different languages and their motivation to acquire foreign languages. The ‘messiness’ arises from the fact that this area of research is highly interdisciplinary: it has attracted the interest of ethnographers, psychologists from different areas, second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and second language (SL) teachers, sociolinguists, psycholinguists, conversation analysts, etc. These researchers have applied their own distinctive epistemologies and methodologies or have created their own unique blends by importing concepts and approaches of neighbouring disciplines. It is therefore appropriate to start this introduction with a quick presentation of the two major epistemological approaches available to SLA researchers interested in perception, attitude and motivation, and the methodological implications of the choice of a particular epistemological approach.

8.1.1 The Etic–Emic Distinction

The first decision SLA researchers in this area of research have to make is where to situate their analysis on the etic–emic dimension. This epistemological opposition was introduced by Pike (1964) in ethnographical research. He extended the *phonetic/phonemic* distinction in linguistic meaning to cultural meaning. He pointed out that researchers’ interpretive (etic) frameworks differ from culturally specific (emic) frameworks used by members of a society/culture for interpreting and assigning meaning to experiences.

Etic analyses and interpretations are based on the use of carefully defined and relatively stable concepts from the analytic language of the social sciences (Pike, 1964). This makes them useful for comparative research across languages, situations and cultures. Emic analyses, on the other hand, incorporate the participants’ perspectives and interpretations of behaviour, events and situations using the descriptive language of participants (Pike, 1964). A debate has been raging in the SLA literature on these ontological and epistemological questions (Gregg, 2006; Firth and Wagner, 2007). Current research in SLA varies widely in terms of preference of emic and etic perspectives, or combinations of both.

Defending the emic perspective, Firth and Wagner (2007) complain that methodologies and theories within SLA reflect ‘an imbalance between cognitive and mentalistic orientations, and social and contextual orientations to language, the former orientation being unquestionably in the ascendancy’. They plead for an enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use and an increased emic sensitivity towards fundamental concepts. It is not entirely clear whether Firth and Wagner (2007) want the balance to shift completely. Previous defences of emic perspectives in SLA, like Watson-Gegeo (1988), stated that emic and etic analyses were complimentary: ‘a carefully done emic analysis precedes and forms the basis for etic extensions that allow for cross-cultural or cross-setting comparisons’ (Watson-Gegeo, 1988: 581–582).

A stronger focus on the emic perspective is characteristic of the Conversation Analysis (CA) paradigm and the postmodernist study of L2 socialization. CA researchers are interested in an ‘emic reality’ (Ten Have, 2007: 37). In order to uncover ‘the procedural infrastructure of situated action’ (ibid.: 37) they carry out an inductive search for patterns of interaction in episodes of naturally occurring interactions. No attempt is made to generalize findings, as researchers are committed to ‘elucidate the local logic’ (ibid.: 199). This approach has been successfully applied to SLA (Mondada and Pekarek, 2004). Postmodernists also insist on the uniqueness of participants, hence their resistance to generalize findings (see below for more on this topic).

Most attitudinal research in SLA privileges a more etic perspective: opinions and attitudes of participants are heard but these are collected through research instruments designed and formulated by the researchers. The first aim in this type of research is to gain an insight in relationships between variables in particular settings, with the ultimate aim of comparing these patterns with studies carried out in different settings. While these researchers acknowledge the uniqueness of L2 learners, their aim is to explain variation in the data through statistical analysis using carefully defined categories: ‘there are probably as many factors that might account for individual differences in achievement in a L2 as there are individuals. However, they may be grouped into one of the two classifications of cognitive or affective variables’ (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1992: 212).

8.1.2 The ‘Positivist’ Quantitative Versus the ‘Relativist’ Qualitative Distinction

Epistemological choices have consequences on the nature of research designs: SLA researchers focusing on the etic perspective typically use quantitative approaches which rely on large samples of participants in order to obtain statistical validity. Smaller samples are sufficient for researchers who favour the emic perspective.

These different epistemological and methodological choices will inevitably contribute to differences of opinion on the meaning and value of research results. This debate on the benefits of methodologies is not limited to the field of SLA.

Psychologists such as Manstead and Fisher have talked about the mutual exclusivity of approaches and the ‘incommensurability of findings generated by standardized and essentially quantitative methods, on the one hand, and idiosyncratic and essentially qualitative research methods, on the other’ (Manstead and Fisher, 2002: 3).

It is therefore not surprising that SLA research on perception, attitude and motivation is also the prime battleground between groups who could stereotypically be labelled ‘relativists’ and the ‘positivists’ (see Block (1996) and Gregg (2006) for both sides of the debate). Spolsky (2000) has pointed out that in SLA motivation is most often seen in positivist and utilitarian terms. Indeed, the primary goal of motivation research in SLA has been to maximize the effectiveness of L2 education through manipulation of personal attributes or contextual variables. Kinginger (2004) concurs with this view and regrets that among American foreign language teachers motivation is solely understood in positivist, utilitarian terms. For them, motivation exists in some stable and unitary form and they need to ‘find, build, nurture, or match it’ in order to increase the effectiveness of the teaching (*ibid.*: 161). The one move that these positivists do normally not envisage is to question the very existence of the construct, which she perceives to be an ‘overstuffed can of worms’ (*ibid.*:161).

Leppänen and Kalaja (2002) also criticize what they perceive as a positivist bias in SLA motivation research and defend a social approach instead:

Endowed with a set of personal characteristics, such as motivation, viewed as stable in nature and measured by objective means, the learner is treated as a physical object operating under universal laws. Importantly, the learner is stripped of agency, or intentional actions, and experiences of his/her own, taking place in particular contexts and in relation to those of others. (Leppänen and Kalaja, 2002: 190)

In order to reinstate agency, intentionality and individual experiences within social contexts, Kalaja and Barcelos (2003) and Barcelos et al., (2008) take a kaleidoscopic view of the subjective meanings and emotions of SL learners. Barcelos et al., (2008) consider learners’ narratives (verbal and visual ones) in order to extract the personal meanings that SL learners attach to English as a foreign language and its learning.

‘Positivist’ SLA researchers like Gardner, MacIntyre, Dörnyei and Schumann approach motivation in SLA from the other end of the spectrum, and rely on quantification and on speculation of general psychological or neurobiological mechanisms. Schumann (2001: 21) argues that learning is a form of foraging as both involve the same neurobiological mechanisms for transforming motivation into action, both show similar dopaminergic responses to stimulus appraisal and both rely on the same kind of decision making. Schumann’s aim is thus clearly to uncover some universal mechanisms for SLA: ‘A biological focus allows us to propose possible mechanisms for SLA; an evolutionary focus provides suggestions for phylogenetically antecedent behaviours upon which learning, in general – and SLA, in particular – may be built’ (*ibid.*: 21).

Dörnyei (2007) reflects on the advantages and limitations of quantitative and qualitative approaches in SLA. As a veteran quantitative researcher into attitudes and motivation in SLA, he defends the quantitative approach because it is 'systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts' (ibid.: 34). However, Dörnyei admits that the downside of quantitative methods is that 'they average out responses across the whole observed group of participants, and by working with concepts of averages it is impossible to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life' (ibid.: 35). Quantitative methods have a rather limited general exploratory capacity because they cannot easily uncover reasons for particular patterns or the dynamics underlying a situation or phenomenon (ibid.: 35). MacIntyre (2007: 572) concurs with this last point, observing that 'correlation or analysis of variance, offer a snapshot of the processes under study. This snapshot has value, but the action necessarily is stopped when we take the picture'.

Summing up, the field of attitude and motivation research in SLA could be roughly organized following epistemological and methodological choices of the researcher.

Pavlenko (2002) will be used as a way to enter the debate on the strengths and weaknesses of etic/quantitative-oriented versus more emic/qualitative approaches. Some of the seminal work carried out on perception, attitude and motivation in these different perspectives in SLA research will be considered, and an attempt will be made to detect emerging synergies in recent studies on the topic in an effort to imagine further developments in SLA.

8.2 The Challenge to Positivist Sociopsychological Approaches: Pavlenko (2002)

In her challenge to sociopsychological approaches to the study of second language learning and use, Pavlenko (2002) raises a number of issues that merit further reflection because of their wider implications for research on perception, attitude and motivation in L2 contexts.

Pavlenko's first objection to traditional quantitative sociopsychological approaches is their monolingual and monocultural bias. She points out that the world does not consist of 'homogeneous and monolingual cultures, or in-groups and out-groups, and of individuals who move from one group to another' (ibid.: 279). She thus considers that concepts such as Gardner's integrative motivation are inherently biased because it 'posits the necessity to abandon one's first language and culture in order to learn the L2 and acculturate to the TL group' (ibid.: 280). She argues that, on the contrary, in today's modern global and multi-lingual world, L2 users can be members of multiple ethnic, social and cultural communities.

She thus proposes to abandon the Gardnerian concept of motivation in favour of Bourdieu's view of language as symbolic capital, as the latter 'allows us to link the individual and the social, tracing the processes by which particular linguistic

varieties and practices become imbued with value or devalued in the linguistic marketplace' (ibid.: 284).

Pavlenko therefore rejects the 'reductionist, static and homogeneous view of culture' (ibid.: 280). She also criticizes the lack of explanatory validity of quantitative sociopsychological approaches concerning the social causes of particular attitudes, motivations and beliefs (ibid.: 280). She argues that constructs such as 'identity', 'in-group membership', 'self-identification' or 'accommodation' cannot be considered to be explanatory because they are themselves in need of explanation (ibid.: 280).

Pavlenko's third objection relates to the 'causal, unidirectional and stable nature attributed to such constructs as motivation, attitudes, or social distance' (ibid.: 280). She points to the continuous shaping and reshaping of motivation and social contexts, where initial success may strengthen the individual's determination in learning the target language while a series of disappointing results may sap that individual's learning motivation (ibid.: 280).

Pavlenko's fourth point concerns the artificiality of the separation assumed in sociopsychological approaches between social factors and the individual, or psychological factors. She argues that many individual factors, such as age, gender or ethnicity, are also socially constituted. As a consequence, the understanding and implications of age, gender or ethnicity vary across communities and cultures. Moreover, 'attitudes, motivation or language learning beliefs have clear social origins and are shaped and reshaped by the contexts in which the learners find themselves' (ibid.: 280–281). She points out that the 'understanding and implications of being Jewish or Arab, young or old, female or male are not the same across communities and cultures' (ibid.: 281).

The methodology used in quantitative sociopsychological studies constitutes Pavlenko's (2002) fifth target for criticism. The validity of questionnaires is in doubt, she argues, because it is not clear 'what exactly was measured by the multiple questionnaires that attempted to quantify language attitudes, motivation, acculturation or language proficiency, in particular, when the latter was reduced to self-evaluation' (ibid.: 281).

Pavlenko's sixth point concerns the fact that most research within the sociopsychological paradigm has been carried out in English-speaking environments in Europe and North America, raising the issue of generalizability of the findings. She points out that a very different picture may emerge in different environment (ibid.: 281).

Pavlenko's seventh criticism concerns 'the idealised and decontextualised nature attributed to language learning, which is presented as an individual endeavour, prompted by motivation and positive attitudes, and hindered by negative attitudes and perceptions' (ibid.: 281). As an alternative, she proposes the poststructuralist approaches which provide 'a more context-sensitive way of theorising social impact on L2 learning and use' (ibid.: 295). This allows researchers to examine complex situations in which L2 users are legitimate speakers who move between different contexts or create rich, hybrid identities. Poststructuralists recast language attitudes and language learning beliefs as ideologies, hence 'illuminating the socially constructed nature of beliefs previously seen as individual'

(*ibid.*: 296). The sociopsychological concept ‘motivation’ is recast by postmodernists such as Norton Peirce as investment: ‘individual learners in the same social contexts may have distinct experiences as a result of power relations of gender, race and class, which, in turn, may shape different investments, learning trajectories and, ultimately, outcomes’ (*ibid.*: 297). Rather than using questionnaires and quasi-experimental designs, poststructuralists such as Kinginger prefer a longitudinal ethnographic approach to examine both the learner language itself and the social contexts of its learning and use (*ibid.*: 297). Finally, Pavlenko (2002) points out that poststructuralists are not seeking to create a hegemony and replace other paradigms: ‘poststructuralist approaches will bloom best when surrounded by other flowers in the garden of theory and practice, giving rise to present and future debates and controversies’ (*ibid.*: 299).

In a later work, Pavlenko (2005) insists that attitudes, perception and the investment in the learning of a foreign language are never static, they reflect ‘the interplay between sociohistoric, sociopolitical, and linguistic circumstances that shape individuals’ investments in particular languages and shows that the languages speakers choose to learn, speak, or abandon are intrinsically linked to their social, political, gender, and national identities and imagined futures’ (Pavlenko, 2005: 234).

In sum, Pavlenko raises several theoretical and methodological objections concerning quantitative sociopsychological approaches and offers alternative ways to consider perception, attitudes and motivation in L2 contexts. Let us now briefly consider the theoretical and methodological positions of sociopsychological researchers in their study of perception, attitudes and motivation in a L2 context.

8.3 Sociopsychological Approaches to Perception, Attitudes and Motivation

8.3.1 Definitions

Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) study and Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model have been considered the seminal works and later the ‘dominant’ positivist model in SLA for many years (MacIntyre, 2007). Gardner (1985) defined attitude as ‘an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual beliefs or opinions about the referent’ (1985: 9). Language-learning motivation is defined as ‘the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language’ (Gardner, 1985: 10). These definitions may seem straightforward but even more quantitatively oriented SLA experts in this area admit that motivation is ‘one of the most elusive concepts in the whole of social sciences’ (Dörnyei, 2001a: 2). The concept’s elusiveness is linked to the fact that it is a multi-faceted, complex and composite construct: some components are more trait-like and others are more state-like and situation-specific (Dörnyei, 2006: 50). The distinction between traits and states originates in personality psychology where researchers such as Eysenck and Furnham wanted to distinguish between long-term, stable

characteristics of a person's personality, like extraversion or emotional stability, from short-term, unstable characteristics, like the foreign language anxiety in an exam situation. From the point of view of duration, one could argue that motivation is situated somewhere in the middle. It is supposed to explain why people opt for certain actions, and how long and how hard they are willing to go on with certain activities (Dörnyei and Skehan, 2003: 614). A more trait-like component of motivation would be a strong willingness to acquire a specific foreign language over a period of months or years. A more state-like component in motivation would be the heightened desire to impress a native speaker (NS) of the target language, or the sudden lack of motivation when confronted with an unpleasant task in the foreign language. Gardner's socio-educational model is grounded in the social environment as it articulates the impact of larger social forces such as intergroup attitudes, cultural identification, and familial influence, on the L2 learning process (Gardner, 1985, 2006; MacIntyre, 2007).

8.3.2 Research Instrument

The data Gardner obtained from participants through the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (for more on its development, see Gardner and Smythe, 1981) are quantitative, namely a value on a 5-point Likert scale accompanying a list of statements relating to possible reasons why the participants want to learn a L2 ('Studying the L2 can be important for me because it will allow me to travel to L2 areas; . . . it will allow me to learn about myself; . . . it will help me find a better job; . . . it will allow me to appreciate L2 minority problems'). These items are linked to 11 scales (integrative orientation, attitudes towards the target group, interest in foreign languages, teacher evaluation, course evaluation, motivational intensity, desire to learn the language, attitudes towards learning the language, language class anxiety, language use anxiety and instrumental orientation. These scales form the basis of five constructs, namely integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, motivation, language anxiety and instrumentality (Gardner, 2006: 246). These dimensions emerge from standard use of factor analyses of individual items in the AMTB. The researcher at that point has to interpret and name the dimensions. Gardner named these dimensions as he did, and though they have a logical basis, they could only emerge because of the choice of the particular items included in the questionnaire. In other words, these dimensions did not exist *a priori*. This approach is common in psychology. For example, factor analyses of items in personality questionnaires typically propose solutions based on five super-dimensions (Furnham and Heaven, 1999). It is not entirely clear to me whether the inclusion of different types of items related to affective aspects of language learning and language perception might not cluster on a new dimension. Statistical analyses allow the calculation of the score of each participant on the different dimensions, and in comparing that single score to group means the researcher can provide a unique numerical profile of that person's attitudes and motivation, or of that group of individuals.

According to Gardner, levels of motivation are influenced and maintained by attitudes towards the learning situation and integrativeness (i.e. ‘an openness to the TL group and other groups in general linked to one’s sense of ethnic identity’ (Gardner, 2006: 236). Motivation can also be supported by instrumentality, i.e. ‘conditions where the language is being studied for practical or utilitarian purposes’ (ibid.: 249).

Research has shown that L2 learners with higher levels of integrativeness tend to obtain better results in the L2 than learners with lower levels of integrativeness (Cziser and Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2001, 2006). A higher level of instrumentality also tends to correlate positively (albeit not always significantly) with L2 proficiency measures (Dörnyei, 2001a; Gardner, 2001, 2006). Gardner (2006) rejected the criticism that the AMTB is only appropriate in the Canadian context by demonstrating the similarity in internal consistency reliability coefficients, factor structures and achievements in English L2 with the data collected through the AMTB in four non-English-speaking European countries.

8.3.3 *Challenges to the Gardner Model*

A number of researchers have pointed out that Gardner’s concept of ‘integrativeness’ may be past its prime. Yashima (2002) has argued that ‘integrativeness’ is not the appropriate concept in a Japanese context. Her Japanese EFL learners showed little inclination to seek to integrate into English-speaking cultures, and that their success in learning English is better predicted by a dimension that she named ‘international posture’. This includes interest in international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, and a readiness to interact with intercultural partners (Yashima, 2002, 2009; Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide, 2008).

The biggest challenge to Gardner’s socio-educational model comes from Dörnyei who lead the way in the 1990s to move towards a more situated approach to the study of motivation. He focused on the influence of the immediate learning context on learners’ overall disposition and the effect of this motivation on concrete learning processes within a classroom context (Dörnyei, 1990, 1994). Dörnyei thus proposed a process-oriented approach that distinguished between different levels of motivational processes, some of which are linked to the enduring social context (e.g. the integrative motive) while others are more localized, such as the motivation to engage in effortful, task-related behaviour within a situation (Dörnyei, 2000, 2001a, 2005). By focusing on the daily ‘ups and downs’ of motivation in SLA, that is, both synchronic and diachronic variation, Dörnyei viewed motivation not as a static attribute, but rather as a ‘dynamic system that displays continuous fluctuation, going through certain ebbs and flows’ (2006: 51).

The recent work of Dörnyei has also shown an increasing interest in new approaches to attitudes and motivation. He has suggested to broaden or even abandon Gardner’s concept of ‘integrativeness’ and focus more on the identification aspects and on the learner’s self-concept (Dörnyei and Cziser, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005). An individual imagines an ‘Ideal L2 Self’, which is the representation of all the attributes that that person would like to possess, including the

mastery of an L2. Dörnyei also postulates a second dimension, the ‘Ought-to L2 Self’, i.e. the attributes that one believes one ought to possess. L2 motivation can then be defined as the desire to reduce the perceived discrepancies between the learner’s actual self and his/her ideal or ought-to L2 selves (Dörnyei, 2006: 54). The third dimension is labelled ‘L2 Learning Experience’, which concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience. Dörnyei ponders about the interface of the Ideal L2 Self and the actional phase of motivation. He refers to Norton’s (2001) use of the concept of ‘imagined communities’ agreeing with her that learners’ motivation will be related to both real and imagined belongings within communities of practice (Dörnyei 2006: 54). Shoaib and Dörnyei (2005) have also focused on motivational change over time among learners, identifying a number of salient recurring temporal patterns and episodes in the participants’ lives that transformed their motivational disposition.

8.3.4 The Pyramid Model

An interesting collaboration between Dörnyei and the ‘Gardnerian’ sociopsychologists (but not Gardner himself) in the mid-1990s resulted in the highly influential pyramid model of willingness of to communicate (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1998)¹ (see Figure 8.1).

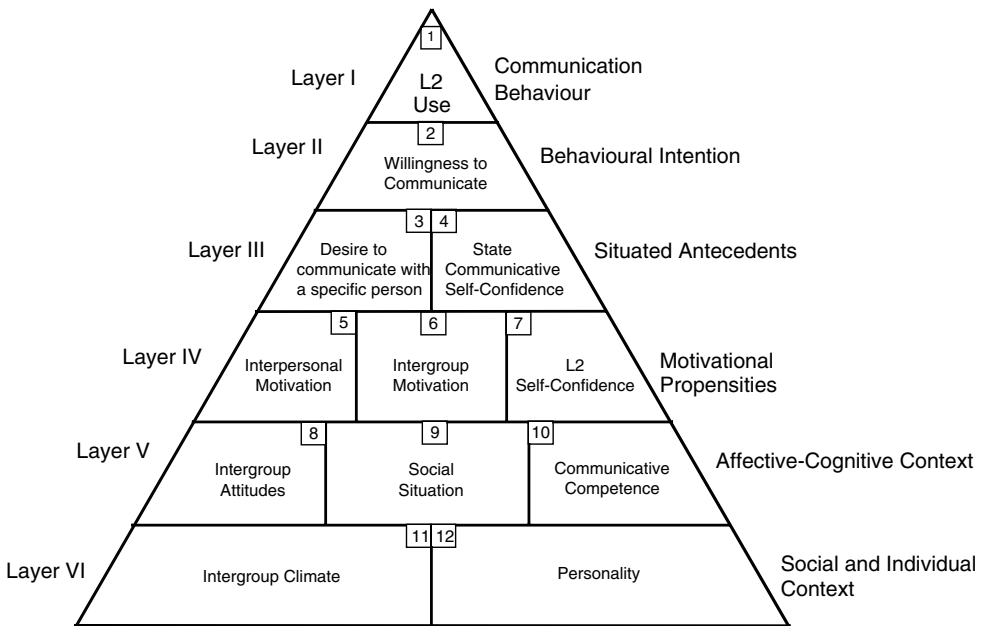


Figure 8.1 The Pyramid Model of WTC (MacIntyre et al, 1998), ‘Conceptualising willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation’, *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 545–562

Motivation is clearly linked to individual and societal factors. The basis of the pyramid (Layer VI) refers to intergroup climate and personality. MacIntyre (2007) explains that this layer exists

even before the individual is born, because they capture enduring intergroup and genetic influences handed down from one generation to the next. The individual has little influence over these factors and generally they play a somewhat indirect role in language behaviour. (ibid.: 567)

The next layer (V) of the pyramid includes intergroup attitudes, the social situation and communicative competence. It thus refers to the individual's typical affective and cognitive context. MacIntyre (2007: 567) explains that this layer sets 'the tone for motivation to learn the L2', namely 'the tension between a desire to approach the target language group and a sense of hesitation or fear of the implications of doing so'.

The next level (Layer IV) 'Motivational Propensities' is the last to refer to enduring influences: 'Intergroup motives stem directly from membership in a particular social group and interpersonal motives stem from the social roles one plays within the group. Issues of affiliation and control (broadly defined) are the most basic of motives, exerting their effects throughout the system. Roles and motives combine with L2 self-confidence; perceptions of communicative competence coupled with a lack of anxiety' (ibid.: 568).

Layer III of the pyramid refers to situational influences: 'The sense of time is coming to focus on the here-and-now. At this level of the pyramid model is the desire to communicate with a specific person as well as a state of self-confidence' (ibid.: 568).

The next layer (II) refers to the behavioural intention to speak if one has the opportunity, or to remain quiet, in other words, an individual's willingness 'to initiate second language discourse on a specific occasion with a specific person, remembering that the person represents a different social group' (ibid.: 568). Layer II, willingness to communicate 'represents the final psychological step in preparation for L2 communication' (ibid.: 568), while the top of the pyramid (I) represents the actual communication in the L2.

What is clear from the pyramid model is that the social dimension plays a crucial part in determining an individual's motivation to learn an L2 and to use that L2 at some point. The authors do not consider motivation and attitudes as idealized and decontextualized, on the contrary, they are grounded in the context of enduring influences from specific affective, historical, social, political and geographical factors.

While these attitudes can be relatively stable within speech communities, they can suddenly shift as a consequence of political circumstances (war), or migration patterns, when a new language suddenly emerges in the local linguistic landscape and becomes associated with a particular style of music or activity.

8.3.5 Sociopsychological Studies on the Contextualization Continuum

Attitudes towards languages may also vary widely within a particular country. Dörnyei and Clément (2001) looked specifically at the attitudes of thousands of 13- and 14-year-old Hungarian schoolchildren towards five different languages – English, German, French, Italian and Russian. Except for marked gender differences (with girls scoring higher on most attitudinal/motivational measures), the researchers found strong regional variation: schoolchildren in the capital scored highest on most variables, those living near the Austrian border scored higher on German, those in the east scored higher on French and Russian and Italian was most popular in Budapest. The authors conclude that ‘macrocontextual, geopolitical factors significantly affect people’s language attitudes’ (ibid.: 423). In a further study Dörnyei, Cziser and Németh (2006) analysed the effect of sociopolitical changes at the end of the 1980s in Eastern Europe on attitudes towards foreign languages. The researchers investigated whether the strong increase of intercultural contact in Hungary had affected the attitudes of Hungarian schoolchildren towards five different languages – English, German, French, Italian and Russian. They found that the rank order between the different languages had remained unchanged after the fall of the Iron Curtain: English was the most popular language, followed by German, followed by French and Italian at similar levels, with Russian at the bottom of the table (ibid.: 143). Gender differences, which had been strong in earlier studies (English, German and Russian being preferred by males, French and Italian being preferred by females) were weaker and had disappeared for English in 2004. French and Italian were found to have overtaken German in the capital (ibid.: 144).

Rich quantitative sociopsychological research into language attitudes has also been emerging from trilingual regions. Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner and Reyes (2004) used Gardner’s Attitudes and Motivations Test Battery (AMTB) to investigate the effect of the cultural background of immigrant learners on their attitudes and motivation to learn Catalan, Spanish and English. Participants were grouped in four categories: Spanish, South American, African and Asian. Cultural background turned out to be linked to very few differences. Attitudes and motivation were less positive for Catalan than for both Spanish and English, with little difference between Spanish and English. A factor analysis showed that integrative motivation was generally language-specific (ibid.: 75). One could argue that the categorization is problematic as it compares a group of Spaniards, in other words, a subgroup of Western Europeans with a huge and extremely diverse group of Africans and Asians. It is also unclear to what extent South Americans differ from the Spaniards as they share the same language.

Lasagabaster (2005) and Ibarra, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2007) have considered the attitudes of students in a Basque university towards their three languages (i.e. Basque, Spanish and English) and found that the most positive attitudes were towards English and their own L1 (Basque or Spanish). The first language

determined the attitude towards English: Spanish L1 participants had more favourable attitudes than those with Basque as L1. In an attempt to reach more generalizable conclusions on language use and attitudes, Lasagabaster and Huguet (2006) asked researchers from nine multilingual European states/areas to apply the same research design in their unique context and have them analyse the data using the same techniques in order to answer common research questions. The resulting studies took into consideration the attitudes towards their own majority and minority languages as well as towards the 'foreign' languages.

Dewaele (2005) found that Flemish high school students' attitudes towards English (the L3) were much more positive than those towards French (the L2), despite the longer and more intense formal instruction in French. Students who described themselves as more Flemish (i.e. their regional identity) than Belgian (i.e. their national identity) displayed more negative attitudes towards French. The more negative attitude towards French was attributed to the tense socio-political relations between the Dutch and French speaking communities in Belgium while English is generally perceived to be a 'cool' *lingua franca*. Personality dimensions were not found to be significantly linked to attitudes to French or English.

Attitudes towards foreign languages are often influenced by local stereotypes and beliefs. Diab (2006) studied foreign language students' attitudes and beliefs about learning English and French in Lebanon. Diab found that students perceived English as an easy language and French as a difficult one, which reflects a popular belief in Lebanon. The instrumental motivation to learn English was found to be stronger than that for learning French.

It would be wrong to consider sociopsychological research as monolithic in its methodological approach. Ushioda, one of the eminent researchers in the field, carried out a longitudinal qualitative study into 20 Irish learners of French (Ushioda, 2001). She relied on interviews in which she asked participants to reflect on their motivation for learning French (*ibid.*: 99). She distinguished eight dimensions in the interview material: academic interest, language-related enjoyment, desired levels of L2 competence, personal goals, positive learning history, personal satisfaction, feelings about French-speaking countries or people, and external pressures (*ibid.*: 102). Her longitudinal approach allowed her to see motivation not as a cause or the product of specific learning experiences but rather an on-going process (*ibid.*: 122). She found that the most successful participants engaged in intrinsic motivational processes more often, reminding themselves about their past and future successes and their aspirations. This allowed them to 'take control of their affective learning experience and to sustain their involvement in language learning' (*ibid.*: 122). Less successful learners focused more on external incentives and blamed factors beyond their control for their lack of progress.

Some sociopsychological studies have tried to control for the effect of the local sociopolitical context by gathering data from participants in different countries and on different continents. Dewaele (*in press*) carried out a quantitative study, partly based on the attitudes questionnaire by Lasagabaster (2005), among NS and

NNS students of French. The study focused on the perceived characteristics of the French language and of Francophones, as well as the perception of areas of difficulty in the French language. NS and NNS were found to differ significantly in their judgements of the characteristics of the French language. NNS judged French to be less difficult overall than French NS. Both groups also disagreed on what area of French is the most difficult. The NNS judged French to be significantly more poetic, more useful and more romantic than NS of French. NNS judged Francophones to be significantly more cultivated and polite, but not more open or nicer. It was argued that the NNS' more positive attitudes could be linked to their on-going investment in the foreign language learning process (cf. Peirce, 1995) and the fact that they may have idealized certain aspects of the target language and target language community.

An even more de-contextualized study of language attitudes was carried out in Dewaele (2007a, b). These studies were based on a database of 1,579 multilinguals who filled out the Bilingualism and Emotions Questionnaire (BEQ) (Dewaele and Pavlenko, 2001–2003). Participants were multilinguals living all over the world with more than 70 different first languages. The sample contained a strong proportion of female, highly educated multilinguals. The first part of the questionnaire contained 13 questions relating to participants' sociobiographical and linguistic background. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 13 close-ended Likert-type questions on language choice for the expression of various emotions with various interlocutors, on code-switching behaviour in inner and articulated speech, on the use and perception of swear-words, on attitudes towards the different languages and finally on communicative and foreign language anxiety in the different languages. The last part of the BEQ presented 5 open-ended questions which asked about: (1) the weight of the phrase 'I love you' in the participants' respective languages; (2) their linguistic preferences for emotion terms and terms of endearment; (3) emotional significance of their languages; (4) language for emotional interactions; (5) ease or difficulty of discussing emotional topics in languages other than the first. The data elicited through the open questions yielded a corpus of about 150,000 words. The complete BEQ has been incorporated as an appendix in Pavlenko (2005: 247–256). Rather than focusing on specific languages, languages were categorized according to the order of acquisition (L1 to L5). The aim of the research was to investigate whether there are any systematic differences between perceptions and frequency of use for languages acquired first and later in life. Dewaele (2007a) compared perception of usefulness, colourfulness, richness, poetic character, emotionality and warmth in the L1 and the L2 of participants. Between one half and three quarter of participants choose the statement 'absolutely' to describe the positive characteristics of their L1 compared to between a third to two thirds for the L2. Statistical analyses revealed that the values for the L1 were significantly higher for all language characteristics compared to the L2.

One of the research questions in the study was whether the perception of emotionality and usefulness of a language predicted self-rated proficiency in that language. It emerged that the L2 was felt by three quarters of participants to be maximally useful, this fell to less than half for the L3 and hovered around a third

for the L4 and the L5. The perception of emotionality was quite different: slightly more than a third of participants judged the L2, L3, L4 and L5 to be maximally emotional. Participants' perception of usefulness and emotionality of a language were found to be significant predictors of self-rated proficiency in the L2 and the L4, with usefulness also being a significant predictor in the L3.

8.4 An Area of Broad Agreement between Researchers: The Shaping of Perceptions, Attitudes and Motivation

SLA researchers from different research traditions generally agree that attitudes towards foreign languages are always shaped by the people who speak these languages, and that some inherent characteristic of the language may affect the attitude of a group of people or individuals towards that language.

8.4.1 Target Language Speakers

This dissociation between the language and the cultural values that the language represents has been amply documented in the literature. Some teachers want learners to acquire competence in the foreign language and culture without actually feeling any sympathy for the speakers of that language. In other words, an instrumental motivation is encouraged but an integrative one is strongly discouraged. An illustration of this peculiar situation is provided by Pavlenko (2003) who describes her first English language class in the former Soviet Union in the mid-seventies. Her teacher framed the objective of the class as the necessity to master English, the language of the imperialists, in order to better defeat this enemy:

My inculcation process started in 1975 when as a fifth grader I chose my foreign language, English, and attended the first class. The teacher welcomed us with a passionate speech: 'My dear fifth graders, today is a very important day in your life – you are starting to study English. Your knowledge of this language will prove crucial when we are at war with the imperialist Britain and United States and you will have to decode and translate intercepted messages'. This was a new idea for me, since my mother, herself an English teacher, conveniently forgot to inform me that one day we would have to confront the capitalist powers and interview their spies. The mission did not particularly appeal to me, neither did the delivery. Thus, I patiently waited until the end of the class and then asked to be transferred to the French programme. French, at the time, was the language of popular singers, Joe Dassin and Mireille Mathieux, of popular movies with Pierre Richard and Jean-Paul Belmondo, and, of course, of popular writers, Balzac, Dumas-père, and Maupassant. It was glamorous and non-threatening and I was delighted to delve into it both in middle and high school and later in college as a French major. (Pavlenko, 2003: 313)

A similar attitude existed towards Russian during the Cold War in the West, or towards German during the two World Wars (Pavlenko, 2003).

Dörnyei (2005) reflects on his many years in Russian classes in Hungary which led to only minimal competence. He attributes his lack of progress in that language to a general resistance among teachers and students towards the language of the oppressor. Nikolov (2001) came to a similar conclusion in her study on unsuccessful Hungarian foreign language learners: of the 87 participants who had studied Russian, none 'reported any proficiency in Russian or a liking of the language and culture' (ibid.: 162). Attitudes towards certain languages and target language communities can also be ambiguous rather than completely positive or negative. LoCastro (2001) reports that her Japanese students had positive attitudes towards English but were unwilling to adopt certain English pragmatic norms that differed from Japanese ones because of their desire to retain a Japanese identity. More negative attitudes exist in Iran and much of the Middle East towards English, yet, it remains typically one of the frequently taught foreign languages (Ahmadi, 2008). That language is taught without the cultural values and attitudes of that group. This so-called language teaching 'with a clothespin on the nose' is dictated by political or economical necessity. It is also dependent on the political climate and can evolve quite rapidly.

Dutch in Belgium suffers from negative attitudes by many young Francophone Belgians who feel they need to learn Dutch because knowledge of both French and Dutch is often required for jobs in Belgium (Mettewie et al., 2006). These Francophone Belgians thus rate Dutch as useful in the Belgian context but they often find it a difficult and ugly language, with very little international stature. Not surprisingly, the motivation to learn a language perceived as ugly and not very prestigious will be low. Emotional attitudes towards languages may thus be quite independent from purely instrumental evaluations.

While attitudes towards foreign languages are often shaped by the global geopolitical and sociopolitical context, they can also be quite unique to the individual. Indeed, 'FL learners are not passive "consumers" of institutionalised ideologies and may engage in resistance and opposition' (Pavlenko, 2003). Her own act of resistance as a pupil was walking away from the English language class and opting for French instead. This had obviously nothing to do with her attitude towards English (which must have been positive considering her mother was a teacher of English), but rather with the attitude towards the teacher. Mettewie (2004) similarly reported that the attitude towards the foreign language teacher determines to a large extent the attitude towards the foreign language, especially for languages which are rare in the usual linguistic landscape of the learners. Noels (2003) pointed out that the teachers' communicative styles also have a strong effect on students' continued motivation to study the L2. The decision to learn a particular foreign language and to soak up the cultural and political values attached to that language can be an act of resistance in itself. Pavlenko (2003) refers to Natasha Lvovich, a translator and professional teacher of French in the former Soviet Union who bitterly regretted being unable to travel to France and for whom French became an intellectual escape from the oppressive communist regime: 'Associating French with intellectualism, sophistication, and nobility, she created an imaginary French identity for herself, learning to speak with a Parisian accent, memorising popular French songs, reading French classics and detective stories in

argot, mastering numerous written genres, cooking French food (from locally available ingredients)' (Pavlenko, 2003: 326).

The attraction of a foreign language and culture is not necessarily linked to an oppressive home environment, it can simply be a matter of falling in love with it. Kaplan, an American academic, describes her infatuation with French and France as a form of addiction: 'sometimes I don't want to need French so much. I want to be free of it' (Kaplan, 1993: 207).

The famous Latin saying *De gustibus et coloribus non est disputandum* (One mustn't quarrel about tastes and colours) is also applicable to the reaction of people towards foreign languages. These tastes can of course be affected by stereotypes about the languages. Some languages sound repulsive, other sound sexy and attractive in the ears of potential learners. Piller (2002) coined the term 'language desire' to describe the attraction of language learners. In her study of linguistic practices of bilingual couples, Piller (2002: 269) notes that some participants were in love with English or German as an L2 long before they actually met their partners. However, languages may have completely different effects on different people. The American philosopher Richard Watson, a specialist in Descartes, could read French but not speak it. After an invitation to give a paper at a conference in Paris marking the anniversary of Descartes' *Discours de la Méthode*, he decided it was time to learn to speak French. Six months of conversation classes with a tutor had very little effect and the conference presentation turned out disastrously. Among the affective obstacles to speaking French, he mentions the fact that French sounded 'syrupy' and 'effeminate' and a language that 'Real Men' would not speak (Pavlenko, 2005: 67).

A similar report of ambiguous attitudes of Americans towards French is reported in Kramsch (2003). She analysed metaphors and subjective construction of beliefs of foreign language learners. One student of French at UC Berkeley wrote that learning French is 'like eating regurgitated paté'. Kramsch (2003) notes that this metaphor might evoke and be linked to a cluster of other ambiguous attitudes and beliefs such as 'France is the country of good food' as well as 'learning French is like having phlegm stuck in the back of my throat'.

The more ambiguous attitude towards French has also been present among British schoolchildren for decades, with clear gender differences in the preferred languages (Williams et al., 2002). Participants explained the boys' preference for German in terms of French being a more feminine language and German more masculine: 'As a high proficiency year 9 boy put it, "French is the language of love and stuff" while German is "the war, Hitler and all that"' (ibid.: 520). A girl from the same year group confirmed: 'I reckon girls are really into French: they like the way that French sounds more than boys do' (ibid.: 521).

In sum, whatever researchers' epistemological or methodological stance, there is a broad agreement that perceptions and attitudes towards foreign languages and motivation to learn them are linked to both the macro context (geopolitical, social and historical factors resulting in specific opinions within groups of people) and the micro context, an individual's like or dislike of the language teacher, admiration or distaste for specific speakers of the target language. This complex

interaction of macro and micro factors can produce ambiguous attitudes, and specific types of motivation (i.e. purely instrumental ones) or even a total lack of motivation.

8.5 From Mono-method to Hybrid and Multi-method Investigations into the Development of Perceptions, Attitudes and Motivation: Study Abroad Research

Studies on the year abroad have considered the effect of a period of total immersion in the target language culture on learners' interlanguages and identities, as well as on their social and cultural understanding of the target language culture (Freed, 1995; Coleman, 1998; Collentine and Freed, 2004; Dufon and Churchill, 2006). SLA researchers working in an etic perspective have been particularly interested in development of fluency, accuracy, lexical richness, grammatical intuitions of study abroad students (Howard, 2005; Towell and Dewaele, 2005). A fair amount of research has also been carried out on the acquisition of sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic norms in the target language through interactions with NS (Barron and Wurga, 2007; Kinginger and Blattner 2008; Regan et al., 2009). Recent research has also focused on the development of speed and accuracy of pragmatic comprehension in the target language during the stay abroad (Taguchi, 2008). Learners who become frequent users of the L2 in authentic interactions with NSs typically make the best progress, though not always in terms of accuracy. The willingness to communicate in the L2 is highly variable among learners/users in the target language community (MacIntyre et al., 1998) which might explain the wide inter-individual variation on the return from the year abroad. Some students come back from the year abroad with extremely positive attitudes towards the target language community, others come back loathing every speaker of the target language (see also Mike Byram's chapter in this volume).

Kaplan (1993) presents the case of Edna, an American student who spent a year in France and who has fallen in love with every aspect of the target language and culture:

Edna is just back from a year of study abroad where she took the majority of her classes at 'Sciences Po' – the French institute for the study of political science. She is imbued with the style and the tone of a French Sciences Po student. She went even farther than I did to make herself over; her French is indistinguishable from that of a student at Sciences Po. She is every French professor's dream! She acquired all the micro-traits of intellectual francophilia: in her notebook, she underlines her main points, marked with Roman numerals 'I.', 'II.', 'III.', in contrasting colored-pencil colors, and for every big point, she's got a little point 'a.', a little point 'b.', sub-points 'i.', 'ii.', 'iii.' This, I imagine, she got from sitting in French university amphitheatres where the professors actually say 'aspect number three, second part, small a' as they're talking, to assist the students taking notes. (Kaplan, 1993: 175)

Edna seems to have been driven, in Gardner terms, by extreme integrative motivation. Not only does she manage to sound exactly like her French peers at Science Po, she seems also to have adopted some specific French academic traits. It is perfectly possible, of course, that she possessed these traits before her stay in France, but that Kaplan attributes them to her contact with French academic culture.

Kinginger and Farrell (2005) investigated the stories of three American students who spent a year in France with a focus on their confrontation with gendered practices and ideologies. The authors found that the students examined and interpreted their observations of gendered practices through the lens of American ideologies of French gender. For one female student 'this confrontation was embedded in and added to a general sense of alienation from the social context and from language learning' (ibid.: 15). The student rejected gender practices which she identified as sexual harassment and 'used these as contributions to her rationale for rejection of emotional investment in French language competence' (ibid.: 15). A second female student accommodated to a certain degree to these gender practices but learned how to defend herself from unwanted sexual advances. Rather than being deterred, she learned how to manipulate them and used them as opportunities for social interaction in French. She also started to question her own image and behaviour in order to enhance her success as a L2 user of French (ibid.: 15). The third, male, student stuck to his American gender identity in the new social environment and was able to interact freely with men and women, creating a story of his own gallantry (ibid.: 15).

The three students considered in Kinginger and Farrell (2005) form part of a group of 24 American students that Kinginger (2008) followed during their year in France. Data on the individual experiences and evolving emotional states were collected through pre- and post-study abroad interviews, and by participants' diaries. Kinginger (2008) was inspired by Kramsch's observation that 'language learners are not just communicators and problem solvers, but whole persons with hearts, bodies, and minds, with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identities' (Kramsch, 2006: 251). The study shows that attitudes towards the French language and the motivation to learn it vary wildly among certain participants. These attitudes are typically associated with specific interlocutors, like the members of the host family. One of the students called Beatrice reports being mocked by the host sisters about her accent in French. Her final journal entry reads as follows:

Let me just say this, I am ready to leave my host family. Although it used to be cute and funny when they would imitate my French accent, it now pisses me off. I have worked my ass off here while I have been in France [*sic*] to learn their language and I know deep inside that I have made a lot of progress and I really do not find it funny anymore when they mock me 5 times a day. . . . I sure as hell do not want to learn your language when you speak to me like that. I think I came to France with a pretty good attitude. Talk about disenchanted! (Kinginger, 2008: 179)

Kinginger (2008) concludes that despite the fact that each student's experience was unique, a certain thematic coherence emerged from the assembled stories of individuals.

Garrett and Young (2009) present a longitudinal case-study based on interviews throughout an 8-week Portuguese course for beginners. The first author described her language learning experiences to the second author. Sessions were transcribed, then coded and analysed. The authors developed a theoretical model grounded in the learner's experiences in order to understand the learner's affective responses to the language learning process, the events from which her affect sprang, and her affective trajectory over the 8 weeks. The authors point out that the learner and her experiences were unique, and that other learners may respond differently to similar experiences. They do feel that their observations are relevant, however, as affective responses of foreign language learners and responses to events in the classroom clearly determine individual learner's affective states and the trajectory of change in those states throughout the language learning process (Garrett and Young, 2009).

Initially positive attitudes towards a foreign language can fade quickly for participants in study abroad programmes. Isabelli-García (2006) reports the cases of four American students in Argentina, including Jennifer, who entered the program with a positive attitude and a strong instrumental motivation to use Spanish. Encountering housing difficulties at the start of her stay and unfamiliar gender-related practices, she soon developed a negative attitude towards the host culture 'and her low motivation to learn the language hindered her from including more Argentines in her social network; she lacked any investment to learn the target language' (ibid.: 254).

As Isabelli-García (2006) shows, attitudes towards the language and the target language country can vary over a period of months but they can also fluctuate on a daily basis according to specific events in the students' life. Isabelli-García refers to the U-shaped development of attitudes, starting with (often unrealistically) positive attitudes prior to travelling to the given country, which often weaken at the beginning of the stay. This could be the consequence of the unforeseen negative effect of the cultural and language barriers experienced while engaged in intercultural communication (Isabelli-García, 2006). Students who stay long enough, may overcome the negative attitudes and end up with more realistic positive attitudes towards the target language speakers and country (Stangor et al., 1996).

In sum, research on the effect of study abroad on SLA in the etic, quantitative perspective typically shows moderate development on a range of linguistic and pragmatic variables in the L2. The high degree of inter-individual variation on the return to the home country has puzzled quantitative-oriented researchers. It is here that a more emic, qualitative-oriented research into perception, attitudes and motivation proves extremely fruitful. Detailed case studies show that attitudes, perception and the investment in the learning of a foreign language sometimes depend on a number of unrelated factors: on sheer chance (staying with a nice

host family), on individual personality traits (the capacity not be overwhelmed by homesickness, a certain amount of cultural empathy, risk-taking, gregariousness and ability to cope with communication failure is necessary to establish links with target language speakers), on the socio-educational context (the teaching provisions), on the global sociopolitical context (being a citizen of an unpopular country may complicate matters).

8.6 Discussion

The review of the literature on language attitudes and motivation shows a field that is evolving in different directions, with a fair degree of cross-fertilization. I would argue that the monolingual and monocultural bias in quantitative sociopsychological approaches is largely a thing of the past. Research in the European context, for example, is often based on participants from mixed ethnic and linguistic backgrounds who typically learn multiple foreign languages. A Eurobarometer survey in 1997 showed that more than three quarters of the 9,400 young Europeans interviewed declared to speak a foreign language and about two thirds desired to learn another (*European Report on the Quality of School Education*). (Incidentally only 45 per cent of British participants reported knowledge of a foreign language and a 62 per cent desire to acquire another language.) Although concepts such as ‘integrative motivation’ do appear in the attitudinal studies on SLA in the European context, it obviously does not imply the loss of the L1 culture. The Hungarians, Basques, Catalans, Frisians learning English may want to integrate a nebulous community of English L2 users rather than a specific target group of NSs of English. The same holds for Flemings learning foreign languages. They may want to broaden their sociocultural horizon by learning foreign languages, thus joining the legions of young European multilinguals, but this learning process does not imply the sacrifice of the Flemish culture. It comes therefore as no surprise that Dörnyei, a European researcher, proposes to abandon the concept of ‘integrativeness’ and focus instead on identification aspects and on the learner’s self-concept (Dörnyei and Cziser, 2005; Dörnyei, 2005).

Dörnyei’s recent focus on theoretical, epistemological and methodological issues in attitude and motivation research (Dörnyei, 2005, 2007) could be interpreted as an answer to Pavlenko’s criticism concerning the lack of explanatory validity of basic constructs in sociopsychological research and by her doubts about the validity of questionnaires. The fact that these are based on self-evaluation do not render the outcomes invalid, but everything evidently depends on what claims are made from the data obtained through questionnaires. I completely agree with Dörnyei (2003, 2007) about the advantages of quantitative approach in attitude and motivation research. It is ‘systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data’ (Dörnyei, 2007: 34). However, Dörnyei is aware about the limitations of quantitative research namely its limited general exploratory capacity and he therefore

recommends qualitative research in order to explore uncharted areas and trying to understand the bigger picture: 'I have also experienced again and again how much richer data we can obtain in a well-conducted and analysed qualitative study than even in a large-scale questionnaire survey' (ibid.: 47). Dörnyei (2007) points out that qualitative methods broaden the repertoire of possible interpretations and permit longitudinal examination of dynamic phenomena. Both Dörnyei (2007) and MacIntyre (2007) agree that the advantage of qualitative methodologies is the richness of the descriptions of dynamic processes in participants' own terms. They also agree on the weaknesses of qualitative research, namely, the small sample size and their idiosyncratic focus (with the danger of biased results because of the researcher's idiosyncrasies). MacIntyre (2007) reports the difficulties of biases in reporting memories and Dörnyei (2007: 41–42) flags the lack of methodological rigour, the complexity or narrowness of theories and the labour-intensiveness as other potential problems with qualitative research. None of these potential pitfalls of qualitative research deter Dörnyei and MacIntyre.

They agree on the benefits of multi-method approaches for the field of SLA to move forward. MacIntyre argues that the best methods to study the affective changes 'will be a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches' (MacIntyre, 2007: 573). He is thus in agreement with Ushioda who argued earlier that 'There is clearly scope for a more qualitative approach to the study of language learning motivation, to complement this long-standing quantitative tradition of research' (Ushioda, 2001: 95).

It thus seems that there is a gradual acknowledgement among etic-oriented, quantitative sociopsychological researchers that an emic perspective can complement traditional quantitative motivation research. Motivation is no longer viewed as stable in nature and measured by objective means; there is growing agreement that learners are a more than mere bunches of variables stripped of intentionality and individuality (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001; Leppänen and Kalaja, 2002). MacIntyre (2007) is a perfect illustration of this trend. By introducing the concept of volition, i.e. free will, he acknowledges the fact that L2 learners and users are not just puppets on strings, whose actions are rooted in the learners' linguistic, social or psychological past, present and imagined future. He points out that to understand how motivational processes affect communicative behaviour, 'one must study the moment in which they are applied' (ibid.: 569). In other words, the process of exercising volition 'provides a way to specify how motivational tendencies are enacted in the moment-to-moment choices we make, such as choosing to speak up or to remain quiet' (ibid.: 569). A growing number of quantitative SLA researchers are taking an interest in learners' intentional actions, in their unique life experiences, and in the variable effects that these have on their attitudes and motivation.

It thus appears that 'positivist', quantitative researchers may not be as fanatical about the value of numbers and statistics as some postmodernists portray them. MacIntyre, Ushioda and Dörnyei fit in a long line of applied linguists, like Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), who have argued that quantitative and qualitative approaches are not mutually exclusive as the latter does entail some degree of

categorization and quantification of data. It is thus crucial to avoid gross simplifications. Referring to SLA research, Dörnyei observes:

although there is no shortage of convincing intellectual arguments to justify paradigm incompatibility, most researchers have actually stopped short of claiming the inevitability of this conflict and, particularly in the last decade, scholars have started to look for some sort of an interface between the two research traditions. (Dörnyei, 2007: 29)

Pavlenko's claim that motivation, attitudes are causal, unidirectional and stable in sociopsychological research seems shaky. Even in his early work, Gardner insisted on the dynamic character of attitudes and motivation in a complex social context. The pyramid model of WTC shows how attitudes and motivation are linked to both enduring social factors, psychological dimensions, situational factors which may ultimately affect the decision to communicate in an L2. Motivation and attitudes are therefore both sources of input and output in the pyramid. Dörnyei's (2001a) process-oriented approach had already highlighted the fact that attitudes and motivation are highly dynamic, fluctuating over different time-frames and related to various actional/engagement contingencies. The pedagogical implications have been highlighted by Dörnyei (2002) who pointed out that, even if certain learners do not enjoy a particular language learning task, they might still try their best if they have positive attitudes towards the foreign language course (i.e. the teacher, the learning materials, fellow students . . .). On the other hand, some language tasks may be perceived by learners to be particularly motivating, and could help them maintain high levels of motivation in the learning of the foreign language. Dörnyei (2001b) has also described ways to strengthen the learner's determination in learning the foreign language and maintain the motivation of disappointed learners.

Pavlenko's criticism that the separation assumed in sociopsychological approaches between social factors and psychological factors is artificial is not one that seems to have overly worried quantitative researchers. Personality psychologists recognize that an individual's personality is formed by a combination of biological and social factors (Furnham and Heaven, 1999). Sociopsychologists seem less worried that age, gender or ethnicity may also be socially constituted. However, they do accept that motivation or language learning beliefs are constantly shaped by the social and political contexts in which the learners find themselves (MacIntyre et al, 1998).

Pavlenko's criticism about the Anglo-centrism characterizing most research in Europe and North America, thus raising the issue of generalizability of the findings, seems to have been heard by Gardner: Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner and Reyes (2004) and Gardner (2006) used the AMTB to gather data from immigrants and from foreign language learners in nine European countries to demonstrate the stability of the factor structure emerging from the data. Moreover, Yashima, Dewaele, Dörnyei and colleagues, Lasagabaster and his colleagues have analysed

attitudes and motivation patterns in non-English-speaking environments. Pavlenko also queried the idealized and decontextualized nature attributed to language learning and defended a more context-sensitive, poststructuralist approach.

The research overview showed that depending on the aim of the researchers, both decontextualized and highly contextualized investigations can produce clear and original findings. Gardner, MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Lasagabaster, Dewaele, LoCastro, Yashima all situate their research in specific sociocultural, historical and situational contexts and seek to measure their effect on the dependent variables.

These researchers see their quantitative approach as the best way to investigate individual differences: linking attitudinal and motivational measures with language proficiency, personality traits, ethnolinguistic vitality and a variety of sociobiographical measures reflecting an individual's past and present linguistic history. Since the data are purely numerical, and no time-consuming transcription of oral or written data is needed, these research designs allow very large population samples. From a statistical point of view, it means that the findings can be more easily generalized. The research is also easily replicable with different populations. If the same patterns emerge from these studies on different populations, one can argue that this pattern taps into some universal characteristic, i.e. independent of culture, language, ethnic background.

It could of course be argued that the quantification of a complex context and of intricate feelings of learners inevitably leads to a relatively pale reflection of a much richer reality. Researchers who have focused on small groups of participants or single participants (Kinging, Leppänen and Kalaja, Isabelli-Garcia, Garrett and Young) have been able to analyse the distinct experiences of individual learners in a specific social context, their shifting attitudes and motivation to study the foreign language and the resulting studies provide fine-grained sketches of dynamic learning trajectories in participants' own terms. The focus is idiosyncratic and generalization is not a concern (MacIntyre, 2007). Some researchers, like Ushioda, combine the strengths of quantitative analysis with those of qualitative analysis. This trend is likely to develop further. I have argued elsewhere that triangulation, i.e. a combination of different research methodologies, is crucial in order to answer common research questions in our field (Dewaele, 2005). Such an approach is also crucial in the search for the attitudinal and motivational factors that determine the development of the foreign language. The interaction of various psychological, sociopolitical and situational variables with unique idiosyncratic life events affecting a learner's attitudes and motivation is so complex that only a combination of approaches can start to shed some light on the process. Such an emic perspective on the role of affect in foreign language learning can provide an excellent complement to quantitative empirical analysis (Dewaele, 2005, 2007c, 2008). Researchers like Kinginger (2008) and Pavlenko (2007) who adopt a very 'emic' perspective do not consider participants as passive objects, or 'bunches of variables' dreamt up by positivists, but as active subjects with rich life histories, capable of meta-linguistic insights on their attitudes and motivation, and on the possible link with ultimate success or lack of it.

8.7 Conclusion

An analysis of Pavlenko's (2002) theoretical and methodological objections to quantitative sociopsychological approaches has shown that not all of the criticism was founded, insofar as the 'positivists' do pay attention to the social context in their models. However, it could be argued that social psychologists reduce an infinitely rich social context to a series of dimensions. I have argued that in some cases a decontextualized approach can actually produce better results that lend themselves to generalization. Pavlenko's suggestions for alternative ways to consider perception, attitudes and motivation in foreign language contexts have been taken up by a number of researchers such as Kinginger (2008), Kinginger and Blattner (2008) and Koven (2007), including those working in the quantitative traditions.

One of the most interesting patterns to emerge from the overview of the work on attitudes, perception and motivation is the relative blurring of etic and emic approaches and a growing awareness among leading researchers from different research traditions that triangulation, i.e. a combination of research methodologies, may help the field forward.

Dörnyei (2007) emphasizes the benefits of more qualitative approaches and the development of some sort of an interface between research traditions; Kinginger (2008) includes a quantitative element to her research and her literature review shows an awareness of research carried out in the quantitative tradition. That is not to say that studies should obligatorily be based on mixed-methods design. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) pointed out that in the case of mixed-methods approaches the sum is not always greater than its parts. Dörnyei (2007: 46) goes even further, wondering whether more harm than good can be done when researchers are not adequately trained in qualitative and quantitative methods. Also, Pavlenko's (2002: 297) call that motivation should be recast as investment to allow researchers to examine the shaping and reshaping of individual investments in particular social contexts seems to resonate with Dörnyei's concept of the learner's image of an ideal self as the main cause to continued effort and investment in the learning process. It would be naïve to think that all epistemological and methodological differences can be overcome. And, indeed, nobody suggests that this is necessary. An encouraging trend in this area of research is the growing agreement among researchers that cross-fertilization is desirable, and that different approaches, like so many flowers, 'bloom best when surrounded by other flowers in the garden of theory and practice, giving rise to present and future debates and controversies' (Pavlenko, 2002: 299).

Note

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CHAPTER

9

Politics, Policies and Political Action in Foreign Language Education

Michael Byram

9.1 Introduction

Some 25 years ago, when I started training future teachers of foreign languages (French, German and Spanish) in an English university, I visited a brand new school to discuss the possibility of placing a student there for teaching practice. The school was not yet open but the new headteacher had been appointed. Our conversation was brief, since he told me that foreign languages would not be taught in ‘my school’.

This tells us several interesting things, specifically about schools and the curriculum in England but also more generally about the place of foreign languages in compulsory education in any country. First of all, it may be of only local interest that, until the 1990s, there was no national curriculum in English schools and that the headteacher had the power to decide what was to be taught in ‘my school’. It is, however, symptomatic for all education systems that there is a tension between the wishes of those – teachers, pupils, parents – who live and work in a school and the requirements of governments as set out in national curricula. In the view of politicians of the 1970s, worried about economic crises created by ‘the oil shock’, it became obvious that schools needed to prepare young people for a new globalized competitive economy and they could not afford to leave everything in the hands of teachers. British politicians were not alone in this; the importance of ‘human capital’ for the post-industrial economy was evident throughout the developed, industrialized world. In England, by the 1990s, what was to be taught in schools was determined by a national curriculum and no headteacher would have been able to say foreign languages would not be taught in ‘his’ school and the sense of ownership and power had much diminished.

In other countries, national curricula of different kinds were already well established 25 years ago and there would be no questioning the presence of foreign languages. On the other hand, there might have been very little reasoned justification for their presence either. The headteacher I met had at least thought carefully and made a rational decision, and the second point raised by this anecdote is that the reasons for including foreign languages in a curriculum were until recently seldom articulated. The headteacher in question argued that foreign languages would be of no use to his pupils, that they would not be able to obtain a better job,

that if they travelled abroad, their English would suffice, and that there was no interest in foreign language learning in the area and among his future pupils. (In fact I later learned that as a result of parental and local political pressure, the decision was not implemented.)

It is often said that the situation for foreign language teaching in Britain and other anglophone countries is different from everywhere else because of the special position of English as a/the world language but the question about why foreign languages are taught as part of compulsory general education in any country is the starting point for this chapter. It takes us straight into the analysis of curricula, which are usually *national* curricula, and into analysis of the potential effects of national curricula on learners and on what teachers of foreign languages do in their classrooms.

9.2 'Foreign Languages' in a 'National' Curriculum

It is difficult to know what people responsible for curricula in previous centuries thought about the reasons for teaching foreign languages. Histories of language teaching tend to focus on the evolution of teaching methods and views about the nature of language. Only in the last half century have there been some analyses of the politics and purposes of language teaching (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Holliday, 2005) and these have argued, particularly with respect to the teaching of English, that language teaching policy may be the effect of neo-colonialism and cultural politics.

Insights into the reasons for introducing foreign languages into schools before the late twentieth century are less easy to acquire. The following statement from a national inquiry in 1918 in Britain reveals one rationale:

The war has made this people conscious of its ignorance of foreign countries and their peoples. . . . The masses and the classes alike were ignorant to the point of public danger. Ignorance of the mental attitude and aspirations of the German people may not have been the cause of the war; it certainly prevented due preparation and hampered our efforts after the war had begun; it still darkens our counsels. Similar ignorance of France, greater ignorance of Italy, abysmal ignorance of Russia, have impeded the effective prosecution of the war, and will impede friendly and co-operative action after the war is over. . . . In this field Modern Studies are not a mere source of profit, not only a means of obtaining knowledge, nor an instrument of culture; they are a national necessity. (Leathes Report, 1918: 32)

The proposal was to replace language teaching which focused only on language per se with 'Modern Studies' which would have a broader educational remit with the three possible purposes enumerated in the last sentence. These are coherent with a view of compulsory education as crucial to the defence and strengthening of the nation state, and to the development of international cooperation, but this

needs to be put into the wider context of the teaching of 'national' languages and their function in creating and maintaining nation states, and to understand this we need to consider first the evolution of nationalism.

For Gellner the dominance of nationalism is closely linked to the rise of industrialization in European societies. Industrialization required new job specifications, not the inherited occupations within the family or the limited world of village community. Industrialization also required mobility, both geographical and in terms of ability to change jobs. People could no longer educate their children themselves; there had to be state education and in particular the possibility of communication among strangers:

a society has emerged based on a high-powered technology and the expectancy of sustained growth, which requires both a mobile division of labour, and sustained, frequent and precise communication between strangers involving a sharing of explicit meaning, transmitted in a standard idiom and in writing when required. For a number of converging reasons, this society must be exo-educational: each individual is trained by specialists, not just by his own local group, if indeed he has one. (Gellner, 1983: 34)

Despite globalization and talk of post-industrial societies, Gellner was arguing two decades ago that nationalism is rooted in industrialization and will continue to be a force in the industrialized society we inhabit; it is, he says, difficult to envisage a homogeneous global culture in reality despite what thought-experiments might suggest (Gellner, 1983: 118). In this situation, the state needs to control education – needs to have 'the monopoly of legitimate education' – in order to ensure the continuing growth which is a fundamental characteristic of industrialization. Hobsbawm takes this point further by arguing that it is through secondary education that social mobility is made possible; primary education provides for the minimal skills needed in industrial work, but secondary education is the gateway to new positions in society, in particular through some form of higher education, and often the first generation become teachers:

The crucial moment in the creation of language as a potential asset is not its admission as a medium of primary education (though this automatically creates a large body of primary teachers and language indoctrinators) but its admission as a medium of secondary education, . . . for it is this which . . . linked social mobility to the vernacular, and in turn to linguistic nationalism. (Hobsbawm, 1992: 118)

Hobsbawm argues that it is the very mention of language and the use of the census as a means of discovering which languages are spoken where within a state, which leads to an awareness of the significance of language as a defining characteristic and marker of nationality, and to the emergence of linguistic nationalism and the emotional investment in language which became so familiar throughout the twentieth century.

If schools and curricula are thus expected to create through 'national' language teaching a sense of belonging to a national group, however loosely defined, then the argument of the Leathes Report for knowing about one's (national) friends and enemies through foreign language teaching and learning is simply another facet of the relationship of schools to the nation state.

Another contextual factor which needs to be taken into consideration is related to the Leathes Report's reference to language learning – 'modern studies' – as 'a source of profit' and 'a means of obtaining knowledge'. In a post-industrial society and a 'knowledge economy', societies must 'invest in people', to cite a scheme started in Britain in the 1980s. Human beings are the source of economic development and society's wealth is encapsulated in the notion of 'human capital' and therefore the place to invest in is the education system. Traces of this way of thinking can be found in education policy documents, as politicians introduced the terminology and the ideology into their rationales for changing and developing education systems. It began in the 1970s, as we said above, and is encapsulated in Tony Blair's claim when British Prime Minister that 'Education is our best economic policy' (DfEE, 1998)

The use of schooling to create a national language and identification with the state are features common to all education systems, whereas a third contextual factor is not necessarily present everywhere. This is the use of schooling as a means of creating equality, or at least equality of opportunity, and is an idea more evident in some countries than others. In Europe it is a common theme. The debates about comprehensive schools in Britain and Germany, for example, have gone on since the 1960s. Both societies were, and are, divided by social class, and both had secondary school systems which reflected and reinforced this. The reproduction of societal structures by education systems was theorized by Bourdieu in the 1960s and later (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970) but experienced earlier, and in Britain attacked by Halsey and other sociologists (1980). This was an international phenomenon perhaps most evident in Germany where the nineteenth-century elitist education system had been revived after the end of World War 2. It was captured by a report from the OECD in 1972, with wonderful understatement:

Inequality of opportunity is manifested not only with respect to social class origin but also with respect to sex, place of residence, and religion. Girls, on average, get less education and receive it in less prestigious types of secondary schools; rural children are comparatively disadvantaged in comparison with school services offered to town children. In the past, too, educational provision in Catholic rural areas was underdeveloped, as compared to Protestant areas. Though important steps have been taken to remedy this, there is still some truth in the dictum that the educational chances of a daughter from a poor Catholic peasant household are not very splendid. (OECD, 1972: 59)

A new development of this third factor has emerged as countries in the industrial and post-industrial world have seen a drop in their birth-rate and a need for

immigration to supplement the labour force. Their populations have become ever more heterogeneous and the question of equality more complex. In this the 'old countries' in Europe (and Japan as an idiosyncratic development), are following the 'immigration countries' such as the USA and Australia, with the same need to offer the children of these new populations equality or at least equality of opportunity. It is coloured by the need to ensure, as a precondition of social mobility, that these children feel 'included'. So 'equality' and 'inclusion' are linked in people's minds, and one might expect that the first purpose of education, to socialize young people of indigenous population into the national society would also make the children of immigration feel included and give them equality. But this is far from true because the conditions are different. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century mode of creating attachment to the state was building on a potential, a sense of belonging together already present in the population (Hobsbawm, 1992). This is not evident in a twenty-first-century multicultural society, and the tension between 'national' and 'multicultural' education is a consequence which is still being resolved.

This is then the broader perspective within which we must consider foreign languages education: we must ask how it contributes to the purposes of education.

From the standpoint of the state and its education authorities, foreign language education has a rather ambiguous position. In times of crisis and conflict between states, language teaching is part of national strategy. The most recent example has been the renewed emphasis on the teaching of Arabic in the USA, due to its involvement in Iraq and elsewhere. On the other hand, languages are often seen as crucial to economic achievement, as is the case in Japan and in many other trading countries in the contemporary world. In China, entering into the World Trade Organisation, the preparation for the Olympic Games in 2008 and the general opening up to capitalism and interaction with Western countries, caused a boom in language learning, encouraged by government.

It is also important to look at the issues from the viewpoint of the individual learner. Foreign languages are often presented to learners from an instrumental viewpoint: they will be able to use the languages for work or leisure, to find work in another country or to travel in the real or virtual world. Teachers also say that language learning 'broadens the horizons', although learners do not usually understand this until afterwards. However, even the instrumental value of language learning is not always obvious to learners – with the exception of English – or to some teachers, as we saw from my opening anecdote.

The position of English as a world language means there is a more obvious relationship of language learning to the economic purpose of education. Education authorities readily see the importance of investing in the teaching of English for economic benefit, as do learners, and in the case of young learners, their parents. The blossoming of private schools of English, the investment by education authorities in innovative teaching methods such as bilingual education, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) or content-based instruction, the introduction

of English at ever earlier stages of education, are all indicators of the conviction that language learning leads to economic benefit. Despite my anecdote, there are signs that this is not confined to English, since even in Britain and the USA, the same methods are appearing, if at a slower pace and pursued by a smaller proportion of people, be they education authorities or parents. Both believe that learning a foreign language – with increasing interest in Asian languages – is bound to be beneficial.

On the other hand, the relationship of foreign language learning to socialization into the nation state and affective attachment to it is likely to be much less obvious to learners and their parents. Yet it brings out the specific nature of foreign language education particularly strongly. Hobsbawm argues that populations at the end of the nineteenth century began to identify with the state and to acquire democratic rights in their relationship with the state. He says that the ‘identification of nation with language’ was crucial in this, not for reasons of communication but as symbolism:

Languages become more conscious exercises in social engineering in proportion as their symbolic significance prevails over their actual use, as witness the various movements to ‘indigenize’ or make more truly ‘national’ their vocabulary, of which the struggle of French governments against ‘franglais’ is the best known recent example. (1990: 112)

Nationalism tends to be inward-looking and exclusive about language. If, since 1945, nation-states have become more open and international, it is as a result of globalization – the creation of an economic system, a ‘world marketplace’, where national boundaries are irrelevant – and of internationalization – the presence in all countries of awareness of and influence from many other cultures. Internationalization is often caused by globalization, and confused with it. Education policies are formulated as responses to globalization and usually suggest an increase in foreign language learning as the best way to operationalize the policy. When this happens, it is part of the investment in human capital for economic gain, rather than a response to internationalization and the benefits of external cultural enrichment.

In order to reap the benefits, internationalization policy needs to counterbalance the socialization into national identity which underpins national education and national curricula, and foreign language teaching has the potential to play a significant role here. However in order for that potential to be realized, language learning has to be more than the acquisition of linguistic competence. Foreign language education has the potential to make a major contribution if it offers learners experience of ‘tertiary socialization’ (Byram, 1989; Doyé, 2008), a concept invented to emphasize the ways in which learning a foreign language can take learners beyond a focus on their own society, into experience of otherness, or other cultural and belief values and behaviours. That experience can and should give them a better purchase on their previous culturally determined assumptions.

Tertiary socialization is, as the term implies, a step beyond the primary and secondary socialization processes through which children become part of their society and acquire membership of the specific social groups within it (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Doyé describes the specific cognitive, moral and behavioural transformations involved:

Living in a multicultural world necessitates the modification of the patterns of thinking, valuing and acting that were considered appropriate for life in monocultural societies and the acquisition of new patterns. The latter is the easier part of the two. The former is by far more difficult as it requires rethinking and unlearning of familiar patterns acquired in primary and secondary socialisation. And the longer this monocultural socialisation has lasted and the more intense and exclusive it was, the more demanding is the task of tertiary socialisation. (Doyé, 2008: 29)

In the cognitive, moral and behavioural changes of tertiary socialization, there is a process of reassessment of assumptions and conventions stimulated by juxtaposition and comparison of familiar experience and concepts with those of other cultures and societies. The purpose is not to replace the familiar with the new, nor to encourage identification with another culture, but to de-familiarize and de-centre, so that questions can be raised about one's own culturally determined assumptions and about the society in which one lives.

9.3 Foreign Language Policies – Two Case Studies

I have thus far argued that foreign language education is potentially an integral part of the purposes of a general education, and brings to it a specific contribution, but is this recognized amongst those responsible for education systems? Curriculum theorists and philosophers on education have tended to ignore foreign language education. What about policy makers? They certainly pay attention to the contribution which foreign language education can make to the economic purpose of education systems, increasingly as globalization dominates their thinking about economic development at national level. Do they also recognize the importance of language learning and internationalization in its strong form, as encapsulated in the notion of tertiary socialization? They certainly readily use the word 'internationalization' but do they recognize the distinction from globalization and the relationship to the socialization purpose of education? Do they consider the question of equality of opportunity and social inclusion?

I have chosen the policies of two countries to explore these questions. France and Japan are countries with a strong national identity where the national language has a significant symbolic role, but they differ in their response to globalization and the dominance of English as a world language. They differ also in that France is part of the European Union, the first supra-national polity, and this has significance for education as socialization and matters of identity as we shall see

below. Japan on the other hand remains a strongly independent nation-state with a highly developed sense of national identity and uniqueness.

In Japan, the strategic plan of 2002 aims to cultivate 'Japanese with English abilities', and links language teaching and learning only to the economic purpose of education. It uses the vocabulary of human capital investment, and the plan is presented as part of a larger 'strategy to enhance human potential'. The motivation is 'the progress of globalization' and 'skills in English' are immediately associated with this. The spread of English as an international lingua franca is not related to internationalization in education:

With the progress of globalisation in the economy and in society, it is essential that our children acquire communication skills in English, which has become a common international language, in order for living [*sic*] in the 21st century. This has become an extremely important issue both in terms of the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation. (<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/news/2002/07/020901.htm> - 2002)

Investment in human capital is important for both individual and national economic gain.

At upper secondary level, there are three aims for language teaching:

To develop students' practical communication abilities such as understanding information and the speaker's or writer's intentions, and expressing their own ideas, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages.

'Communication' is understood as exchanging 'information, ideas, etc.' and is clearly influenced by communicative language teaching. The attitudinal dimension is also focused on communication, whereas in many other countries the point is to encourage positive attitudes towards people of other countries rather than communication *per se*. The reference to a deepening understanding of language and culture remains unclear but what is expected of teachers is that they should propose topics which interest learners and are related to 'the daily lives, manners and customs, stories, geography, history etc. of Japanese people and the peoples of the world, focusing on countries that use the foreign languages'. Here is the first indication of an interest in internationalization, but it cannot be without significance that the foreign language lessons should be used to deal first with Japanese people and then other cultures. International understanding is also defined in these terms. Teachers are expected to treat:

Materials that are useful in deepening international understanding from a broad perspective, heightening students' awareness of being Japanese citizens living in a global community, and cultivating a spirit of international cooperation.

The final phrase is the only one which suggests a richer view of internationalization, but is not explained or expanded.

Similarly, there is very little concern with such matters in the French education system. Despite the fact that it is recognized that English is spoken as first language in anglophone countries and as second language 'in many countries of the world', the focus quickly moves to a variety of English widely used in Britain. There is only passing reference to an international context or to the concept of internationalization. Just one comment in the final sentence links language learning with the notion of social inclusion and its importance in a multicultural society:

As the learning of a foreign language is the knowledge of one or more other cultures, it gives access to other customs, other ways of thinking, other values. To learn a foreign language is to learn to respect the other in his/her difference, it is to acquire the sense of the relative, and the spirit of tolerance, values which are all the more necessary today as the school community is tending to become a multicultural community. (My translation here and below) (www.cndp.fr/archivage Ministère de la jeunesse, de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche. Les langues vivantes au college. – 2005)

Other comments refer to the importance of developing tolerance in young people as future citizens:

It appears to be more than ever necessary that foreign languages contribute to developing in children, that is in future citizens, the sense of the relative and of tolerance. This is the reason why this new programme puts significant emphasis on cultural contents.

Nonetheless the principal aim of language teaching should be to inculcate the ability to communicate, that knowledge of other cultures is subservient to this, even where there is a hint that language learning also requires the ability to decentre:

To speak a foreign language means to be able sometimes to put oneself in someone else's position, think like them, and imagine the world of the other. Lack of knowledge of cultural references can impede communication.

Despite the emphasis on learners being able to recognize, name, describe and relate knowledge of other countries to their own culture, communication is the priority. The question of attitudes and moral development is referred to only in the phrase 'the sense of the relative and of tolerance', but there is no connection with psychological and moral development and even the emphasis on acquisition of knowledge does not present this as an enlargement of or challenge to existing cognitive structures.

Only at the final stage of compulsory education is there a statement that learners should be encouraged to decentre in order to contribute, in undefined ways, to education for citizenship but it is not clear whether this means French or international citizenship:

Furthermore, whenever possible, one should begin to initiate pupils into establishing a sense of distance when reading any document, thus contributing to their education for citizenship.

The documents from these two countries make very little allusion to equality of opportunity and inclusion. The French documents refer briefly to the question of inclusion of diverse groups in a multicultural society, but in Japan there is more emphasis on the economic purpose of education, on investment in human capital. This may be because in contrast to France, English in Japan is presented as an international language and linked with the concept of globalization.

In neither country is there more than a cursory and superficial consideration of how language learning can be crucial in the internationalization of education. There is continuous emphasis on communication with people of other countries, and in the French documents in particular, communication is properly defined as more than exchanging information and bridging information gaps. However, the concept of decentring – ‘establishing a sense of distance’ in the extract above – is linked only with the improvement this will bring in communication, not with taking another, critical and liberating perspective. The potential for tertiary socialization – irrespective of use of this or other terminology – is not envisaged in any fully developed sense.

9.4 Language Learning and Social Identities

Socialization and identification is the process through which people gain their sense of belonging to various social groups, and thus their various social identities. Language is crucial and Berger and Luckmann in their classic discussion of socialization have an intriguing discussion of second language learning which raises the issue of identification through language:

One learns a second language by building on the ‘taken-for-granted’ reality of one’s mother tongue. For a long time, one continually retranslates into their original language whatever elements of the new language one is acquiring. Only in this way can the new language have any reality. As this reality becomes established in its own right, it slowly becomes possible to forego translation. One becomes capable of ‘thinking in’ the new language. Nevertheless, it is rare that a language learned in later life attains the inevitability of the first language learned in childhood. Hence derives, of course, the affective quality of the ‘mother tongue’. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 163)

There is here a pre-supposition concerning the relationship of language and social reality in this vision of socialization which needs some thought. Searle argues that 'institutional reality' is constituted by language. There are also language-independent facts but those which are language-dependent 'must be communicable from one person to another. . . . Even in simple cases of institutional facts, this communicability requires a means of public communication, a language' (Searle, 1995: 77). It is this 'public communication' function which underpins the role of a shared language in the process of socialization. It is in the shared language that there is a shared reality. Learning another language brings with it the potential to experience another reality. It also has the potential, not mentioned by Berger and Luckmann, to challenge what is taken for granted, even if there remains a strong emotional tie to the world embodied in the 'mother tongue'. Foreign language teachers can promote through their pedagogical methods a conscious processing of the differences between languages and the taken-for-granted realities they embody.

This is where the concept of 'tertiary socialization' has a particular didactical, prescriptive function rather than being descriptive of social-psychological development as the concepts of primary and secondary socialization are. It suggests purposes and objectives for education; 'tertiary socialization' embodies the idea that teachers and others can and should help learners to understand new concepts (beliefs, values and behaviours) through the acquisition of a new language, new concepts which, being juxtaposed with those of the learners' other language(s), challenge the taken-for-granted nature of their existing concepts. Risager (2003: 494–495) has rightly pointed out that all three stages of socialization overlap and has criticized our focus on the national paradigm, the reference to the concepts acquired by others in socialization into their national culture, saying that it is enough to describe the processes in terms of primary and secondary socialization. This misses, however, the point that tertiary socialization has a prescriptive purpose and is intended to guide teachers in their course and objectives planning.

Tertiary socialization could then lead to the development of social identities which are not constrained by the learners' dominant language(s). People may acquire 'international' identities, a sense of belonging to one or more transnational social groups. Of course this is not the responsibility of language educators alone, and in some countries policies to internationalize the whole curriculum of compulsory schooling have been created. The development of an international identity promoted through tertiary socialization and an international curriculum can thus be posited as a desirable outcome from education in a period of globalization/internationalization. However, it is quite possible that an international identity will be in some respects in contrast and tension with a national identity as a consequence of the challenge to the taken-for-granted values which underpin national identity.

In order to see the potential of language education in the development of international identities, we can consider those learners who are among the most advanced. Students of foreign languages at university have often been learning their language for 10 years or more. They are 'language people' (Evans, 1988) who

are dedicated to the language and to the literature and culture associated with it. In some countries, in addition, they spend a long period in a country where the language is spoken with the intention of improving their linguistic competence and then they usually discover that other learning experiences become more important to them as they become interested in the way of life in which they participate. In such cases – which are common in the European traditions of university language study – the effects are all the stronger but may not be found in situations where study abroad is less easily available. It is evident however that study abroad is becoming a global phenomenon (Welch, *in press*) and the longer term effects remain to be seen.

Participation in a culture as a means of learning and understanding it, was first developed systematically by anthropologist ethnographers, but participation is tempered by observation and analysis, and the ethnographer who is a ‘participant observer’ usually maintains a metaphorical distance. To ‘go native’ is not the aim of ethnographers. Language people, on the other hand, do sometimes see this as the most desirable fulfilment of their study of another language, and this is encouraged by the tradition of attempting to imitate the native speaker in linguistic competence. It is a short step to imitating the native speaker in their identity too.

If this were to happen, it would not be an example of tertiary socialization but of what Berger and Luckmann call alternation, i.e. a rejection of a previous identity and the socialization out of which it evolved, and the acquisition of a new identity and the beliefs, values and behaviours it embodies. They suggest that this is in fact rare and akin to religious conversion (1966: 176–177). It is a moot point whether alternation should be the aim of language teaching, since it implies a rejection of national identity, and that would for many people not be desirable. It is a debatable issue but not one which need hold us up here, for in practice it is very unlikely to happen in the ‘classic’ situation of a foreign language being taught as a subject for a few hours per week, although there is no empirical research which investigates this question. On the other hand, it might be expected that being in an immersion class, with half or more of the school day being experienced in a foreign language, could have an effect on identity, but here again there is little research. Downes (2001) investigated whether such experience of English immersion for Japanese children would weaken their sense of being Japanese – a fear that Japanese parents articulated – and found on the contrary that:

the immersion students have a stronger attraction towards Western culture, a more positive attitude towards English, a stronger identity with Japan, and more awareness of Japanese culture. A possible implication here is that the immersion experience not only promotes positive attitudes towards another culture but also seems to foster a heightened sense of identity towards the child’s own culture. (Downes, 2001: 12)

Research has otherwise focused on learners who are resident in a country where the language is spoken and particularly on those who have a strong desire to ‘invest’ (Norton, 2000) in language learning (Armour, 2001; DeKorne et al., 2007).

Research on language learners who spend a period of residence in a country where their language is spoken brings a new dimension. In the following example, Lynn is a 'language person' who has learnt French for some 10 years, from the age of 11. She has just spent a year living in France and is speaking about the experience a couple of months after returning to England. She shows signs of wishing to 'convert' to a French identity, but also believes this is not possible because one has to be 'born' French. She has a theory of ethnic and national identity and socialization which arises from her experience. She has a notion of using physical appearance to indicate ethnicity – choice of hair style and of dress – and it has the desired effect. Her theory coincides with academic research which emphasizes the significance of specific boundary markers (Barth, 1969) as indicators of ethnic identity. She also, however, shows signs of developing an international identity as a consequence of her tertiary socialization, an identity she calls 'European':

I would now say – I'm not sure now, but when I came back (i.e. from France some weeks earlier) – I would say I was European rather than English. . . . I would love to be French, but you can't. I can never be French because you have to be born French. I could be a European. I couldn't be French though. There's no way you can become French, but you'll never be French unless you're actually born French. . . . I've completely changed appearance, physical appearance. I've grown my hair. I used to have really short permed hair, very very curly, very very short. And I've grown it in the idea of becoming chic and French-like. I've changed my style of dressing, becoming much more conscious of what I'm wearing rather than just putting something on in the morning. But that's all obviously an influence of being in France. Because they do have this idea, you know, they are very conscious of what they are wearing and how they look. So I mean I have changed physically an awful lot and people didn't recognize me when I came back. People just walked straight past.

So, at best, Lynn believes she can 'pretend' to be French in terms of appearance but she cannot 'become French', or 'pass' from one ethnic group to another even though she would like to do so since she sees 'the French' as a superior group and would gain in self-esteem as a consequence (Tajfel, 1981). On the other hand, she has an as yet undeveloped concept of being European, which seems to have a different meaning, not comparable or in competition with being French or English, and this is an indication of a new phenomenon, of creating an alternative, overarching identity which includes some of the characteristics of being French and yet is neither French nor English.

This takes us back to the analysis of policies because what we have here is a realization of what is envisaged in the language education policy of the European Union evident in the EU 'White Paper' on education published in the mid-1990s:

Multilingualism is part and parcel of both European identity/citizenship and the learning society. (European Commission, 1995: 67)

So the notion of proficiency in languages is linked to and implicitly seen as in a causal relationship with a sense of being European, with European identity, which in turn seems to be synonymous with citizenship. The subsequent recommendation for practice is that European citizens should speak their mother tongue(s) plus two other languages. This seems to imply that a knowledge of three or more languages – perhaps to different degrees and in different ways – will create a sense of European identity and citizenship, and a potential for participation and integration into an international/European society and polity. A similar statement was made in 2003:

Knowledge of language is one of the basic skills which each citizen needs to acquire in order to take part effectively in the European knowledge society and therefore facilitates both integration into society and social cohesion; a thorough knowledge of one's mother tongue(s) can facilitate the learning of other languages. (Council Resolution of 14 February 2002, Official Journal C 050, 23.02.2002)

The EU policy on language education thus has three features:

- a relationship between national language/mother tongue learning and foreign language learning;
- an assumption of a causal relationship between language learning and identity/citizenship;
- and a conditional relationship between language learning and participation in European society.

Learning several languages is at least a pre-condition and perhaps a causal factor in the evolution of citizenship in the sense of being an elector, in an affective bond with an international society, and in an action orientation involving participation in the economic, political and cultural life of the society.

In fine, the EU offers an example of language education policy which reaches beyond the national level of education even though the realization of the policy in curricula is yet to evolve. It also brings us to the third section of this chapter which deals with language teaching and education for citizenship.

9.5 Foreign Language Education and Citizenship Education

Much of the thinking about education for citizenship is focused upon the nation-state. For example in the English national curriculum, we see three related purposes (quoted from the website of the ministry responsible for education in England and Wales):

1. Social and moral responsibility: Learning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour.

2. Community involvement: Becoming involved in the life of neighbourhood and communities, including learning through *community involvement* and *service* to the community.
3. Political literacy: Learning about the institutions, problems and practices of our democracy . . . how to *make themselves effective* in the life of the nation – *a concept wider than political knowledge alone*. (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship/section.cfm?sectionId=3&hierarchy=1.3> 2006)

The reference to ‘our democracy’ and ‘the nation’ which Billig (1995) would refer to as ‘banal nationalism’, reveals the unquestioned assumption that citizenship is synonymous with national identity and this kind of thinking corresponds to Anderson’s (1991) notion of the nation as an imagined community in which ‘print-language’ and the power of newspapers and books are crucial to a sense of community. A nation-state is thus *inter alia* a community of communication among citizens who need a shared language, and usually this shared language is what is designated as the national language. (I am simplifying here of course as there are many states which have more than one language, but I think the argument holds *mutatis mutandis*). This means that linguistic identity, national identity and citizenship are closely connected through a formal, institutionalized ‘community of communication’, which might be better designated as a ‘society of communication’ – using the *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* distinction (Tönnies, 1887/1963) – in which education and national curricula play a key role.

There are also other levels of community within a nation-state which are not necessarily formalized, and tend to have the characteristics of a *Gemeinschaft*. The organizations and institutions of ‘civil society’ have differing degrees of formality, and these communities of communication can challenge the official discourses of the state (Kennedy and Fairbrother, 2004: 296). Nonetheless, such discourses are likely to be conducted through the same national, officially recognized language, relying on a competence which is developed above all through schooling, and is seen as a signifier of adherence to the nation-state and to the norms it demands of its citizens. The right of the nation-state to expect linguistic competence and linguistic identity goes largely unchallenged.

The significance of communication and interaction becomes all the more evident as the nature of politics changes. For Habermas, the model which should replace out-dated concepts of ‘the classic republican idea of the self-conscious political integration of a community of free and equal persons’, is a model dependent on communication flows:

a model of deliberative democracy, that no longer hinges on the assumption of macro-subjects like the ‘people’ or ‘the’ community but on anonymously inter-linked discourses or flows of information. (Habermas, 1994: 32)

This applies to the evolution of the nation-state, but all the more to the evolution of democratic processes in transnational contexts. Communication flows and the

‘informal networks of public communication’ at a transnational level pre-suppose favourable conditions for mutual understanding, and Risager has demonstrated how such communication flows need to be taken into consideration in foreign language pedagogy (Risager, 2006).

The importance of this issue is evident from the evolution of transnational civil society. Some people hope that transnational civil society will be a force for democracy limiting the power of organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund. The exact nature of transnational civil society and of a democratization of global governance is not yet clear, but it can be argued that the present legitimization of global institutions based on the notion that experts can deliberate and come to a representative consensus is inadequate. It should be replaced by debate in a public sphere, where a public is understood as ‘a collectivity of persons connected by processes of communication over particular aspects of social and political life’ (Nanz and Steffek, 2004: 8). Nanz and Steffek argue that ‘organized civil society has a high potential to act as a “transmission belt” between deliberative processes within international organizations and emerging transnational public spheres’ (ibid.: 10).

This may happen first in the political space created by the European Union, where we can see nation-states gradually giving up some of their power and adopting a more international, or at least European, perspective. There is encouragement for other languages to be given a status as part of the creation of identification with a community, as we saw above in the policy statements, and it is not expected that people should identify with one or more languages and be ‘native speakers’. The success of a European imagined society and community of communication pre-supposes plurilingual competence, so that discourses at formal level and in civil society can be extended beyond the national frontiers, to European level. The association of native speaker competence with identification with a polity is challenged, and replaced by plurilingual competence.

Models of citizenship education do not take this sufficiently into account. The focus is on the national, as pointed out from the English example. On the other hand foreign language education even where it pursues both linguistic and intercultural competence (Byram, 1997), does not pay enough attention to the social involvement and social action which citizenship education promotes, as exemplified again in the English document’s reference to ‘community involvement and service to the community’. Analysis of citizenship education theory reveals this emphasis on activity and action, for example in the work of German theorists Gagel and Himmelmann, and in the group on citizenship education at the Council of Europe.

Gagel (2000) defines two dimensions to *politischer Unterricht* (political teaching and learning): first, the social science education dimension, with a focus on epistemology and a cognitive orientation leading to the acquisition of knowledge which has practical significance for daily life. Second the political education dimension with a narrower focus on behaviour and an evaluative orientation in which it is intended to raise awareness of and transmit the characteristics of

‘correct’ behaviour in public political life. He identifies three aims for political education in this sense:

Eigenes politisches Handeln als wünschenswert ansehen lernen.

Demokratische Handlungsformen als Werte anerkennen lernen.

Interesse für öffentliche Aufgaben gewinnen (Gagel, 2000: 22–23)

[Learning to consider personal involvement in political action as desirable;

Learning to recognize democratic forms of action (and only democratic forms) as values; these can be called democratic ‘virtues’;

Acquiring interest in public affairs, being prepared to be interested in political resolutions of social problems. – my translation]

As Himmelmann says (2003), these three elements of *politische Bildung* are also to be found in documents written for the Council of Europe (e.g. Audigier, 1998) and it is evident from writers such as Gagel, Himmelmann and Audigier, that democracy and education for democratic citizenship are of unquestioned value. The only question is how to ensure that people understand and use their opportunities to behave democratically in public life not only nationally but also in trans-national contexts. Despite this assumption, we must nonetheless remember the litmus test of confrontation with other concepts of governance, including the soft democracy of a country such as Singapore.

There are three elements of *politische Bildung*: cognitive, evaluative and behavioural, which can also be formulated as epistemological, affective/moral and active orientations. Of these three, Himmelmann (2003) prioritizes ‘affective/moral attitudes’ because without a will or disposition to achieve common purposes, there can be no acquisition of knowledge or active engagement in democratic processes. This can also be argued with respect to intercultural competence as will be shown below.

Himmelmann defines ‘standards’ or agreed outcomes for political education, and derives from Audigier’s (1998) paper for the Council of Europe the following list of affective/moral attitudes:

1. recognition of the principles of universality, interdependence and indivisibility of basic rights and freedoms
2. respect for the value, the dignity and the freedom of every individual person
3. acceptance of the rule of law, search for justice, recognition of equality and equal treatment in a world full of differences
4. recognition of the importance of peace, absence of violence, and the participatory and constructive resolution of social conflicts and problems
5. trust in democratic principles, institutions and modes of action and valorization of participatory citizenship

6. recognition of pluralism in life and in society, respect for foreign cultures and their contribution to human development
7. valorization of mutuality, co-operation, trust and solidarity and the struggle against racism, prejudices and discrimination
8. taking action in favour of the principles of sustainable development as a balance between societal and economic growth and the protection of the environment.

Attitudes, or commitments, as he also calls them, have to have an object towards which they are directed. The list reveals the principles and values which Himmelmann, and others, consider to be fundamental and are some of the desirable outcomes from political education in terms of attitudes and capacities/skills. They derive from what Gagel calls the narrower sense of political education, and are in turn complemented by the knowledge content derived from social sciences. Himmelmann lists content under four headings:

- life-world and creation of social relationships (democracy as a form of life)
- society, economy and law (democracy as a form of society)
- democracy as political order (democracy as form of governance)
- globalization, international relations and organizations (democracy as a global project).

This is a list put together pragmatically, he says, from a wide range of literature on political education, curricula guidelines and textbooks. It therefore seems to represent a common ground of consensus.

As Himmelmann points out, *politische Bildung* takes place, in Germany, in many parts of the curriculum and under many labels and guises but there is no mention of language education, neither national nor foreign language education. It is, I suppose, assumed that, wherever it is in the curriculum, it will be conducted in German as the national language, the language of citizenship and of the 'society of communication', irrespective of whether it is the first language of the pupils involved. And yet the pursuit of 'democracy as a global project' would require linguistic competences among people of different national languages when they interact in a transnational civil society where democracy can be realized. This is one point of contact between foreign language teaching and education for citizenship.

Another is the pursuit of comparable competences. In foreign language teaching which takes seriously the development of intercultural competence, there are many points of contact which language teachers would recognize in Himmelmann's list of attitudes above. Here I will focus on just some (see Byram, 2008).

In the elaboration of critical cultural awareness in Byram (1997), the following objectives are specified for 'the intercultural speaker', i.e. someone who is not attempting to imitate a native speaker of a foreign language but acquiring an ability to occupy the 'space between' cultures of different groups and establish and

mediate relationships between them; the intercultural speaker should have 'critical cultural awareness' or *savoir s'engager*:

Objectives (ability to):

- (a) Identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures

The intercultural speaker:

- * can use a range of analytical approaches to place a document or event in context (of origins/sources, time, place, other documents or events) and to demonstrate the ideology involved.
- (b) Make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria
 - * is aware of their own ideological perspectives and values ('human rights'; socialist; liberal; Muslim; Christian; etc.) and evaluates documents or events with explicit reference to them.
 - (c) Interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes
 - * is aware of potential conflict between their own and other ideologies and is able to establish common criteria of evaluation of documents or events, and where this is not possible because of incompatibilities in belief and value systems, is able to negotiate agreement on places of conflict and acceptance of difference.

The emphasis on the centrality of critical cultural awareness in intercultural communicative competence is similar to Gagel's suggestion that the central, unifying purpose of *politische Bildung* (political education in the narrower sense) and *sozialwissenschaftliche Bildung* (social science education more generally) is the concept of *politisches Bewusstsein* (political awareness) defined as critical awareness, independent judgement and political engagement. The pre-condition for political engagement is that the citizen becomes aware of the relationship between the life of the individual and social processes and structures. Political awareness is formed through the recognition of one's own interests and through the experience of social conflicts and relationships of governance. The politically aware and informed person should not be a passive object of politics, but, as a subject or social actor, should participate in politics (Gagel 2000: 27). Gagel draws attention to the concept of *engagement* (a loan-word in German from French) and this corresponds to my use of the French phrase *savoir s'engager* for the concept of critical cultural

awareness. In other words foreign language teachers with their emphasis on the linguistic and intercultural competences needed for taking action in a transnational civil society and citizenship teachers, more oriented to the national, can find a common ground.

A foreign language education perspective can complement and enrich 'democracy learning', to use Himmelmann's phrase, not only by providing the linguistic competence necessary to engage with people of other countries in democratic processes but also, in the concept of critical cultural awareness, by introducing a process of comparison, mediation and negotiation which does not pre-suppose democracy as the only source of values and governance. For it is important to note that the definition of critical cultural awareness promotes the importance of individuals being aware of their own ideology – political and/or religious – and the need to be explicit about and justify one's criteria for evaluating other people's actions, or the documents and events of other cultures, as well as one's own. This would be crucial if education for citizenship were to engage learners with people of countries outside Europe where democracy is not assumed to be the only possible way of living together. Critical cultural awareness thus promotes the engagement of the individual with people of other ideologies: to look for common ground where possible, but also to accept difference, and includes the acceptance of other systems of governance than democracy, and other types of democracy than that which is dominant in European and North American thought. Even within a framework of education for democracy, it is more important to be able to discuss different concepts of democracy – Asian and Western for example as suggested in the work of W. O. Lee and colleagues – rather than to seek for a 'common core of citizenship education' as Kennedy (2004) suggests.

What is important here is that the objectives of Education for Citizenship go further than those for Intercultural Communicative Competence, by encouraging engagement and action. But they do so at a local and national level, as I pointed out at the beginning. There is a need for extension of the objectives of Education for Citizenship and this is where the combination with Education for Intercultural Communicative Competence adds a missing dimension.

9.6 Conclusion

All this is a long way from my opening anecdote. It suggests a way of thinking about the purposes of foreign language education which is more than a simple focus on utility and economic gain together with the image of tourists speaking English wherever they go. It is probably also still a long way from what happens in most language teaching classrooms. It may appear too much. Language teachers I have spoken with tend to think this is adding yet more to their task, but in fact it is simply systematizing what many people do and would like to do more. Giving activities which are already present and have the potential for systematic development, a new name helps teachers and learners to think more clearly about what they are often doing on the basis of their professional intuition. The label proposed (Alfred et al., 2006) is 'education for intercultural citizenship'.

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CHAPTER

10

Identity in Applied Linguistics: The Need for Conceptual Exploration

David Block

10.1 Introduction

Over the past 40 years, identity has moved to centre stage in the social sciences in general and applied linguistics in particular as Bonny Norton Peirce's (1995: 12) call for 'a comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context' has been taken up with enthusiasm by a good number of researchers working in linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics and second language learning.¹ As a result, there have been a good number of books – both collections and monographs – which have put identity at the centre of discussions about language learning and use in studies focusing on bi- and multi-lingualism in educational contexts (e.g. Creese, 2005; Hadi-Tabussen, 2006; Heller, 1999, 2006; Miller, 2003) and naturalistic contexts (e.g. Block, 2006b; Joseph, 2004; Nic Craith, 2007; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004) .

In keeping with the overall orientation of this book, my aim in this chapter is not to rehearse exhaustively the findings and arguments of these and other publications, but to identify and discuss what I see as problematic aspects of contemporary applied linguistics research in which identity is central and a key construct. In the sections that follow, I present three aspects of identity research in applied linguistics which I think are problematic and therefore worthy of further and more in-depth exploration by future researchers. In order, I will deal with the term 'identity' itself and how it might be distinguished from 'subjectivity'; the tension between structure and agency in much identity research and why it is important to address it; and finally, the prospect of a psychologically-inspired approach to identity to complement the already dominant social orientation.

In writing this chapter, I obviously could have adopted a different tack, dealing less with conceptual issues and more with research itself, in particular potential 'hot' areas for future research. However, I believe that there are by now enough publications on identity in applied linguistics (e.g. Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Block, 2007; Joseph, 2004; Riley, 2007) to merit a stock-taking exercise, more about conceptual issues than concrete research.

10.2 Questioning the Term 'Identity'

A close reading of the publications cited in the introduction reveals that in applied linguistics today, researchers frame identity as a social process as opposed to a determined and fixed product. They thus reject an essentialist position whereby 'the attributes and behaviour of socially defined groups can be determined and explained by reference to cultural and/or biological characteristics believed to be inherent to the group' (Bucholtz, 2003: 400). This approach to the study of identity may be described, in broad terms, as poststructuralist. By poststructuralist, I mean an approach to the study of social phenomena and human behaviours which moves beyond the search for stable social structures and universal explanatory laws to a concern with issues that are arguable unique to the times in which we live, embedded as they are in social contexts emergent in the runaway world of late modernity (Giddens, 2000). In this runaway world, key aspects of modernity have been called into question. For example, the power of nation-states to dictate local policy is often superseded by global collectives and structures which escape its control (Sassen, 2007); strong affiliations to state market economic policy have given way to the unfettered capitalism of neoliberalism, as articulated in the so-called Washington consensus (Gray, 1998); there is much talk about the breakdown of traditional society and culture as individuals live their lives in more individualized, local and ephemeral networks (Bauman, 2005a); heterogeneity and diversity seem more appropriate descriptors of many societies than do homogeneity and uniformity (Gilroy, 2004); and fluidity and flexibility are characteristics valued over staticity and constancy (Bauman, 2005b). In the midst of such shifts in both how individuals live and how they make sense of how they live, identities, in the plural, are conceptualized by theorists as socially constructed, emergent, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project multimodally (i.e. drawing on a range of semiotic resources, such as stance, gaze, bodily movements, dress, etc.) as they participate in activities in their day-to-day lives. In addition, identity is always conceptualized in terms of inscriptions, that is, categories which might be qualified as social or even demographic, such as ethnicity, race, nationality, gender and social class.

As I have just stated, there seems to be a good deal of consensus around this general approach to identity. Nevertheless, there are grounds for fundamental disagreements around the term 'identity' itself, not least ones about whether or not it is even appropriate as a cover-all term. These disagreements are not generally acknowledged by applied linguists who explore identity in their research, perhaps because they are part of more theoretical discussion in the realm of social theory and seemingly not central to their research. For example, in a book that is often cited by many applied linguists when discussing identity, Chris Weedon's *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (1997), the author does not even mention 'identity' in her discussion of poststructuralist constructions of the self. She rejects 'humanist discourses [that] presuppose an essence at the heart of the individual which is unique, fixed and coherent', and centres her attention on 'subjectivities', which she defines as 'the conscious and unconscious thoughts and

emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world' (Weedon, 1997: 32). In her later work, Weedon does take on the term 'identity', albeit to situate it vis-à-vis subjectivity as follows:

Identity is perhaps best understood as a limited and temporary fixing for the individual of a particular mode of subjectivity as apparently what one *is*. One of the key ideological roles of identity is to curtail the plural possibilities of subjectivity inherent in the wider discursive field and to give individuals a singular sense of who they are and where they belong. (Weedon, 2004: 19)

Thus identities are seen by Weedon as more permanent than subjectivities, and perhaps, following Giddens (1991), as necessary to individuals in search of a certain narrative coherence and 'ontological security' (Laing, 1969) in their lives, that is, a sense of stability in their socio-psychological past, present and future. From this point of view, identities are convenient fictions, conceptual resources drawn on by researchers and lay people alike who need to fix subjectivities momentarily or for longer periods of time in terms of gender, nationality, race, social class and other social inscriptions. This fixing of subjectivities, converting them, as it were, into more stable identities, allows people to objectify themselves and others as what it is they are thinking about, interacting with, and talking or writing about.

Similar to Weedon, Rom Harré has over the years shown an interest in subjectivities shaped by and within discursive fields, as he conceptualizes identity in terms of the constant and ongoing positioning of individuals in interactions with others. The key concept of 'positioning' is defined as 'the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines' (Davies and Harré, 1999: 37). The 'discursive process' in question is the ongoing engagement in interactions with others as individuals participate in their day-to-day activities. Important in Harré's work are the physical metaphors of position and location. For Davies and Harré, individuals both situate themselves through their discursive practices and, at the same time, they are situated by others. In both cases, there is a sense of what constitutes a coherent subject position, within a particular activity, transpiring in a particular place at a particular time. In other words, all actors will position themselves and others according to their sense of what constitutes a coherent narrative for the particular activity, time and place. In addition, as authors such as Gee (1999/2005) and Blommaert (2005) have noted, positioning involves not only the use of language but also other forms of semiotic activity such as stance, gaze, proxemics, body movement and dress. In other words, it is via the implementation or deployment of semiotic resources that individuals position themselves and it is via the construction of indexical values for these uses of semiotic resources that others position individuals.

Despite clarifications such as that explicitly elaborated by Weedon and others, in much current thought and research on identity in applied linguistics, terms such as 'identity' and 'subject positions' are used interchangeably. For example, Aneta Pavlenko explains in her discussion of social emotions, 'the terms *identities*

and *subject positions* will be used interchangeably to refer to discursive categories (that is, identity options)' (Pavlenko, 2005: 197; italics in the original). Meanwhile, Bethan Benwell and Liz Stokoe note that 'within the broad field of discourse and identity, we find numerous, often near-synonymous terms for "identity"' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 5) and later conclude that 'due to the sheer lack of agreement across different traditions, we make no special distinction between terms, but use them interchangeably' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 6). In my own work, I have similarly conflated terms, making the following statement in my 2006 book, *Multilingual Identities in a Global City: London Stories*:

In this book, the term identity will be used as a cover for identifications, subjectivities and positions. In some cases, however, the term 'subject positions' will be used as an alternative referent to identity. (Block, 2006a: 29)

As regards confluences of this type, I believe that authors always have the right to opt for such shorthand solutions, normally because they have a bigger prize in mind as regards what they have set out to do and the shorthand solution is thus more strategic than the product of conviction. However, I have come to question the specific practice of not distinguishing sufficiently between 'identity' and 'subject positioning' and begun to listen to authors such as Donald Hall (2004) who argue that making such a distinction is important. Thus, in future research on second language identities, I believe it is necessary to make distinctions along the lines outlined here. The question is, however, how exactly to make the contrast.

According to Hall, 'one's identity can be thought of as the particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that, in short, or long term ways, gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being' (Hall, 2004: 3). Here, it seems Hall is assigning to identity the role of denoting stability and integrity as regards one's sense of being. In contrast, he writes that 'subjectivity implies a degree of thought and self consciousness about identity, at the same time allowing a myriad of limitations and often unknowable, unavoidable constraints on our ability to fully comprehended identity' (Hall, 2004: 3). He adds that '[s]ubjectivity . . . [is] a critical concept [which] invites us to consider the questions of how and from where identity arises, to what extent it is understandable, and to what degree it is something over which we have any measure of influence or control' (Hall, 2004: 3–4). Thus, for Hall 'subjectivity' seems to occupy an analytical space devoted to the understanding of how identity is constructed in moment-to-moment activity at the crossroads of self-consciousnesses and externally imposed constraints.

In a similar vein, James Paul Gee has made a distinction between the relatively ephemeral and the relatively stable in his discussion of subjectivity and identity. He distinguishes between 'socially situated' and 'core' identities, where the former are 'the multiple identities we take on in different practices and contexts', while the latter are 'whatever continuous and relatively "fixed" sense of self underlies our continually shifting multiple identities' (Gee, 1999: 39). This distinction is attractive due to its clarity; however, the concept of 'underlying' suggests a stability that many working from a social constructivist perspective would not wish to

subscribe to. In this sense, it is perhaps preferable to use the term 'identity' to denote the 'limited and temporary fixing for the individual of a particular mode of subjectivity as apparently what one *is*' (Weedon, 2004: 19). At the same time, the term 'subject positioning' may be used to refer to 'the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines' (Davies and Harré, 1999: 37). Elsewhere, Stuart Hall puts the distinction succinctly as follows: 'identities are . . . points of temporary attachments to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us' (Hall, 1996: 6).

As I noted above, such distinctions between 'identity' and 'subjectivity' are notable by their absence in applied linguistics today. My point here is twofold: first, that differentiating between the two terms – where identity is seen as more permanent and subjectivity as more ephemeral – is possible, and second, that such differentiation makes possible the conceptual distinction between being as socially recognized birthright, affiliation or achievement and being as ever-emergent in ongoing activity. Recourse to the former is necessary when one is, for example, writing about individuals and their lives. A focus on the latter allows one to show how the former comes to be constructed and recognized.

10.3 The Need to Clarify the Role of Agency in Identity Research

Paralleling the fuzziness around the identity/subjectivity distinction is an equal lack of clarity as regards the relative role of agency in identity research in applied linguistics. As the anthropologists John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (1997: 37) have put it, agency is 'that abstraction greatly under-specified, often misused, much fetishized these days by social scientists'. Thus, an examination of recent publications in which identity is central shows how there is a tendency to avoid direct confrontation with phrasing such as: 'Agency is defined as . . .'. For example, according to the index of Bethan Benwell and Liz Stokoe's 2006 book *Discourse and Identity*, 'agency' appears on 25 different pages; however, on none of these pages is there a clear definition. In my own recent book on second language identities (Block, 2007), 'agency' appears on 12 pages, although, like Benwell and Stokoe, I never actually define it in a direct way. Instead, like so many authors, I tend to talk around the topic, stating in what terms it is understood.

When they actually do define agency, some authors opt for simple options. The sociologist Derek Layder refers to agency as 'the ability to take action in the light of a conscious assessment of the circumstances' (Layder, 1997: 35). Meanwhile, the linguistic anthropologist Laura Ahearn succinctly states that 'agency refers to the socioculturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn, 2001: 112). Elsewhere, Alessandro Duranti (2004) takes a slightly different tack, offering a somewhat fuller definition:

Agency is here understood as the property of those entities (i) that have some degree of control over their own behaviour, (ii) whose actions in the world

affect other entities (and sometimes their own), and (iii) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g. in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome). (Duranti, 2004: 453)

Albeit from different perspectives, these three authors would appear to be following what Bucholtz and Hall (2005) have called an ‘interactionist approach to identity’, one in which agency is always emergent in social interaction. Bucholtz and Hall explain matters as follows:

From the perspective of an interactionist approach to identity, the role of agency becomes problematic only when it is conceptualized as located within an individual rational subject who consciously authors his identity without structural constraints. . . . Sociocultural linguists are generally not concerned with calibrating the degree of autonomy or intentionality in any given act; rather, agency is more productively viewed as the accomplishment of social action. (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005: 606) [NB Here the authors deliberately use ‘he’ in order to mark the rational subject view as associated with the use of ‘he’ as an unmarked gender marker]

While this statement certainly seems to get round the problem of rational subjects making their way on their own, it also opens up another front of critique from anthropologists like Sherry Ortner (1989, 2005, 2006), for whom interactionist approaches often marginalize structural constraints on emergent activity. I do not think that in their work Bucholtz and Hall are guilty of ignoring larger structural constraints (they are not, like Conversation Analysts, adverse to moving beyond the micro level of the text). However, I do see Ortner’s point that as we work at the micro level of social interactionism, we may lose sight of how macro level structures impinge on and limit the individual agency of those participating in interactions.

In her work over the past 30 years, Ortner has attempted to reconcile the structure/agency dilemma in social sciences. Some years ago, she began to elaborate what she calls ‘Practice Theory’, which is her attempt to understand the interrelationships between, on the one hand, structures of society and culture and, on the other hand, human action and practices (see Ortner, 1989 for an early formulation). For Ortner, ‘the fundamental assumption of practice theory is that culture (in a broad sense) constructs people as particular kinds of social actors, but social actors, through their living, on-the-ground variable practices reproduce or transform – and usually some of each – the culture that made them’ (2006: 129).

Ortner began her intellectual journey with the early sociology of Durkheim and Marx and the anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, which prioritized structure over agency, with the former determining the latter. However, as has been noted over the years, in the work of early social theorists like Karl Marx, generally positioned as a structuralist, there has always been a little space for agency, albeit an agency shaped by the weight of history:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. (Marx, 1972 [1852]: 437)

Here Marx clearly argues for the dominance of the weight of history, dramatically describing it as the 'tradition of dead generations [which] weighs like a nightmare on the brain'. However, he also may be seen to attribute to individuals the capacity for action, for example as actors who can overthrow dominant social structures, even if, as he goes on to write, the historical constraints on agency mean that they may only 'conjure up spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, slogans and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history' (Marx 1972 [1852]: 437).

In her most recent work, Ortner's (2005, 2006) starting point is the need to overcome 'oppositions' in social theory in the 1960s and 1970s, such as that between those focusing on the macro level social structures (e.g. neo-Marxists) and those focusing on micro level interactions (e.g. conversation analysts). Imbedded in such oppositions is the issue I focus on here, that is, how to steer a course between the view that human beings and their actions are determined by social structures that pre-exist them and the view that human beings are free agents who act on their own behalf and interest and make the world around them with no constraints on their activity. Above, we observed how Marx very partially reconciled these two poles by allowing individuals a degree of agency subject to the overwhelming weight of history. More recently, Pierre Bourdieu has navigated the line between determining social structure and individual agency as follows:

It is necessary to abandon all theories which explicitly or implicitly treat practice as a mechanical reaction, directly determined by the antecedent conditions and entirely reducible to the mechanical functioning of pre-established assemblies, 'models' or 'roles'. . . . But rejection of the mechanistic theories in no way implies that, in accordance with another obligatory option, we should bestow on some creative free will the free and wilful power to constitute, on the instant, the meaning of the situation by projecting the ends aiming at its transformation, and that we should reduce the objective intentions and constituted significations of actions and works to the conscious and deliberate intentions of their authors. (Bourdieu, 1977: 73)

Ortner's readings of Bourdieu, as well as other authors such as Berger and Luckman (1966), Giddens (1979), de Certeau (1984), have led her to formulate a model of social activity, which includes identity formation and, by extension, agency. However, Ortner believes that there is a need in social theory to work not just at the level of agency but also – and this links back to the discussion above about identity – at the level of subjectivity, which she defines as 'a specifically cultural and historical consciousness' (Ortner, 2005: 34). She goes on to explain

that her use of the word ‘consciousness’ is not intended to ‘exclude the various unconscious dynamics as seen, for example, in a Freudian unconscious or a Bourdieusian habitus’ (Ortner, 2005: 34). The latter has been defined on numerous occasions in Bourdieu’s work over the years, the following quote coming from his oft-cited *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. I have inserted my own structuring comments in square brackets to aid comprehensibility:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus* . . . [Habitus refers to] systems of durable, transposable *dispositions* . . . [These dispositions are] structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures . . . [This means that they are] principles of generation and structuring of practices and representations . . . [These practices and representations] can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules. . . . [These practices and representations can also be] objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations to attain them . . . [A]nd being all this, [these practices and representations can be] collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 1977: 72; italics in the original)

Examining this definition, one might well wonder which parts of Bourdieu’s ‘unconscious dynamics’ Ortner would include in her practice theory and which she would reject. An answer to this question can be found, in part, in what she goes on to say about subjectivity:

At the individual level, I will assume that, with Giddens, that actors are always at least partially ‘knowing subjects’, that they have some degree of reflexivity about themselves and their desires, and that they have some ‘penetration’ into the ways in which they are formed by circumstances. They are, in short, conscious in the conventional psychological sense, something that needs to be emphasized as a complement to, though not a replacement of, Bourdieu’s insistence on the inaccessibility to actors of the underlying logic of their practices. (Ortner, 2005: 34)

This statement leads me to question whether or not it is possible to keep an ‘insistence on the inaccessibility to actors of the underlying logic of their practices’ (Ortner, 2005: 34) in one’s work while arguing that ‘actors are always at least partially “knowing subjects” [with] some degree of reflexivity about themselves and their desires, and that they have some “penetration” into the ways in which they are formed by circumstances’ (Ortner, 2005: 34). There seems here a desire to, in a sense, have it both ways: on the one hand, an act of agency is always a conscious act; on the other hand, there are socialized structures within individuals which guide them in their actions but which cannot be grasped and comprehended by individuals. Thus, Ortner does a good job of reconciling the structure agency

dilemma when it is a matter of showing how social structure is both constitutive of and constituted by individual agency, where she is following a version of Giddens' (1979) structuration theory. However, a certain mystery remains around the role of 'underlying logic of . . . practices', Bourdieu's notion with echoes of Marx's weight of history sedimented in the minds of individuals.

Space does not allow further discussion of this dilemma about the interrelationship between structure and agency in identity research. Indeed, further discussion would be somewhat of a distraction from my main purpose here. As I hope to have made clear, the interrelationship between structure and agency is a complex one and it deserves greater attention by identity researchers. I say this not least because while most researchers adopt versions of Bourdieu's theory of practice and/or Giddens's structuration theory, they then proceed to present narratives of their informants which position them as active shapers of their realities while leaving behind more explicit mention of how social constraints are at work at every juncture in their activity. This tendency is curious when one considers how the general poststructuralist approach to identity, outlined briefly at the outset of the previous section, is overwhelmingly social in nature. However, I believe it exists because so much identity research focuses on individual case studies and the struggles and conflicts engaged in by individuals as they strive to obtain sufficient cultural and social capital which in turn allows them to be considered legitimized interlocutors and validated denizens in their new environments. To my mind, the case study is an effective methodology; however, within it, analysis needs to be carried out in accord with an approach to identity, subjectivities and agency which does not move structure to a secondary plane. And this is the challenge for future identity research in applied linguistics.

Nevertheless, for some identity theorists, so much emphasis on the social leaves on the margins a more psychological approach to identity, mentioned by Ortner above, but not there explored in detail. I now turn to what such an approach might mean.

10.4 The Need for a More Psychological Perspective

In his detailed examination of identity in sociology, Derek Layder argues that 'it would be a mistake to think that the self is simply a social construct and that it has only an outer texture that is moulded and shaped by external social forces' (Layder, 1997: 48). He sees such thinking as part of what he calls the 'social constructionist fallacy' in sociology, which he describes as follows:

This refers to the tendency for sociologists to avoid examining the psychology of individuals for fear of producing explanations that are inappropriate or couched at the wrong level. This may involve an aversion to reducing social phenomena to the effects of individual psychology – expressed by many writers despite different backgrounds. . . . Alternatively, others go to great pains to avoid underscoring the 'bourgeois' myth of the individual subject, which is the

typical response of structuralists, poststructuralists and postmodernists alike. (Layder, 1997: 51)

Layder proposes an approach to identity that examines what he calls the individual's 'psychobiography', that is the individual's 'life career' which emerges as the development of self over time and space via activity. This 'life career' is composed of more institutionalized experiences, which are common to all individuals who engage in similar activities in similar settings, and more personalized experiences, which contribute to the construction of what Layder calls a 'unique cluster of personality characteristics and typical behaviours' (Layder, 1997: 39). The latter, more unique aspect of self is seen by Layder to operate below the level of consciousness as individuals are not always able to articulate their motives or fully acknowledge their emotions. There is thus an attempt here to move to more psychological notion of identity as complement to the more social one so dominant in the social sciences today. Nevertheless, Layder is not long on details as regards his exact psychological theory. He draws selectively on the work of Schef (1990), who has examined how emotions such as shame and embarrassment may shape behaviour but not be acknowledged as significant by individuals. And he revisits R. D. Laing's (1969) 'ontological security' and 'ontological insecurity'. But the reader is left somewhat in the dark about how exactly one would operationalize in actual research Layder's call for an examination of what he calls the 'subjective' (the psycho-biographical) to accompany the 'objective' (larger social structures).

Elsewhere, in his critical discussion of identity in the social sciences, Mervyn Bendle (2002) takes a more dramatic tack than Layder and in doing so is far more explicit as to what he has in mind when he calls for a more psychological approach to identity. He begins by stating that the rise of identity as a key construct is 'indicative of a crisis' born from contradiction:

There is an inherent contradiction between a valuing of identity as something so fundamental that it is crucial to personal well-being and collective action, and a theorization of 'identity' that sees it as something constructed, fluid, multiple, impermanent and fragmentary. The contemporary crisis of identity thus expresses itself as both a crisis of society, and a crisis of theory. The crisis of identity involves a crisis of 'identity'. (Bendle, 2002: 1-2)

Like Layder, Bendle believes that this crisis of identity is more pronounced in sociology, in particular among those who examine the forces and flows of people, technology, finances and culture in the current global era. It is the result of the somewhat indiscriminate borrowing and appropriation of the construct from psychology, the field of inquiry which many see as its original, traditional and rightful home. Bendle critiques the work of Anthony Giddens and Manuel Castells, two of the better known globalization and identity theorists in recent years. He argues that these two scholars and many others like them have effectively taken a superficial approach to identity, focusing on surface flexibility and how

individuals constantly adapt to ever more complex stimuli that they encounter. Bendle asks 'upon what psychological substrate such a transient construction rests and how it mobilizes the energies that are observably necessary to maintain an integrated personality in dynamic conditions of social change' (Bendle, 2002: 8).

In his critique of Giddens's (1991) *Modernity and Self-identity*, Bendle argues that although he uses psychological terminology gleaned from the work of R. D. Laing (e.g. 'ontological security') while in addition referencing the works of Freud and Lacan, he quickly takes the more optimistic tack that human beings manage to adapt to social change around them leaving to the side the inner self of repression, paranoia, schizophrenia and so on. He therefore does not address how inner-self phenomena might hold individuals back and act as a check on their self-realization. Indeed, the very term 'self-identity', so prominent in Giddens's work, seems to be at the crossroads of psychological and sociologically informed versions of who people are. However, for Bendle, Giddens and many other identity scholars have systematically failed to address the psychological while emphasizing the social.

For this reason, Bendle argues that there is a need to move from 'surface' models of analysis, that is, the kind of social approaches put forth by Giddens and Castells, to more 'depth' models, which take the prospect of the unconscious more seriously and contemplate an altogether more pessimistic and 'dark' side to human existence. There is a need for identity scholars to look more carefully at ego psychology and so called 'left' psychoanalytic theories of identity, based on the work of Jacques Lacan (1977). This means an examination of an inner core self which, first, is not entirely stable, second, is thoroughly conflicted and third, acts as a constraint both on human development and ongoing participation in mundane activities. Including such a perspective would mean viewing identity as fluid and unstable, not just as a response to an ever-changing environment but also as an effect of emotions such as repression and paranoia.

Bendle believes that sociologists can take psychoanalytical theory on board in their work, and indeed that to do less is to ignore much that is relevant to the thorough and rigorous study of identity. He argues that there is a need for 'critical and uncompromising analysis [to] be conducted at the interface of sociology with the key underlying models of identity derived from constructionism, psychoanalysis and psychology' (Bendle, 2002: 17). To date, there has been very little movement in applied linguistics along the lines of what Bendle has suggested. Still, it is worth noting that some theorists and researchers, working under the umbrella of discursive psychology, have incorporated psychoanalytical constructs and frameworks into conversation analysis (e.g. Billig, 1999; Wetherell, 2003, 2007). For example, in his book *Freudian Repression*, Michael Billig (1999) moves Freud's concept of repression – the debarring of impulses and thoughts from consciousness – from the purely unconscious to the surface. Billig is critical of Freud's treatment of repression in the different cases he discusses in his writings, stating that '[h]is interest is in the causes and effects of repression rather than in the repression itself' (Billig, 1999: 27). Examining Freud's accounts, Billig sees not only how Freud's patients managed to 'do' repression, but also how Freud himself repressed

certain topics and events, perhaps because they would have been shocking, embarrassing or even painful for him had he incorporated them into his accounts.

Meanwhile, Margaret Wetherell (2003, 2007) has also argued in favour of bringing a psychoanalytical perspective to discourse analysis. Wetherell suggests that despite themselves, socially oriented ethnographers too often make reference to psychological factors in their discussions of data. She notes that it is easy to find in their work references to perceptions, beliefs and agency, all psychological concepts. In her own work, in which she analyses interview data and naturally occurring conversations, she sees the need to establish links between socially situated identities, emergent in interaction, and what she calls the 'personal order', which is 'derived from social order but not isomorphic with it' (Wetherell, 2007: 668) and which is generative of practices such as transference, a construct taken from the work of Nancy Chodorow (1999), which Wetherell defines as the 'process by which the person animates or inflects the external world with their internal preoccupations and impersonal meanings' (Wetherell, 2007: 676). In this focus on the personal order, there are echoes of Layder (1997), although Wetherell clearly sees the personal order as related to psychoanalytic concepts such as the aforementioned transference, as well as depression and paranoia.

Elsewhere, Colette Granger (2004) has also argued for a psychoanalytical approach, in this case with reference to second language learners. Granger focuses specifically on the phenomenon known as the 'silent period' in second language development, during which learners do not produce language to any significant degree despite being exposed to ample input by interlocutors. She notes that the silent period has traditionally been seen either as a sign that language learners do not understand the input they are being exposed to or that they are actively processing their input as they internally develop sufficient linguistic competence which will eventually enable them to speak. For Granger, both interpretations of the silent period exclude what she sees as an equally and compatible third possibility, namely that silence is a part of an internal struggle going on in individuals as they sort out feelings of loss (of the first language) and anxiety at the prospects of an uncertain future in a new language. She selectively draws on the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, Donald Winnicott, Adam Philips and Jacques Lacan, employing the Freudian construct of ego, as well as other constructs such as anxiety, conflict, projection and avoidance, all of which arise in relation to experiences of destabilization and loss. Granger sees parallels between what the infant experiences and what the child, adolescent and adult L2 learners experience when they come into contact with and learn a second language, as ambivalence arises from destabilization and the loss of the 'love object', in this case what Granger calls 'the first language self', that is 'the self that could make itself known, to the world and to itself, in its first language' (Granger, 2004: 56).

Along with Billig, Wetherell and others working in discursive psychology, Granger provides much food for thought regarding the application of key concepts from psychoanalysis to language data, in her case interview, diary and memoir data focusing on language learning experiences. Indeed, her book does represent

a somewhat daring move towards the reclaiming of identity for psychology that Bendle envisages. However, before rushing to balance an overwhelmingly social view of identity with a more introspective psychoanalytically-inspired one (and it should be noted that no such movement has materialized since the publication of Granger's book), applied linguists should consider that such a change in orientation is not a simple move and that there are some potential pitfalls to bear in mind.

One reason for being careful when acting on Bendle's call to bring a psychoanalytical perspective into discussions of identity in the social sciences is that he is making reference to what is diachronically and synchronically a hugely and highly complex discipline. On the one hand, there have been important historical changes – from Freud to the present – across more than a century of existence. On the other hand, at present there is a great deal of fragmentation into different schools of thought. Thus, when Bendle suggests a psychoanalytical perspective on identity, he has in mind Lacanian and neo-Lacanian thought. However, not everyone is convinced by the Lacanian thought (see Billig, 1999, for a trenchant critique) and might orient far more to different schools which, somewhat simplistically, might be labelled as neo-Freudian or Kleinian or even postmodern (see Elliot, 1996 for a discussion). In addition, the lack of thorough historical and contemporary knowledge about psychoanalysis might lead to selective and partial appropriation of constructs and frameworks, which in turn would lead to theoretical and empirical superficiality. There is a need, therefore, for collaborations involving researchers with strong backgrounds in psychoanalysis and researchers with strong backgrounds in applied linguistics if Bendle's suggestion is to be carried forward in applied linguistics.

A second reason for proceeding with care as regards Bendle's suggestions has to do with the problematic ethics of diagnosing 'character' and 'the potential voyeuristic violence of research as diagnosis' (Wetherell, 2003: 113), which come with the use of frameworks from psychoanalysis. Indeed, away from its institutional habitat, a psychoanalytically inspired examination of life story interviews may seem inappropriately intrusive to those being studied, in that it focuses on individuals' intimacies and puts the analyst's in the assumed (and powerful) position of arbiter of the truth, as it is the analyst and only the analyst who is able to see what is *really* inside the individual.

A third and final reason for being somewhat circumspect about Bendle's proposal relates directly to what applied linguists see as the remit of their work on identity. The poststructuralist approach to identity, which I outlined briefly in section 10.2, frames the construct as emergent in interaction (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005) and in terms of positioning, 'the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines' (Davies and Harré, 1999: 37). In addition, it was noted that this positioning involves not only the use of language but also other forms of semiotic activity such as stance, gaze and dress. I would add there that following this line of thought, discourse comes to be understood in terms outlined by Gee some years ago, when he defined 'Discourses' as the 'ways of being in the world, or

forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes' (Gee, 1996: 127).

As I have argued throughout this chapter, this view of identities, as emergent in ongoing semiotic behaviour, is manifestly social and does not move into the realm of the psychological easily. Therefore, researchers wishing to link the analysis of micro-level interactions with posited underlying psychic processes, as Wetherell attempts to do within a discursive psychology framework, will have to proceed with care as they deal with what seem to be incommensurable epistemological worlds. Nevertheless, there is surely a need to reconcile these two worlds, a need to move beyond Layder's 'social constructionist fallacy' discussed above. Just as Ortner and other researchers struggle to reconcile Bourdieu's *habitus*, a structuring structure outside the consciousness of human beings, with individual agency, so too should researchers attempt to reconcile underlying and deep emotions and passion with semiotically-mediated surface-level behaviour. To do otherwise is to show contentment and conformity with what is obviously a partial approach to identity.

10.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have eschewed the route of naming and discussing current hot areas of identity research in applied linguistics. Instead, I have chosen to present to the reader what I believe to be three issues related to identity which need to be resolved if future identity research in applied linguistics is to be based on firm ground. Distinguishing between 'identity' and 'subjectivity' (or 'subject positioning'), working out a clear (or at least momentarily and sufficiently coherent) understanding of the relations between structure and agency and taking on board that there is an inner self in all individuals presented as having a social identity are all, as I have suggested here, worthwhile endeavours for identity researchers. Of course one can carry on researching and writing about identity while leaving these issues relatively un-explored, as witnessed by the number of publications in which the omission of such discussion is evident (see some of this author's publications over the years). However, if we wish to proceed in the tradition of (or indeed, stand on the shoulders of) scholars such as Foucault or Bourdieu, we need to clarify, as they have done in their work, what we mean by key constructs in our own work. And this needs to be done before proceeding with applications of constructs in the analysis of empirical data.

It would be wrong to suggest here that no one working in the realm of applied linguistics is engaging in the kind of conceptual groundwork that I am suggesting here. In particular, in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, there are recent cases in which authors have grappled with issues such as what exactly identity means, how agency and structure interrelate and the interrelationships between the psychological and the social (e.g. Wortham, 2006). What I propose here is that there needs to be more such discussion as a prelude to research and discussion of data across all areas of applied linguistics, such that, for example, language

learners' stories (e.g. Benson and Nunan, 2005), or language teacher identities (Llurda, 2005) are not presented with relatively little conceptual background of the type I have discussed here.

What I have written in this chapter informs research into language learning far more than it informs language education practices. However, there are ways in which it might articulate with language education and inform teachers in formal learning environments. For example, clarifying what we mean by identity (and subjectivities) might illuminate teaching practice which aims to develop not only the linguistic abilities of students but also their real or potential membership in communities of practice mediated by the language being taught. I say this because it can provide a more solid understanding of the putative outcome of interactions which students are asked to engage in. Thus, in task-based instruction, teachers might ask not only what linguistic outcomes are expected but also what types of subject positioning might take place during activities and ultimately what social identities students might be working towards. In a sense this means a more sociocultural/activity theory approach to language learning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Put simply, with activity as the main focus in both the research and practice of language teaching, it is far easier to frame task-based interactions as sites of ever-emerging identity work.

In addition, my discussion of structure and agency as well as psychoanalysis here might find some application in teaching, albeit more at the level of understanding students and the actual and potential worlds which they inhabit materially, socially and psychologically. On the one hand, language teachers need to be aware that individuals do not become language learners in situations of unfettered agency; rather, their joining groups and engaging with institutions mediated by the target language means a negotiation at the crossroads of structure and agency. As regards what I have said here about psychologically informed approaches to identity research, Colleen Granger's work provides us with food for thought about how silence and other student behaviours, generally framed in terms of affective factors, might be understood more in terms of the inner struggles of the psyche and the individual's sense of self.

Note

- 1 In this chapter, I will use the term 'applied linguistics' in a very general sense as being about the explorations of real world problems in which language figures as a central construct. I in no way wish to suggest that linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics and second language learning research – nor indeed anthropology and sociology, two areas of inquiry I will cite extensively here – are somehow subsumed under applied linguistics. Rather, I would argue that applied linguistics itself exists not as a discipline with a centre, but as an amalgam of research interests related to and drawing on the aforementioned established areas of inquiry as well as others.

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CHAPTER

11

Third Culture and Language Education

Claire Kramsch

11.1 Introduction

In language education there has always been a tension between the conventionally agreed upon and collectively shared ways of making meaning by members of a given culture, and the individual idiosyncratic uses of language by speakers and writers. In foreign language education, there is an additional tension within language learners who are by definition performers of a first language (L1) and a first culture (C1) and are becoming also performers of an L2 and C2. In both cases, there might be a conflict between the needs of the individual and the group, the demands of the self and the other. It is to break out of these dualities – individual–social, self–other, native–nonnative speaker, C1–C2 – that the concept of ‘third culture’ was conceived. Third culture has been conceptualized under various names in various disciplines in the social sciences. In the following, I pass in review the various ways in which thirdness has been theorized and applied to language and literacy education. I then take stock of current structuralist and emergent post-structuralist approaches to the relation of language and culture in language education. I finally discuss the future of thirdness as an educational principle in a plurilingual and pluricultural world.

11.2 Thirdness in Language Education

As a cross-disciplinary field of research, language education has drawn inspiration from various theories of Thirdness in semiotics (Barthes, 1977; Peirce, 1898/1955), philosophy and literary criticism (Bakhtin, 1981), cultural studies (Bhabha, 1994), foreign language education (Kramsch, 1993a) and literacy pedagogy (Gutierrez et al, 1999; Kostogriz, 2002). I consider each of these in turn.

11.2.1 Third meaning and Semiotic Relationality

Even though the concept of third culture has been used in general education mostly in a psychological or social sense, in the case of language education it is worth remembering its semiotic antecedents and the role that thirdness plays in the creation of symbolic meaning through linguistic and visual signs.

In his famous little essay ‘The Third Meaning’ (1977), the French literary critic and semiologist Roland Barthes reflects on the meaning of some stills from the Soviet filmmaker Sergei M. Eisenstein. He notices that beyond the referential meanings communicated by the image (objects, people, settings) and the conventional, symbolic meanings recognized by every viewer (a shower of gold symbolizing wealth; a fist clenched in anger symbolizing the working class) there is a third meaning – ‘evident, erratic, obstinate’ (p. 53) that focuses the viewer’s eyes on the signifier itself. For instance, the man’s fist that is not raised in protest but left hanging naturally along the trouser leg as if in clandestine revolt; the touching discrepancy between the excessive mass of a woman’s hair and her tiny raised fist. As poets have noticed, this kind of meaning is fleeting, subtle, it ‘escapes’ easily (Widdowson, 2003), but it affects the viewer aesthetically and emotionally. This third meaning Barthes calls *signifiante*. By contrast with *signification* that fills the signified with reference or symbolism, *signifiante* remains on the level of the signifier, of the form itself. By drawing attention to itself, the language or the image requires a “poetical” grasp’ (Barthes, 1977: 53) that can trigger an emotional response (p. 59).¹ In applied linguistics today, third meaning is studied in research on style, whether it be literary style in stylistics (Widdowson, 1992) or speech styles in sociolinguistics (Johnstone, 1996; Coupland, 2007) (see below section 11.3). Language teachers draw attention to thirdness when they point out the meaning of putting on a posh accent, or adopting a formal style when writing academic essays.

Even though Barthes claims that *signifiante* ‘carries a certain emotion’, emotion is of course not in the signifier itself, but in the particular relation between the viewer and the signifier. It is precisely on this relation that the American semiotician Charles S. Peirce built his theory of signs (Peirce, 1898/1955). In Peirce’s semiotic system, a sign, such as a word or an image, not only has an object to which it is related, but it also evokes in the mind of its receiver another sign, which Peirce calls ‘the interpretant’. It is through the interpretant that signs have meaning rather than just signification. The activity of the interpretant is what Peirce calls ‘Thirdness’. If Firstness is the mode by which we apprehend reality and gain immediate consciousness of incoming bits of information, Secondness is the mode by which we react to this information, and by which we act and interact with others within a social context. Thirdness, on the other hand, is a relational process-oriented disposition, that is built in time through habit, and that allows us to perceive continuity in events, to identify patterns and make generalizations. All three modes of being coexist at any given time, but only Thirdness is able to make meaning out of the other two and to build a sense of identity and permanence.

If Barthes’ semiological theory foregrounded style as the third dimension of communication, Peirce’s theory of signs underscores the relational nature of this third dimension. Meaning according to Peirce emerges

- by relating linguistic, visual, acoustic signs to other signs along paths of meaning that are shared or at least recognized as such by most socialized members of the community.

- by relating signs to prior signs whose meanings have accumulated through time in the imagination of the people who use them or see them used.
- by relating signs to human intentionalities. Because signs are used for a purpose (they are ‘motivated’), they are intended to evoke quite specific interpretants in the minds of their recipients.

Signs in one culture are not limited to the meanings historically given to them by members of one social community. In heterogeneous environments like the large urban centres of the world, signs may evoke in different people other interpretants than those intended. They are constantly resemiotized by outsiders who have come in, by insiders who have gone out and come into contact with other cultures and who now give different meaning to the traditional signs in their original community. Peirce’s concept of Thirdness has proven useful in educational linguistics to researchers who, like Kramsch (2000) or van Lier (2004) propose a semiotic and ecological approach to language education (see section 11.4.2). Language teachers can benefit from teaching culture not as a collection of objects, facts and events, but as a system of signs that has a logic of its own (see Note 1).

11.2.2 The Thirdness of Dialogue

If, for Peirce, thirdness stresses the relationality of signs and meanings, for literary philosophers like Bakhtin (1981) it highlights the relationality of Self and Other. How do we know when a sign in a foreign culture is to be read as the expression of one individual’s purpose or as the collective purpose of, say, a national community, since a person can act either as an individual or as a member of a group? Bakhtin eschews the dichotomy altogether by insisting that the Self has no meaning, cannot even define itself without the Other.² The Bakhtin scholar Michael Holquist (1990) calls this relationality ‘dialogism’. He characterizes the thirdness of Bakhtin’s dialogism as follows.

- Dialogism is a differential relation. Part of becoming a member of another community is precisely the process of constructing your own identity in relation to that of others. We are what others are not. We perceive the world through the time/space of the self but also through the time/space of the other.
- Dialogism is not only relation, it is always response. For Bakhtin, cultural and personal identity do not precede the encounter, but rather they get constructed in language through the encounter with others. An utterance is always a response to an actual or potential utterance that preceded it. We are the role we are playing at this particular moment in response to the roles played by others. The individual, like the sign in Peirce’s system, does not exist in any other way than as a response to a sign with other signs.
- Dialogism is not only a relation to the other in space, but also to others and other manifestations of self in time. Dialogue, composed of utterances and responses, links not only present to present, but present to past and future.

Within the same utterance I can at once enact my present relationship to my interlocutor, evoke past relationships and mortgage our future. More important than either the utterance or the response taken separately is the relation between my words and prior and future words.

- Dialogue is, for Bakhtin, a triadic relationship between a Self, an Other, and a remembered/anticipated Self and Other. The only way to find our own voice, he says, is to have a double-voice, i.e. to see and express ourselves both through our own perspective, from the inside, so to speak, and through the perspective of others, from the outside. He calls the ability of speakers to see themselves from the outside *transgression*. Through transgression, speakers develop a distance to themselves and their words, i.e. an awareness of stylistic variation and an ability to subvert the ‘unitary’ language of political and marketing discourse.

Michael Holquist explains the relation Bakhtin establishes between thirdness and transgression:

The thirdness of dialogue frees my existence from the very circumscribed meaning it has in the limited configuration of self/other relations available in the immediate time and particular place of my life. For in later times, and in other places, there will always be other configurations of such relations, and in conjunction with *that* other, my self will be differently understood. This degree of thirdness outside the present event insures the possibility of whatever transgression I can achieve toward myself. (1990: 38)

Bakhtin’s dialogic principle has inspired scholars in cultural studies (e.g. Butler, 1997) and in language and literacy education (e.g. Ball and Freedman, 2004), especially those concerned about promoting social justice and giving immigrant and minority children a voice in the public educational system. Language learners can find in Bakhtin an incentive to question the texts they read as to who is talking, for whom and in answer or reaction to what or whom.

11.2.3 The Third Space of Enunciation

The interest for Bakhtin among language educators coincides with a realization that language education need not be tied to structuralist theories of language, that view language as separate from reality, but would benefit from drawing on post-structuralist theories, that view speakers and writers as constructing through discourse the social and cultural reality that in turn constructs them. The Indian British cultural critic Homi Bhabha is one of those post-structuralist thinkers. His notion of *Third Space* (Bhabha, 1994) complements on the discourse level Peirce’s and Bakhtin’s theories of thirdness.

According to Bhabha, culture is located in the discursive practices of speakers and writers living in post-colonial times in complex industrialized societies.

Cultural difference is built into the very condition of communication because of the necessity to interpret, not just to send and receive messages.

The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious. (Bhabha, 1994: 36)

For Bhabha, Third Space defines the position of the speaker of an utterance who both refers to events in the outside world and, in so doing, constitutes him/herself as a 'subject of enunciation', i.e. as a speaker/writer who is at the same time a social actor. This position is historically contingent, socially larger than the individual, and therefore beyond any single individual's consciousness. In other words, we cannot be conscious of our interpretive strategies at the same moment as we activate them. They are the unconsciously acquired discourse practices that speak through us and that constitute our essential cultural difference. The encounter between two cultures always entails a discontinuity in the traditionally continuous time of a person's or a nation's discourse practices. For example, a non-native speaker living in a host country might not have the same discourse regarding his/her host nation's history as a native national. The inclusion of the foreign national's perspective makes it possible to envisage, for example, a national anti-nationalist view of a people's history.³ Understanding someone from another culture requires an effort of translation from one perspective to the other, that manages to keep both in the same field of vision.

Cultural difference gets articulated, says Bhabha, in the 'highly contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation' (p. 37). We always say more than we think we do because part of the meaning of what we say is already given by our position in the social structure, by our relative power, and by the subject positions we occupy in social encounters. Because it carries with it the traces of our multiple positions in the social order, the cultural space carved out by our words and those of others is, in modern societies, an eminently heterogeneous, indeed contradictory and ambivalent space in which third perspectives can grow in the margins of dominant ways of seeing. Bhabha calls this space Third Space.

It is because of the heterogeneity of this Third Space, that ensures fluidity of signs and symbols, that cultural change is conceivable:

Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, . . . constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (Bhabha, 1994: 37)

For Bhabha, the speaking subject is, as Bakhtin would say, 'full of the voices of others', but he/she reinscribes earlier voices into her own. This reinscription is a

political act in itself. Many post-structuralist thinkers have elaborated on the notion of the appropriation, translation and resignification of signs (see e.g. Weedon, 1987; Butler, 1997). Their ideas have inspired researchers in second language education like Norton (1995), Kramsch (2000), Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000), Kinginger (2004), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004). In English language teaching, the debate about the right of non-native speakers to appropriate for themselves the English language and give it other meanings than native speakers would, owes a great deal to the kind of third space Homi Bhabha talks about.

11.2.4 *The Third Culture of the Foreign Language Learner*

The theories of Thirdness discussed above have been used to question the traditional dichotomy native speaker (NS)/non-native speaker (NNS) in language learning (e.g. Kramsch, 1993b, 1997). The concept of *third culture* was proposed as a metaphor for eschewing other dualities on which language education is based: first language (L1)/second language (L2), C1/C2, Us vs Them, Self vs Other. Third culture does not propose to eliminate these dichotomies, but suggests focusing on the relation itself and on the heteroglossia within each of the poles. It is a symbolic place that is by no means unitary, stable, permanent and homogeneous. Rather it is, like subject positions in post-structuralist theory, multiple, always subject to change and to the tensions and even conflicts that come from being ‘in between’ (Weedon, 1987). These tensions can be painful, but they can also be fruitful in the same manner as unsuccessful socialization can be the mother of invention. In Kramsch’s view, the third culture or third place of the language learner has three characteristics.

- *A popular culture.* The ‘third place’ of the language learner is an oppositional place where the learner creates meaning on the margins or in the interstices of official meanings. It is not a place of strategic resistance but of tactical subversion. As the sociologist Michel de Certeau characterizes it, it is a ‘way of using imposed systems’, of making do with resources acquired from others, such as foreign grammars and vocabularies. “‘Making do’ (or *bricoler*) means constructing *our* space within and against *their* place, of speaking *our* meaning with *their* language’ (de Certeau, 1984: 18).

A third culture pedagogy leaves space for mischievous language play, carnivalesque parody, simulation and role-play and the invention of fictitious, hybrid identities that put into question NS claims on authenticity.

- *A critical culture.* Third culture pedagogy does not merely transmit content and have the students practice their L2 in interactions with others about that content. It encourages making connections to dominant attitudes and world-views as expressed through the textbook, the grammar exercises, the readings (Kramsch, 1988). It encourages reading against the grain, questioning the social categorization of experience as expressed through the L2 vocabulary and grammar, making students aware of the historical resonances of words and

their combinations. It actively promotes comparisons between L1 and L2 categorizations.

- *An ecological culture.* Third culture methodology is also highly context-sensitive and adapted to the demands of the environment. Since bricolage is the name of the game, third culture uses any method that ‘works’: communicative activities but also the memorization of vocabulary, poems or prose; real-world tasks but also dictation, translation and the transcription of audio-recordings or written texts. Exercises in communicative fluency in the L2, but also observation and reflection in the L1. Third culture promotes rereadings, retellings, multiple interpretations of the same text, multiple modes of meaning making (visual, verbal, gestural, musical) and multiple modalities of expression (spoken, written, electronic); it favours the deconstruction of signs and their subversive reconstruction (see Kramsch and Nolden, 1994).

Finally, in 1993, the concept of third culture was meant to capture the experience of the boundary between NS and NNS. In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many people were forced to cross linguistic, national and ideological boundaries within Europe and across the Atlantic. Immigrants brought along with them

stories of bordercrossings that help the story-telling participants understand the joy and make sense of the pain these crossings have occasioned. They belong to a stock of narratives that attempt to create a third culture, made of a common memory beyond time and place among people with similar experiences. (Kramsch, 1993: 235)

The telling of these boundary experiences makes participants become aware of how manipulating contextual frames and perspectives through language can give them power and control, as they try to make themselves at home in a culture ‘of a third kind’. Such research has inspired language teachers to have their students read published ‘language memoirs’ like those of Nancy Huston, Eva Hoffman or Alice Kaplan and to elicit students’ narratives of their experience crossing linguistic and cultural borders.

11.2.5 *Thirling in Literacy Education*

In the 1970s and 1980s, thirdness was best represented by the work of the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (1972) with his insistence on the liberatory potential of dialogue and community building practices in raising the political consciousness of the ‘oppressed’ through literacy education. Since then, the growing spread of economic globalization and human migration and the educational challenges presented by the computer and the internet have rendered the duality between oppressors and oppressed less clear. This is not to say that relations of power no longer exist, but they are more diffuse, less visible. Rather than seeing

literacy education as autocratic top-down inculcation or bottom-up harmonious assimilation into a community of practice, literacy scholars now call for a pedagogy that teaches learners how to live with difference, contradiction and ambivalence (Kostogriz, 2002). They base their view of literacy education on the work of semioticians like Yuri Lotman (1990) and cultural geographers like Edward Soja (1996). Lotman, studying the cultural changes occurring in multicultural nation-states where national languages and cultures are becoming increasingly hybridized by the influx of immigrants, focused on the production of cultural-semiotic Thirdness, or semiotic creativity that produces hybrid texts, hybrid identities and meanings. Soja, studying the social space of megacities like Los Angeles and Amsterdam in a post-structuralist perspective, coined the term 'Thirdspace' (in one word) to conceptualize social space as it is perceived, conceived and lived in a networked, multicultural world. Echoing the work of bell hooks, Michel Foucault and feminist theorists, Soja used the term 'trialectics' to escape the seemingly simplistic dichotomy implied by the Marxist term 'dialectic'. He proposed instead a three-dimensional representation of social space that would take into account the interaction of spatiality, historicity and sociality. The work of these two social scientists has captured the imagination of language educators and literacy researchers in two large immigration countries, Australia and the United States.

In Australia, Alex Kostogriz' Thirdspace pedagogy of literacy (Kostogriz, 2002) invites teachers to (re)imagine classrooms as 'multivoiced collectives' (p. 8) whose efforts to read, write and interpret texts owe a great deal to the meaning making practices brought to the class by minority and migrant students. Thirdspace for Kostogriz is not about resolving differences or finding common ground in literacy representations and practices. Rather, it is about making the students aware of contradictions and ambivalences and helping them find a way of living and learning with this ambivalence. Kostogriz calls this 'thirling'. Thirling in meaning-making can be genuinely appreciated only when difference is recognized and used as a resource for literacy learning in conditions of 'multiculturalism and semiotic multimodality' (p. 9). He links thirling to the development of intercultural competence and to the building of 'classroom communities of difference' (p. 10).

In the United States, Third Space (in two words) is associated with the work of Gutierrez et al. (1999) and Moje et al. (2004). Like Kostogriz, they associate thirdness with the typical hybridity and diversity encountered in countries with large numbers of immigrants and with conflicting interests due to race, class and gender, but they stress the 'transformative potential' of conflict and difference. 'Tension and conflict in various learning activities can lead to a transformation in the activity and the participation and discourse practices therein. These transformations can lead to productive literacy learning' (p. 286). In their concrete analyses of classroom transcripts, they associate third space with the counterscripts produced by students within the discourse of the classroom. Embedding the notion of third space within learning theory and a developmental view of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, they identify third space as a developmental zone, in

which ‘hybridity and diversity can be used to promote learning’. In their words: ‘we believe the use of hybrid language practices can help educators negotiate or traverse the diverse and often conflictual urban classroom landscape’ (p. 301). For these educators, it seems that the third space of diversity and conflict can be used by teachers not to change the existing relations of power between immigrants and mainstream members of society, but to neutralize hybridity and conflict by embedding them into the mainstream and making them serve the interests of the school institution.

11.2.6 Summing up

In this brief survey of the concept of Thirdness in Western language education we can see how this notion has been variously used in the Humanities and the Social Sciences. Originally conceived in semiotics, it migrated to literary and cultural studies where it got applied to the analysis of novels and post-structuralist definitions of culture; it spread to foreign language study and the teaching of literacy to immigrants in immigration countries like Australia and the United States. While all these applications have in common the desire to eschew dichotomizing and essentializing tendencies in thinking about the education of language learners, they vary in the location they assign to thirdness and in the importance attached to its subversive potential.

For Barthes and Peirce, thirdness is constitutive of the sign itself, and its relation to other signs, both verbal and visual. Its subversive potential is of an aesthetic or formal nature, but for Barthes aesthetics and politics went hand in hand. Post-structuralist thought, as championed by Bakhtin and Bhabha, builds on the Thirdness of the linguistic sign. Bakhtin includes the relation of Self and Other in the dialogic use of verbal signs; Bhabha considers the way in which discursive practices construct culture and the speaking subject finds a location in the very space of enunciation. Both thinkers are quite conscious of the political implications of Thirdness: Bakhtin because in the Stalinist state in which he lived it was dangerous to deviate from the ideological dichotomies of the day; Bhabha because by locating culture in language, he ran the risk of antagonizing those in whose interest it is to essentialize cultures.

Foreign language educators like Kramsch apply the principles of post-structuralism to locate the foreign language learner in a bilingual, oppositional culture that, like popular culture, thrives in the interstices of dominant monolingual cultures, whether they be C1 or C2. The metaphor of third culture captures language learners’ growing awareness of the predicament of language stated at the very beginning of this paper, and of the larger social and political forces that govern its use. Literacy educators like Gutierrez et al. see the culture of immigrant language learners as hybrid, conflicted and ambivalent. The Third Space pedagogy they propose attempts to deal with this ambivalence and turn it into a transformative experience for the immigrant learners that will help their integration in their host societies. While Kramsch’s third culture ultimately aims at diversifying

the unitary discourse or monolingual ideology of countries like the U. S., Gutierrez et al.'s Third Space is meant to transform multilingual individual immigrants into constructive members of American society.

11.3 Current Attempts to Capture the Language/Culture Relation in Applied Linguistics

The search for third culture inserts itself in the current efforts in applied linguistics to better capture the nature of a L2 learner's competence faced with the changing needs of a global economy. Indeed, if applied linguistics is 'the study of language with relevance to real-world problems', we need to explore the nature of this relevance once the real world has become a global world of multilingual and multicultural interconnections. How do NS and NNS understand one another *across cultures*? How do L2 learners grow into another *sociocultural* speech community? How do they find their place as *intercultural* speakers? These questions have been asked mainly in the large-scale context of human migration and immigration in the last 20 years, especially immigration to the industrialized societies of Europe, Australia and North America. Several strands of this research take culture to be a stable category, attached to an individual's identity and place of belonging. They hold on to the equation: one language (or way of speaking) = one culture (or social background). These are: cross-cultural communication studies, sociocultural theories of second language development, and intercultural learning, which I consider in turn.

11.3.1 Cross-cultural Communication Studies

Cross-cultural communication as studied by linguists and discourse analysts focuses on the way native speakers and non-native speakers manage conversations in everyday life. It examines the different expectations of speakers regarding the pragmatics of speech acts, the management of turns at talk, discourse cues and various pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features of talk. 'Culture' is the term used for characterizing the personal background that might account for variations in individual verbal behaviours, whether they be attributable to a national, racial, or ethnic culture or the culture of a particular social class, generation or gender. Culture is often seen as the source of interference and misunderstanding and sometimes as the object of negotiation. This strand of research focuses mainly on problematic talk (Grimshaw, 1990) and instances of miscommunication in social life (House et al., 2003; Kramsch, 2003) based on mismatches in assumptions and interpretations, themselves often based on cultural difference. Researchers in cross-cultural communication maintain a dichotomous view of self and other that easily leads to essentializations and generalizations of difference across social groups. Because they do not systematically examine power relations, they are not primarily interested in the notion of third culture.⁴

11.3.2 Sociocultural Theories of Second Language Development

Sociocultural theory, despite its name, is not, as Lantolf and Thorne point out, ‘a theory of the social or of the cultural aspects of human existence . . . [but] a theory of mind . . . that recognizes the central role that social relationships and culturally constructed artifacts play in organizing uniquely human forms of thinking’ (2006: 1). Within the Vygotskian perspective they espouse, Lantolf and Thorne define culture as ‘an *objective force* that infuses social relationships and the historically developed uses of artifacts in concrete activity’. They add: ‘An understanding of culture as objective implies that human activity structures, and is structured by, *enduring* conceptual properties of the social and material world’ (ibid.; my emphases). Sociocultural theory clearly sees culture as a stable category, an objective force, structured both by historical processes of socialization and by people’s engagement in cultural activities.

What is not clear, however, is whether that force is real or imagined. This question becomes relevant to our topic when we ask to what extent L2 learners must accommodate to the target culture, and to what extent they can carve out for themselves a third culture of their own. Sociocultural theory describes well the zone of proximal development that L2 learners traverse under the guidance of NSs or other NNSs who have internalized the cultural models or schemas of the L2 cultural community. Lantolf and Thorne, for example, refer to ‘American culture’ (p. 116) and its schemas of individualism and autonomy that get reinforced and internalized through such cultural events as conversations, movies and TV shows. But their example seems to suggest that everyone growing up on the territory of the United States sooner or later internalizes these American schemas and makes them their own. Is that really so? Do the cultural models of English speakers have any psychological reality for speakers of other languages and are they even psychologically real for all English speakers? Are they not, for some, merely ideological constructs? Lantolf and Thorne recognize that ‘cultures are rarely monolithic organizations and as such comprise communities with different schemas and concepts’ (p. 148), but they don’t account for the fact that cultural models and the cognitive categories created by language might not be internalized, but, rather, imitated, parodied or simulated, and that communities are not real but ‘imagined’, in the sense that Benedict Anderson gives the term (1983).

The fact that many immigrants do not internalize these schemas, even after decades of living and working in the country, raises questions as to the necessary link between mind, culture and activity in second language learning. Is language learning, as they suggest, ‘a matter of intent and commitment to live one’s life as a member of the new community?’ (p. 148). But what if the newcomers either do not recognize this community as a community, nor care to join it, but only want to work there and make a living? (p. 148). ‘It remains to be seen’, they write, ‘if programs can be developed that will promote the type of knowledge that learners can make use of to re-mediate their thinking . . . Perhaps the type of third space discussed by Kramsch (1993) is the appropriate outcome of instruction when it comes to culture’ (p. 148). A third space by default?

11.3.3 *Intercultural Learning*

Intercultural learning is an interdisciplinary effort on the part of scholars in the sciences of education to link language education to the teaching of cross-cultural awareness. It has taken off in Europe, Japan and Australia. In Europe, the concept is associated with the work of Michael Byram, Adelheid Hu, Ingrid Gogolin, Lothar Bredella, Hans-Jürgen Krumm (for a review, see Königs, 2003; Kramsch, 2002a). Originally conceived within the framework of linguistic, academic or professional exchanges across the national borders of the European Union, it focuses on national languages and cultures. Its original theoretical grounding in cultural studies (Byram, 1989) has been broadened to include various fields in the social sciences and the humanities (e.g. Bredella and Delanoy, 1999). In Japan, the interest in 'intercultural literacy' is a variation on the European intercultural learning (Sasaki, 2006).

In Australia, the notion of 'intercultural language learning' (ILL) is being discussed at conferences of the Australian Modern Language Teachers Association and is gaining ground in the crafting of government foreign language curricula. Based on the work of Antony Liddicoat and his colleagues (Crozet et al., 1999; Liddicoat, 2002; Liddicoat et al., 2003), ILL tightens the link between the foreign language and the foreign culture in language education and strives to develop a learner's 'third place' (Lo Bianco et al., 1999) that is neither that of the C1 nor that of the C2. Language learners develop an intercultural perspective where they get to understand both their own culture and language contexts (First Place) and the target culture and language contexts (Second Place). Using this knowledge, they move to a position in which their developing intercultural competence informs their language choices in communication (Third Place). ILL pedagogy helps students construct this Third Place by making connections between the L1/C1 and the L2/C2; communicating across linguistic and cultural boundaries and identifying and explaining those boundaries; critically reflecting on their own intercultural behaviours and their own identity; and taking responsibility for contributing to successful communication across languages and cultures.

In sum: In much of applied linguistic research, the links between language and culture are taken to be stable and non-problematic. Culture is seen as a fixed category of place and identity. Such a structuralist approach is favourable to a positivistically inclined research that seeks to describe pragmatic sources of conflict among speakers from different cultures and to minimize those conflicts. It is also favourable to a normative educational process intent on making minority language learners aware of their right to be listened to and be given the respect they deserve, and to make mainstream language learners aware and accepting of the minority and foreign Other. The concept of Third Place serves that purpose. It is seen as a place of contact or encounter between speakers from two different cultures. However, because intercultural communication gives little attention to issues of power differential and conflict within and between cultures, the notion of Third Place risks being seen by some language educators as a romantic excuse

for immigrant L2 learners to escape from long-term commitment and social integration into the host society, and for mainstream L2 learners as an opportunity to colonize the other (see 11.4.3).

11.4 Emergent and Future Issues

Recent research takes a more post-structuralist approach to the relation of language and culture. It defines culture as an individual's subject position that changes according to the situation and to *the way he/she chooses* to belong rather than to the place where she belongs. Such a definition of culture presents a challenge for foreign language education and for applied linguistic research. The social, cultural and political contexts in which languages are taught and learned are so diverse, the educational systems often so incommensurable that it has become very difficult to make any generalizations about the best way to teach foreign languages. In the United States, for example, the increasingly multilingual and multicultural nature of college campuses in general and of foreign language classrooms in particular should lead to an ever more diversified response and attention to social and cultural difference on the part of language teachers (Lam, 2000). Yet, many school administrators and educators turn to the findings of research on the acquisition of English as a second language for solutions on how to best teach foreign languages. They seek to standardize best teaching practices in order to better control and predict the outcomes of language education. Right now, post-structuralist approaches to second language education inspired by work in inter-actional sociolinguistics, and in ecological theories of learning are gaining momentum (Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2006; de Bot et al., 2007). Third culture becomes relevant here as the oppositional subject positions taken by the children of immigrants in English secondary schools (Rampton, 1995). We can also see third culture at work in the hybrid language of hip-hop and English that weaves together in new and creative ways the 'transcultural flows' of global youth culture and localized subcultures (Pennycook, 2007).

11.4.1 *Post-structuralist Perspectives in Sociolinguistics and Anthropology*

The study of communication across national, ethnic and social cultures by researchers in interactional sociolinguistics (Rampton, 1995; Johnstone, 1996; Blommaert, 2005; Cameron, 2005; Coupland, 2007) and linguistic anthropology (Hanks, 1996; Ochs, 1996) takes a post-structuralist perspective on language acquisition and language socialization. Researchers in this strand of applied linguistics see language relations as much more decentred, in flux and relative to the perspectives of the participants. Rampton's concepts of *crossing* (1995) and *styling* (1999) capture the fluid nature of the relation between language and culture: social actors temporarily take on others' ways of speaking and behaving, style themselves on others, act out different identities, play out different relations of power. Blommaert's notion

of *layered simultaneity* (2005: 130) brings in the historical dimension of unequal cross-cultural encounters: individual encounters reenact past encounters, internet users simulate, parody, cite, plagiarize others' postings. Cameron (2005) discusses explicitly the issue of power and domination in unequal encounters across genders. In linguistic anthropology, the extended notion of indexicality proposed by Hanks (1996) and Ochs (2002) challenges any notion of one language = one culture.⁵

A post-structuralist view of the relation of language and culture focuses nowadays on four major aspects that together could be seen as constituting a 'third' perspective on the relation of self and other through language.

- *Subjectivity or subject-positioning*. Different languages position their speakers in different symbolic spaces. Subject positioning has to do less with the calculations of rational actors than with a multilingual's heightened awareness of the embodied nature of language and the sedimented emotions associated with the use of this or that language, dialect or register.
- *Historicity or an understanding of the cultural memories evoked by symbolic systems*. In times of migrations and displacements, cultures become collective *lieux de mémoire* formed by the sedimented representations of a people. These are deterritorialized cultural icons (or stereotypes) that individuals carry in their bodies and that they enact in their day to day transactions. Whether these representations are accurate or not, historically attested or only imagined, they are actually remembered by individual members and serve as valid historical models. As Blommaert writes: 'The synchronicity of discourse is an illusion that masks the densely layered historicity of discourse' (2005: 131).
- *Performativity or the capacity to perform and create alternative realities*. Within an ecological perspective of human exchanges, language is not merely the representation of thought: instead, language creates and performs thought in dialogue with others (Pennycook, 2007: Ch. 4). This performative aspect of language can be seen as having 'political promise' (Freire, 1972; Butler, 1997), i.e. as potentially effectuating social change. In language education, the capacity to use various linguistic and semiotic codes to create alternative realities and reframe the balance of symbolic power has been called by Kramsch (2006) symbolic competence.
- *Stylistic variation*. The renewed interest in style (Rampton, 1999; Coupland, 2007; Pennycook, 2007; van Leeuwen, 2007) is symptomatic of current post-structuralist efforts to capture individual creativity in language use. Style here should be understood not in the eighteenth century monologic sense of individual elegance and stylishness, but in the dialogic sense of stylization, i.e. a general capacity of speakers to rework the utterances of others in their own personal style – a capacity that Coupland defines as 'a subversive form of multi-voiced utterance, one that discredits hegemonic, monologic discourses by appropriating the voices of the powerful, and reworking them for new purposes' (p. 150).

11.4.2 Complexity Theory and Language Education

Like the post-structuralist strand of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, complexity theory (Byrne, 1997; Cilliers, 1998; Capra, 2005) considers language to not only represent, but actively construct social and cultural reality in interaction with others. Actively embraced in educational philosophy by scholars like Lemke and Sabelli (2008), Mason (2008), Morrison (2008) and others, it has been drawn upon by SLA researchers like Larsen-Freeman (1997) and Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) and applied linguists advocating an ecological approach to SLA (Kramsch, 2002a/b; van Lier, 2004; Kramsch and Steffensen, 2007). Complexity theory, which originated in the physical sciences, has been used as a productive metaphor in SLA to stress the relativity of self and other, the need to consider events on more than one timescale and to take into account the fractal nature and the unfinalizability of events. What does this mean for language education?

Complexity theory has in common with sociolinguistic theory the notion that any use of language, be it learning a language or using it to gain information, make friends or influence people does not derive from structures in the head – beliefs, rules, concepts and schemata, but are new adaptations that *emerge* non-linearly from the seamless dynamic of events. In complex dynamic systems like human relations, both the *self* and the *other* are intrinsically pluralistic, variable, and possibly in conflict with themselves and with one another. Because the I is not unitary, but multiple, it contains in part the other and vice-versa; it can observe itself both subjectively from the inside and objectively through the eyes of the other. The meanings expressed through language operate on multiple *timescales*, with unpredictable, often unintended, outcomes and multiple levels of reality and fiction. Our memories are not in the past but live on as present realities in our bodies to be both experienced and observed.

Complexity theory offers an ecological perspective on language education. It is concerned with patterns of activities and events which are self-similar at different levels of scales, i.e. which are *fractal* figures for larger or smaller patterns. For example, as Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008: 216) observe, patterns of behaviour at the classroom level are fractals of and interact with patterns of behaviour at the institutional and, beyond that, at the socio-political level and historical timescale. An ecological approach to language education does not seek dialectical unity, or bounded analyses of discrete events, but on the contrary open-endedness and *unfinalizability*. It counts under ‘participants’ not only the flesh and blood interlocutors in verbal exchanges, but also the remembered and the imagined, the stylized and the projected. It problematizes the notion of bounded speech communities and focuses our attention on open-ended, deterritorialized communicative practices rather than on the ‘territorial boundedness’ posited by the ‘one language – one culture assumption’ (Blommaert, 2005: 216).

What we see emerging in ecological approaches to language education is a new way of looking at the relation of language and culture. Culture is seen as heterogeneous, fluid, conflictual; it is seen as a mode, not a place, of belonging; it is as

imagined as it is real, a *lieu de mémoire* as much as a lived event. In a similar manner the notion of third culture has changed from a place, space or status that learners occupy, to an oppositional way of being. Within a globalized economy, the changing landscapes of human migrations and the expanded time/space afforded by internet technology, third culture has become located in language itself, either as textual identity (Kramsch and Lam, 1999), or as 'intercultural stance' (Ware and Kramsch, 2005) or as the 'symbolic competence' recently proposed by Kramsch (2006).⁶

However, because the metaphor of third culture is prone to romanticizing marginality and hybridity, it risks being easily re-appropriated by members of dominant first or second cultures as the exotic 'border-crossings' of polyglot cosmopolitan individuals (Kramsch, 2004; Lam, 2004). It also risks becoming a static place between two dominant cultures, the place of a community of like-minded bilinguals that immigrants strive to participate in (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000), or a permanent hybrid subject-position for Chicanos in the United States (Gutierrez et al., 1999). As a metaphor, third culture has become less capacious than that of thirdness itself. It is therefore more useful to consider the future of thirdness as an epistemological principle that might inform both the research and the practice of language education.

11.4.3 *The Future of Thirdness*

By contrast with 'third culture', thirdness is a stance (Ware and Kramsch, 2005), a way of seeing the relation of language, thought and culture. As shown in section 11.2, thirdness has captured the imagination of literary critics, semioticians, linguists, applied linguists and literacy educators and will continue to inspire new research. It has served as a rallying point for researchers dissatisfied with the usual dichotomies prevalent in positivistic research and eager to focus on dynamic, relational, variable and emergent phenomena rather than on stable entities. In language learning and teaching, it has been at work in recent efforts to develop a conceptual lens that would supersede and reframe traditional dichotomies, for example Cook's notion of 'multicompetence' to supersede the dichotomy NS/NNS in SLA research (Cook, 1992), Rampton's notion of 'language repertoire' based on expertise, inheritance or affiliation to replace the L1/L2 dichotomy (Rampton, 1990), Larsen-Freeman's notion of language learning as a 'complex system' to overcome the duality individual vs social (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), Kramsch's use of 'language ecology' to eschew the language acquisition vs language socialization dichotomy (Kramsch, 2002b). Such reframings stress process, variation and style over product, place and stable community membership. Because the concept of thirdness always runs the risk of becoming reified, essentialized into a stable third culture, which in turn also includes and excludes, it struggles to retain the internal conflictual plurality of the object of study.

In Europe, thirdness has informed recent thought on intercultural learning (e.g. Byram and Fleming, 1998; Hu, 1999) and the training of language teachers

in plurilingual settings (e.g. Byram, this volume). In the *Handbook of Plurilingualism and Pluriculturalism*, Zarate, Levy and Kramsch explain:

The teacher trainers of tomorrow will need to operate in a globalized space where verbal exchanges will be increasingly plurilingual and pluricultural . . . [But] linguistic and cultural pluralism is more than the mere coexistence of various languages. It is primarily about the transcultural circulation of values across borders, the negotiation of identities, the inversion, even inventions of meaning, often concealed by a common illusion of effective communication. (Zarate et al., 2008; my translation)

In the United States, the interest in the relationality afforded by thirdness underlies the recommendations of the Modern Language Association (MLA, 2007) to rethink the relation of language, literature and culture in foreign language departments. In the recent report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages of the MLA, the goal of language study at university level is defined as 'translingual and transcultural competence'. The Report adds:

The idea of translingual and transcultural competence places value on the multilingual ability to *operate between languages*. . . . In the course of acquiring functional language abilities, students are taught critical language awareness, interpretation and translation, historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception. (pp. 3–4; my emphasis)

Our students' ability to 'operate between languages' will not be so much a matter of bringing their message across accurately and appropriately, but of creating affordances, i.e. 'relationships of possibility' (van Lier, 2004: 105) among and between symbolic systems, whether these are verbal, visual, filmic, electronic or gestural. These relations will be created if they learn to see themselves both through their own embodied history and subjectivity and through the history and subjectivity of others.

The past President of the MLA, Michael Holquist, put it bluntly in a recent *MLA Newsletter*:

We need to do some educating among those powerful constituencies who do not recognize the existence of, much less the power of, Language [*sic*] and who conceive our work as confined to teaching individual languages. That is of course a very important and honorable part of what we do. But in performing that task, we are simultaneously, always already creating deep change in the minds of our students. (Holquist, 2007: 5)

This change is possible only because of the intricate link between language, thought and culture. Making Language in all its forms, rather than any particular language or literature, the central object of study in foreign language and literature departments, is quite revolutionary (see also Kramsch, 1993b). It offers a way

of overcoming the traditional dichotomy between the study of language and the study of literature, as well as between linguistics and applied linguistics in academic departments. It also represents the 'dream of a unified field' (Graham, 1980) that researchers in language education have never ceased to pursue.

Notes

- 1 The literary scholar Roland Barthes, who was keen on discovering the source of aesthetic pleasure in the reading of texts, rejoined in this sense the linguist Roman Jakobson, who at around the same time proposed that the distinguishing characteristic of a literary text was its focus on the poetic function of language (Jakobson, 1960). Barthes' notion of third meaning is also related to what the philosopher Karl Popper (1972) calls the 'world 3' of symbolic systems like language, scientific theories, and works of art – all products of the human mind that have their own logical relationships beyond the world 1 of physical objects and the world 2 of mental processes. In his 1977 essay, Barthes only deals with the third meaning in works of art.
- 2 Bakhtin's notion of dialogism has strong Orthodox Christian resonances. In the Christian theogony, God is both Father and Son, Christ is both Man and God. Thirdness is the principle that holds the two poles of the duality together in the person of the 'Holy Spirit'. This third person of the Trinity represents the love between Father and Son, between God and Man.
- 3 See as an example, the different ways in which the Kurdish conflict with Turkey is represented in the media in Germany. While the German language media speaks of the Kurds in Turkey as 'rebels', the Turkish language media calls them 'terrorists' (Kulish, 2007: 4).
- 4 Critical Discourse Analysis does study the relation of language and power but, because it has an educational agenda, it often gets caught between a Marxist structuralist view and a Foucauldian post-structuralist view of power relations (Fairclough, 1999).
- 5 The notion of indexicality goes back to Halliday's notion of genre in the 1960s–1970s.
- 6 Communication in cyberspace has also become a kind of romanticized 'third culture' that supposedly speaks the universal language of computer technology and tends to gloss over power struggles and identity conflicts. The location of this virtual third culture is all the more difficult to identify and talk about as it is the invisible interface that is increasingly defining our discursive existence (see, e.g. Poster, 1995; Turkle, 1995; Jones, 1997; Mitchell, 2003).

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CHAPTER
12
Language Learning as
Discursive Practice

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12.1 Introduction

I begin this chapter with a quote by Karl Marx, which states, ‘It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness’ (Marx in Tucker, 1972: 4). It is a rather bold statement, but if we look past the strong rhetoric, we find a provocative claim being made about the relationship between social activity and individual mind. This same view underlies the notion of language learning as discursive practice. Restated, it is this: the source of language learning in classrooms resides not in individual learners, but in what is done in activity with them, that is, in the interactionally-instantiated discursive practices constituting language classroom communities. These interactional practices are what give fundamental shape to what individuals come to know as language and language learning.

Such a view on language learning is the focus of this chapter. The chapter is organized into three sections. The first section presents an overview of key assumptions about language and learning embodied in this perspective. The second examines data from several language classrooms to explore the opportunities for and outcomes of language learning made available in the discursive practices of these contexts. The chapter concludes with a discussion of implications for research and pedagogy arising from a view of language learning as discursive practice.

12.2 A Usage-based Perspective of Language and Learning

The notion of language learning as discursive practice draws on theoretical insights and empirical support on the nature of language and learning from several fields and most centrally, linguistic anthropology and in particular the large body of work on language variation and social identity¹, conversation analysis², functional and cognitive linguistics³ and cultural psychology⁴. In brief, the insights and findings from these different disciplines reveal language knowledge to be fundamentally dynamic and malleable, comprised of fairly simply organized collections of linguistic forms and patterns, whose structural shapes and meanings are tied to one’s pragmatic pursuits in the intellectual and practical discursive practices constituting one’s daily lives.

Discursive practices⁵ are culturally-mediated, conventionalized interactions by which members of a culture group experience and live in their social worlds. On a daily basis, individuals participate in a variety of discursive practices; they share information, complain, give and get advice, chat with friends, plan, gossip, instruct and so on. Each practice is comprised of a conventionalized goal or set of goals and a configuration of actions for accomplishing the goals that is accomplished through turns-at-talk (Schegloff, 2007). The minimal configuration of actions is the adjacency pair. An adjacency pair consists of two contiguously placed actions, the first of which initiates an exchange and projects a relevant second action or set of possible relevant actions as a response. For example, in standard American English, the action of asking a question seeking information typically makes the action of answering the next relevant action, i.e. the question 'Where are you going?' typically calls for a response. Similarly, a greeting from one speaker usually calls for a return greeting from another, (e.g. a second 'Hi' typically follows a first 'Hi'), a directive generally projects a compliant action and so on. Each action, in turn, is comprised of a conventionalized set of prosodic and linguistic regularities and collocations for its accomplishment. For example, in standard American English, a yes/no question is typically associated with the basic structure of auxiliary verb, subject and main verb uttered with rising intonation, e.g. 'Are you going?' Likewise, a change in the state of one's knowledge or attention in response to some prior action is typically associated with the discourse marker 'oh', stated with falling intonation.

Individuals' competent participation in discursive practices demands, in part, a reliance on ethnographically-grounded, practice-specific dispositions and expectations (Hanks, 1996; Levinson, 2006a, 2006b). These expectations include knowledge of the likely goals of a practice, the typical trajectories of actions by which such goals are realized as well as knowledge of the prosodic, linguistic and other resources conventionally used to infer meanings of turns and actions, to construct them so that they are interpreted by others in ways that are intended to be, and to anticipate larger action sequence configurations (Levinson, 2006a, 2006b). Individuals draw on this 'sedimented social knowledge' (Hanks, 1996: 238) to navigate through their discursive practices and to continually manage and display to others their ongoing understanding of what they are doing together.⁶

The competence individuals bring to their discursive practices is developed through repeated experiences in their practices with other, more experienced participants (Tomasello, 1999, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978, 1981, 1986). Key aspects of these experiences to the construction and organization of individual knowledge are their recurring nature and the distribution and frequency with which sequences of actions and their specific linguistic components are encountered in the discursive practice. The more frequent, reliable and stable the use of particular patterns and structures is in the unfolding actions of the practice, the more likely they will be stored and remembered.⁷ Also key are actions used by more expert participants that make salient these patterns and structures and their form-function relationships and that assist novices in noticing, experiencing, representing and remembering them. These include verbal actions such as repetitions, direct instruction

and tone and pitch changes. They also include nonverbal actions such as gaze and gesture.

These actions alone, however, do not give shape to individual knowledge. Individuals are active explorers of the structures and patterns of their practices. From the beginning, they use their cognitive capacities for sharing and directing joint attention to select and attend to particular structures and patterns of actions, to hypothesize about the meanings and motivations of others' actions, to test to see if their intended goals were met in their interactions and to reorganize both their understanding of the practice and their involvement in it. This recurring process of testing, using and testing again, is basic to human behaviour (Levinson, 2006a). Over time, and with assistance, individuals learn to recognize what is taking place and to anticipate turns and sequences of actions along with the linguistic and other resources used to interpret and construct actions, and eventually develop shared collections of language knowledge, i.e. 'the adaptive, complex, highly inter-related, and multiply categorized sets of recurrent regularities that arise from doing the communicative work humans do' (Bybee & Hopper, 2001: 48). In addition to conventional syntactic and lexical units, such knowledge includes various kinds of routine formulas, fixed and semi-fixed expressions, formulaic language and idioms and conventionalized collocations or groupings of units. These shared, dynamic grammars are the cognitive tools by which individuals make sense of and participate in their discursive worlds.

On this view, the development of individual language knowledge and skills is intimately linked to the discursive worlds in which individuals participate; the practices in which they spend their time do not simply enhance their individual development. Rather, they fundamentally shape and transform it. The patterns and structures used to accomplish action in practices function as 'carriers of socio-cultural patterns and knowledge' (Wertsch, 1994: 204), and the resulting collections of individual language knowledge and abilities reflect at the same time 'their socialization and individuation' (Williams, 1977: 37). It is the eventual internalization and self-regulated use of the actions and their conventionalized patterns and structures for realizing one's discursive practices, including the particular world-views embodied in them, which characterize learning. So, when we say that someone has learned something, it means, first, that the individual knows how to take action with the patterns and structures that were made available to him or her in the same ways that the patterns and structures were used towards him or her and, second, that the person also understands the cultural, historical and institutional meanings that his or her actions have. This is what Vygotsky (1978) means when he states, 'the method is simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tool and the result of the study' (p. 65).

The fundamental link between discursive practice and language knowledge makes apparent that, rather than culminating in an unchanging end-state, the construction of linguistic knowledge is an ongoing, dynamic process developing from its routinized uses in specific discursive practices. Resulting from the process are individually based organizations of language knowledge, i.e. collections of 'largely prefabricated particulars' (Hopper, 1998: 164) that are 'variable

and probabilistic' (Bybee and Hopper 2001: 219), available for use in appropriate contexts and practices.

To sum up, current theoretical insights and empirical research on language knowledge reveal it to be a consequence of extended involvement in regularly occurring discursive practices in which participants have 'various pragmatic goals towards the world and towards one another' (Tomasello, 2001: 136). The specific shapes it takes are tied most closely to the actions that individuals employ to negotiate specific contexts of action. It is the nature of the turns and actions being implemented in interaction that give rise to practice-specific dispositions and expectations (Levinson, 2006a). Discursive practices then are not just sites where language learning can take place. They are, more fundamentally, the design source from which language knowledge develops as 'a massive collection of heterogeneous *constructions*, each with affinities to different contexts and in constant structural adaptation to usage' (Bybee and Hopper 2001: 3; emphasis in the original). Any appearance of stability in individuals' disposition and collections of constructions is a matter of stability in their discursive pursuits and not an inherent aspect of the dispositions and collections themselves.

12.3 Studies of Classroom Learning

The perspective of language learning as discursive practice has much to contribute to understandings of classroom-based second and foreign language learning. Most significantly, it calls attention to the significance of classrooms, and more specifically, to their discursively formed instructional environments in shaping both the direction and outcomes of learners' language development. But it is not just the coming together of individuals to work towards a common goal that leads to transformation in learners' language knowledge. It is more fundamentally the actions constituting the discursive practices in which learners regularly engage that give shape to learners' knowledge. That is, the discursive practices of classrooms, and, more specifically the linguistic and interactional resources for realizing their turns and action sequences, are the shared tools by which teachers and learners together constitute, represent and remember what it means to know language and do language learning. The question about how language is acquired and represented in the mind of an individual learner then is an empirical one, begun by first looking not at what is being talked about in classroom interaction, but at the actions and their linguistic structures and patterns by the interactions between teachers and students are accomplished, as the discursive practices that are created in classroom interaction are 'the arena of language use from which other uses derive' (Ford et al., 2003: 122).

The question then becomes, what do we know about the discursive practices constituting language classrooms? There is a growing body of research on naturally occurring interaction in second and foreign language classrooms employing discourse and conversation analytic methods whose concern has been just this, that is, with uncovering the linguistic and interactional resources constituting the

discursive environments of language classrooms.⁸ While none of the studies employs explicitly a perspective of language learning as discursive practice as its interpretive lens, their findings, taken together, offer some useful insight into the kinds of discursive practices in which learners are regularly engaged. In fact, the main finding across the studies is that a great deal of teacher–student interaction in all kinds of language classrooms, across age groups, and across instructional and institutional contexts, is characterized by one particular discursive practice, the teacher-led three-part action sequence of Initiation–Response–Follow-up (also known as Feedback), shortened to IRF.

Each action of the IRF has a specific instructional function. The initial action, I, consists of the teacher posing a question or directive to a student or group of students that points students' attention to the curricular focus of instruction. This action projects the second action, a student response, R, whose function is to display the student's understanding of what is to be learned. The third action, the F, is the follow-up to the student response, provided by the teacher, which serves to evaluate student responses, and when necessary, to remediate that which is deemed inaccurate, insufficient or in some way unacceptable. This action can take several forms, including explicit corrections, where the teacher overtly marks the response as incorrect and either provides the correct form or directs another student to provide the sought-after response. It also includes clarification requests, in which the teacher asks for more or more clearly stated information, repetitions of student responses with different intonation contours, prompts where the teacher states or repeats part of an utterance and leaves the rest for the student to complete, and reformulations of student responses into more appropriate versions. It is this third part of the IRF, the follow-up to the student response, which gives the practice 'a specifically instructional tenor' (Heritage, 2005: 125). The turn-taking organization of the practice is also specialized, in that who may speak and when, and the kind of contributions each participant may make are restricted. It is the teacher who initiates the practice and who decides which responses are adequate and which are in need of correction or remediation (Heritage, 2005). Their continual orientation to this specialized sequence of action is the primary means by which teachers and students 'display and recognize that instructing is going on' (Macbeth, 2004: 729).

While studies of the IRF practice in language classrooms vary in terms of the contexts from which the data come, the findings on its instantiation are quite similar. Excerpt 1 is taken from a study of a high school with Spanish as a foreign language classroom in the United States (Hall, 2004). The excerpt begins with the teacher initiating an IRF sequence by posing the question 'are you sleepy sir' to a student. This is followed by a brief pause, in line 2, which the teacher apparently interprets as an inability by the student to respond as she goes on to aid the student in providing a relevant action by providing the prompt 'yes' in line 3. By indicating the kind of response she is expecting from the student with the cue 'yes', the teacher reveals that she is not anticipating an opinion from the student but, instead, is expecting a specific, correctable response. After an apparent attempt by the student, the teacher provides the rest of the expected response, as we see in

line 5, which the student repeats. The teacher's repetition of the student's response with a falling intonation in line 7 both affirms its correctness and provides a positive evaluation.

*Excerpt 1*⁹ (from Hall, 2004: 78)

1. T: Tú tienes sueño señor? la verdad
I'm not sleepy are you sleepy sir the truth
2. (.)
3. T: sí
(yes)
4. S2: ()
5. T: Tengo sueño.
(I'm sleepy)
6. S2: Sí tengo sueño.
(I'm sleepy)
7. T: Sí tengo sueño. Sí tengo sueño.
(yes I'm sleepy yes I'm sleepy)

Excerpt 2 below is another example of the practice's instantiation in a foreign language classroom. This excerpt is taken from a study by Mondada and Pekarek (2004) on the classroom interaction of a L2 French classroom in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. According to the authors, the classroom was designed for newly arrived immigrant children between the ages of 10 and 12; the children's L1 backgrounds are not reported. We take up the ongoing practice in line 18, which begins with a teacher-initiated directive to a student to provide a grammatically correct statement using a particular phrase. This action makes relevant a correctable student response as the next action, which student L provides in lines 19 and 20. The response calls for teacher feedback, and, in this case, it is an explicit positive evaluation, indicated by the use of *oké* (ok) and *ouais* (yeah) by the teacher in line 21. Another student, P, continues the practice by providing another correctable response in line 23 to the initial teacher directive. It is not apparent in the excerpt why P presumes that it is his turn but since the teacher does not initiate repair on P's action, it is assumed that P, perhaps through prior experience in the practice or a nonverbal gesture or eye gaze from the teacher, knows that it is his turn. No teacher uptake of P's response is given. Evidently, K takes the lack of response as an indication that P's response is correct and that it is his turn to respond to the initial directive, which he does in line 25. Part of K's response however, is taken to be incorrect as the next action in line 27 is a teacher correction of the linguistic item deemed to be inaccurate. K repeats the corrected item in line 28, and thereby indicates his receipt of the correction. The teacher provides a positive evaluation of the corrected response by repeating the last part of K's

answer with falling intonation, and after a brief pause, initiates another round of the practice by directing another student to provide a correctable response. While Mondada and Pekarek do not tell us the frequency with which the IRF practice occurs in this classroom, the students' apparent ease of participation, demonstrated in their knowing when and how to respond to the teacher's directive and interpreting successfully the teacher's evaluations of their responses, display a developing understanding of how the practice operates, its instructional goal and their roles in accomplishing it.

Excerpt 2 (From Mondada and Pekarek, 2004: 508)

- 18 T: °chhhh:°:°(.) Lorena une phrase avec ce[te(trousse)
°chhhh:°:°(.) Lorena a phrase with th[is pencil case
- 19 L: [cette trousse
[this pencil case
- 20 est dans ma valise
is in my bag
- 21 T: ok[é:. (.) ou]ais:,
ok[ay:.(.) ye]ah:,
- 22 B: [()]
- 23 P: cette trousse est à moi
This pencil case is mine
- 24 J: ((cough))
- 25 K: cette trousse est [(0.3) dans ma:] (0.9) ma sac
this pencil case is [(0.3) in my: (fem.)] (0.9) bag
- 26 J: [((cough))]
- 27 T: °mon:,°
°my:,° (masc.)
- 28 K: mon sac
my bag
- 29 T: sac.
bag.
- 30 (0.7)
- 31 T: fais une phrase avec cette trousse Ariane.
make a phrase with this pencil case Ariane.

Excerpt 3 is taken from a 2002 study by Irene Koshik on a US-based university level ESL writing conference between a teacher and a student. Koshik's analytic

focus in the study is on one particular aspect of IRF practice, the teacher initiation of a correctable student response through the use of a prompting device. She labels this specialized initiation a *decidedly incomplete utterance*, or a DIU. According to Koshik, DIUs are used by the teacher to aid the student in noticing and self-correcting errors in his written work. The excerpt begins with the teacher reading aloud a portion of a sentence from the student's text. After a brief pause, the teacher continues to read but stops just before completing the sentence. There ensues a fairly lengthy pause, after which, in line 187, the student completes the sentence with the expected correct verb tense. The teacher then brings closure to this round of the IRF with a positive evaluation of the student response, as seen in line 188.

Excerpt 3 (from Koshik, 2002: 287)

- 181 TJ: .h: ((*reading*)) >he died not from injuries.<
 182 (0.5) ((*TJ and SH gaze silently at text*))
 183 but drowned
 184 (1.2) ((*TJ and SH gaze silently at text*))
 185 ->><after he>
 186 (4.5) ((*TJ and SH gaze silently at text*))
 187 SH: ->had been?
 188 TJ: there ya go.

More data on the discursive practice come from two recent studies by John Hellermann (2003, 2005). Although the data are from US high school level mainstream content courses containing both mainstream English language speakers as well as linguistically diverse students and not from language classrooms per se, the studies are useful for our purposes here in that they provide even more architectural detail on the IRF. In his 2003 study, Hellermann examined the use of prosodic cues, and in particular, pitch contour, pitch level, timing and rhythm, in the third action of the sequence, the F, to indicate the teacher's assessment of the student response. He found that markers of positive assessment included repetitions of student responses with falling pitch contour and a mid level pitch that, while matching the intonation of the student response, lasted slightly longer. One example provided by Hellermann shows a lengthened teacher repetition of a student response, *food*, that almost precisely matches the falling intonation pattern of the student response. Markers of negatively assessed student responses in Hellermann's study included repetitions ending with a slightly rising pitch contour in the F slot.

Additional examples of the use of intonation to mark different assessment actions can be found in Excerpt 4, taken from Hellermann's (2005) study. Here,

we see several rounds of the IRF being accomplished. Each round begins with a teacher elicitation of a student response, as seen in lines 3 and 4, 6, 10, 17, 19 and 22. These elicitations call for correctable responses from the students, which are forthcoming in lines 5, 8, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21 and 23–25. The specific nature of these responses, in turn, project different kinds of teacher feedback. In response to the student contribution in line 5, for example, the teacher repeats the student's response 'mild' with falling intonation and thereby provides a positive evaluation of it. In line 10, the teacher's use of an elongated 'by' with slightly rising intonation is similar to the DIU we saw in Koshik's (2002) study and is intended to aid students in providing a correct response. However, the responses given by Jin and Tina in lines 12 and 13 are apparently not what the teacher is after since the feedback the teacher begins to provide appears to be an explicit correction in line 15. With his contribution in line 16, offered at the same time that the teacher is providing an explicit correction, Al appears to have assessed the earlier responses as incorrect as well and goes on to provide the expected response. With her repetition of Al's response with falling intonation in line 17, the teacher marks it as correct.

Excerpt 4 (from Hellermann, 2005: 108)

- 3 T: okay the CLASS STRUCTURE:.(.) strict? Or mi:ld. What
4 idea did you get yesterday.
5 Jin: mild.
6 T: mild. could you move among the classes.
7 Jin: (social mobility).
8 Aly: yes.
9 Tina: yes.
10 T: yes. by:?
11 (1)
12 Jin: plantation.
13 Tina: °owning a plan[↑]tation.°
14 (.)
15 T: [don't say–
16 Al: [>owning LAND<
17 T: [owning *land*. and WHERE was there (.) always going to
18 Tina: [I mean–yeah
19 T: be more land available.

- 20 Jin: [the west.
 21 Al: [the west.
 22 T: the west. (1)>if you could face what danger.<
 23 Al: [Indians.
 24 Jin: [Indians.
 25 Tina: [Indians

In addition to the details on the prosodic conventions used to mark the teacher's intention in the feedback slot, this study makes a further contribution with its finding on the specialized question pattern of the initial action in the IRF, the initiation. According to Hellermann's analysis, the use of this specialized pattern calls for a 'fill in the blank' known-answer response. We can see an example of this in line 22. Here, the teacher begins her elicitation of student responses with an assertion and inserts the question word toward the end of the utterance, asking 'if you could face what danger'. This action calls for a student response that replaces the phrase 'what danger' with a short correctable answer, which three students ably do in lines 23–25. From the students' apparent effortless participation in this practice, we can surmise that they are quite experienced in participating in the IRF. They are adept at figuring out and providing the kinds of knowledge displays that teacher initiations make relevant and at distinguishing and responding to the subtle changes in the intonation patterns of teacher feedback that express either affirmation or negative evaluation of their responses.

These and other findings from discourse and conversation analytic research on language classrooms make clear that the IRF is a pervasive practice in language classrooms. In fact, it appears to be the primary if not sole practice constituted in the interaction between teachers and students. If, as argued earlier, discursive practices are both the tool and result of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), we must ask, what is being learned here? Although no study of which I am aware has focused specifically on learner development in such practices, given the students' competent displays in these excerpts we can speculate that over time and with continued experience in the IRF, learners will become adept at using the practice and its tools for knowledge displays and assessments towards themselves and others in the very ways that they are used towards them by their teachers. This would include not just the acts of eliciting, assessing and correcting productions of language knowledge, but also the specific syntactic, prosodic and other patterns of language, such as the use of specialized questioning patterns to elicit short, correctable responses, and the use of rising and falling intonation contours to indicate levels of certainty and assessments that inhabit these acts.

In fact, a recent study by Gabi Kasper (2004) on peer conversations between German language learners and native speakers of German, while not directly concerned with learning, reveals traces of such development. The conversations she examined were an out-of-class assignment requiring university level German

language learners to meet with native-speaking peers to talk about anything they wanted to for 20 minutes or so. The pedagogical purpose of the assignment was to give the learners the opportunity to improve their fluency in German.

Excerpt 5 provides details on part of a more extended conversation between Cindy, one of the learners, and Dagmar, one of the native-speaking peers. The excerpt begins with Dagmar the native speaker disclosing some personal information. She tells Cindy in lines 37 and 38 that she has no boyfriend and adds a bit of self-deprecating humour by asking 'where is my prince'. With laughter and 'ja ja' in lines 39 and 40, Cindy affirms Dagmar's disclosure and adds some personal information of her own. Up until this point, Kasper argues, the two are talking as friends who, by establishing some common ground, seem interested in building on their potential friendship. In the next line, however, the forward movement of the conversation is temporarily stopped with the insertion of a different action by Cindy, in which she reformulates the utterance she offered in line 40, this time completing it with a rising intonation contour that is typical of a student response in the IRF indicating uncertainty and inviting correction from the teacher (Heritage, 2005). As Kasper notes in her analysis, since it had already been established in the two preceding turns that neither woman had a boyfriend, the sequential position and prosodic format of Cindy's utterance gives it a decidedly instructional tone. In line 43 we see that Dagmar, the native speaker, orients to this tone by taking on the role of teacher and providing Cindy with the desired feedback, which is acknowledged by Cindy with her repetition of the corrected response in line 44. Such insertions lead to what Kasper describes as 'a hybrid interactional form that incorporates some actions typical of ordinary conversation, whereas other actions treat the event as an exercise in foreign language practice' (2004: 558). Kasper reported that the insertions of such components of the IRF instructional practice were typical not only of the entire 20-minute talk between Cindy and Dagmar, but of her whole corpus of peer interaction data.

Excerpt 5 (from Kasper, 2004: 561)

- 037 D: *hh ich hab keinen freund (nur jetzt) [wo ist mein*
I don't have a boyfriend (only now) [where is my
- 038 *prinz ((declamatory voice))*
prince
- 039 C: [HUHEEhehehe
- 040 C: ((giggle)) ja, ja, ich ehm (.) keine freund
yeah, yeah, I no boyfriend
- 041 D: oh auch nicht, ((sympathetic voice))
oh you neither,
- 042 C: ich nicht freund?
I not boyfriend?

- 043 D: ich habe keinenfreu[nd
I don't have a boyfrie[nd
- 044 C: [ja ich habe keinen freund °auch nicht °
[yes I don't have a boyfriend °either°

Studies by Mori (2004) and Young and Miller (2004) provide similar examples of language learners displaying budding abilities in using the actions and linguistic and prosodic patterns of the IRF to identify, solicit correction, and ultimately correct errors in their own production of language. Findings like these provide intriguing evidence that language learners are indeed becoming competent in using the tools of this discursive practice to self-direct their attention to the accuracy of their own language production, procedures that our earlier examples showed to be largely teacher-controlled. And, as we saw in Kasper's study, this occurs not just in classrooms but in talk outside classrooms, as well.

If what language learners take away from their classrooms in terms of their developing routines and expectations of language knowledge as well as their understandings of what it means to learn another language are intimately tied to the kinds of discursive practices that are created in their classroom interactions, then it appears that the IRF instructional practice is far more consequential to language learning than it has been given credit for. Its importance does not come from its use in guiding learners to notice and correct errors of grammatical accuracy and appropriateness in the production of language. Instead, its importance comes from the fact that it appears to be the primary source, not only of what learners come to understand as language, but also of what they come to understand as the doing of language learning. Indeed, it appears to be the only tool by which teachers and language learners are constituting, representing and remembering what it means to know and do language learning. And, from what we have seen here, from their extended experiences in the IRF learners are developing an understanding of language as the production of accurate forms and language learning as the processes of assessing and correcting one's knowledge of forms.

For now, we need to set aside the question of whether these are the only kinds of understandings of language and learning that we think language learners should or could be developing in classrooms. The more important point has to do with the mutually constitutive relationship between language learning and discursive practice that these findings present to us. The specific point is this: what learners take away from their classrooms in terms of their target language knowledge and understandings of what it means to learn another language is intimately tied to the kinds of discursive practices that are created in their classrooms. To state this more generally, it is through the actions created in interactions between teachers and learners and specifically through the various linguistic means constituting these actions that specific language-knowledge-shaping learning opportunities are created. Through their interactions with their teachers, learners become experienced at figuring out the actions that are being implemented in the utterances including linguistics resources by which the utterances are constructed and

eventually learn to use them to take actions of their own. The practices are then the very sources from which grammar and other language skills emerge as 'a constantly evolving set of cognitive routines that are shaped, maintained, and modified by language use' (Ono and Thompson, 1995: 215–216). To paraphrase Vygotsky (1978: 65): the discursive practices of learners' classrooms are simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tools and the results of learning.

12.4 Conclusions and Implications

A perspective of language learning as discursive practice is powerful in that it reveals the fundamentally interdependent relationship between classroom practices and language learning and so has the capability of changing not only how we conceptualize and design research on language learning but also how we conceptualize and design language pedagogy. In terms of research, it makes clear that the language knowledge and understandings about language that learners come to acquire cannot be understood fully without understanding the discursive conditions of their specific classroom contexts. For this reason, an adequate study of language learning can no longer be concerned with the acquisition of linguistic systems by individuals detached from their real world contexts of use. Instead, the goal must be to understand the varying shapes and substance of individuals' language knowledge as it is constructed by individuals-in-interaction with others within specific contexts of action. As Scribner (1997: 268) suggests, 'The starting point and primary object of analysis is the actual process of interaction in which humans engage the world and each other.' To accomplish this, researchers need to reconsider the methods they use for conducting research on language learning. Certainly, the discourse and conversation analytic methods used by the studies we looked at here to reveal in fine detail the architectural elements of the IRF provide a useful beginning. Just the small snapshots of interaction they provide, however, will not be enough as the best they can do is to allow for speculation on what learners may be learning. For more robust understandings, we need corpora of classroom discursive practices gathered from various contexts over extended periods of time. Such data will allow for close, detailed examinations of the discursive practices found in particular learning contexts and the kinds of grammars, i.e. collections of routines and 'prefabricated particulars' (Hopper, 1998: 164) that are motivated by these practices, including the various means used to assist learners in their participation. Ultimately, through the examination and comparison of these practices across contexts and time, we will be able to discern the complex relationship between specific tool use in particular learning contexts and the particular collections of individual language knowledge and dispositions that emerge from their extended engagement in their practices.

Fortunately, recent advancements in electronic tools such as digital video and audio recorders and transcription and analysis technologies can help make the use of such methods easier by facilitating the way that data are collected, represented, analysed and shared. For example, the tools can allow for the direct connection of

transcriptions to digitized audio and video, and, and thus facilitate the instant retrieval of annotations and immediate access to data from annotations. Such visual representations can reveal the incredible complexity and dynamics of language use and development in a way that pages of description cannot. In addition, the emerging technologies can foster the building of networked research coalitions across geographically distant regions, whose shared interests in documenting the intimate links between discursive practices and language learning will contribute to an understanding of language learning 'as a practice in which [learners] all participate in very different ways, to very different effects, under very different pressures' (Crowley, 1996: 28).

As for teaching, a view of language learning as discursive practice makes clear that classroom language learning is a locally based interactional endeavour tied to what is done in classrooms in subtle but consequential ways. Transforming what learners come to know and be able to do in the target language then can only come about by changing the opportunities for learning that are created in teacher–student interaction. This does not mean changing how language is talked about. It means changing how language is used, i.e. changing the kinds of discursive practices created in classroom interaction between teachers and learners, including the purposes for talk, the actions and actions sequences and their various prosodic, linguistic and other conventions used to accomplish these purposes, and the role relationships that obtain among the participants. To paraphrase the quote by Marx with which this chapter began, 'All forms and products of *language knowledge* cannot be dissolved by mental criticism . . . but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to this idealistic humbug; that not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history.'

This is not to suggest that there is no room for the IRF in the language classroom as surely, there is a pedagogical advantage to developing in learners the skills and abilities needed to spot and correct errors of accuracy in language production. The challenge is to move beyond the IRF and imagine how we might create interactional conditions in the classroom that provide learners with opportunities to build skills and abilities and understandings about language and themselves as language users needed to manage their participation in a wider, more diverse range of discursive practices. Keith Richard's (2006) study is a telling demonstration of how subtle changes in the kinds of identities one makes relevant in classroom interaction can change the nature of the discursive practice and the actions and sequence of actions being accomplished in teacher–student talk and, concomitantly, the kinds of language routines and regularities that are made available as possible tools for appropriation by the learners.

In highlighting the intrinsic link between teaching and learning, a view of language learning as discursive practice provides a principled basis for constructing practices in the classroom that best suit the needs of our learners howsoever they are defined. As Richards (2006) points out, however, the possibility of bringing to the classroom more productive forms of teacher–student interaction bring associated practical, pedagogical and moral responsibilities. Opening up the professional floor for a discussion of these responsibilities would be a good place to

begin to imagine how we might create discursive conditions in classrooms that help learners develop a complex range of understandings and perspectives, knowledge and skills, and values and motivations for full participation not only in their classroom practice but in their everyday, social practices as well.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Bucholtz, Liang and Sutton (1999); Gumperz (1982, 1992); Hanks (1996); Heath (1983); Hymes (1972, 1974); Ochs (1993, 1996); and Ochs and Schieffelin (1995).
- 2 See, *inter alia*, Heritage (2005); Sacks (1972); and Schegloff (1991, 2007)
- 3 Here, the work of Bates (1999); Bowerman and Levinson (2001); Bybee and Hopper (2001); Halliday (1978); Hopper (1998); Levinson (2006a/b) and Tomasello (1999, 2003) is relevant.
- 4 See, for example, the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1981, 1986), Leontiev (1981), Cole (1996) and Wertsch (1994, 1998).
- 5 In earlier work (Hall, 1993, 1995a) I have referred to these as oral practices. The terms 'language game' (Wittgenstein, 1953) and 'communicative practice' (Hanks, 1996) have also been used. I use discursive practice here in keeping with its more recent use by Young (2007), who provides a more detailed review of the origins of the term.
- 6 As an aside, when engaging in our discursive practices, we also have at our disposal the organization of repair, "the self-righting" mechanism' (Schegloff et al., 1977: 381) of talk. Repair allows us to deal with troubles that threaten our shared understandings of what we are doing together in the unfolding of the course of actions. For a more detailed review of repair, see Hall (2007).
- 7 See Boyland (2001); Bybee (2003); Bybee and Hopper (2001); Tomasello (2003).
- 8 See, for example, Hall (1995b, 1998, 2004); Haneda (2004); He (2004); Hellermann (2003, 2005, 2008); Kasper (1985); Koshik (2002); Lin (1999); Mondada and Pekarek (2004); Mori (2002, 2004); Poole (1992); Richards (2006); Seedhouse (2004); and Young and Miller (2004). Much of this research has its roots in a broad base of discourse analytic studies of the interaction found in first language content-based classrooms. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) were the first to use the term to describe the basic pattern of interaction between teachers and students. Additional studies on the IRF include Baker (1992), Barnes (1992), Cazden (1988), Edwards and Westgate (1994), Gutierrez (1994), Heap (1992), Lemke (1990), Macbeth (1994, 2004), Mehan (1979), Nassaji and Wells (2000); and Tharp and Gallimore (1991).
- 9 Following CA transcription conventions, in this and subsequent excerpts, punctuation marks indicate intonation, with a question mark '?' indicating rising intonation and a period '.' indicating falling intonation. A dot in parentheses '(.)' indicates a pause of less than one second. Left brackets '[' indicate overlapping talk. A word or words in parentheses '(word)' indicates transcriber uncertainty. An italicized word or words in double parentheses '((word))' provides contextual information. A colon

‘:’ indicates elongation of a sound or sounds. The degree sign ‘°’ indicates soft voice. Numbers in parentheses ‘(.1)’ represent length of pause in tenths of a second.

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