TESL REPORTER

Vol. 29(2) October 1996

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ISSN 0886-0661
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Peer Speech Repairs in EFL Classroom Activities

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Introduction

In the last few decades, the conjunction of, on the one hand, pedagogical approaches tried in foreign language English (EFL) classrooms, such as task-based teaching (e.g., Candling, 1987; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Long & Crookes 1992) its variants such as the procedural approach (Prabhu, 1984, 1987), or task-oriented teaching (Johnson, 1982), communicative language teaching (e.g., Breen, 1987; Brumfit, 1978, 1979; Munby, 1978; Nunan, 1985, 1989), "prosocial" approaches — such as peer-teaching, cooperative/collaborative learning (Bitzer, 1994; Ghaith & Shabban, 1995; Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Slavin, 1983a, 1990, 1991) and, on the other hand, empirical research from a sociolinguistic perspective on non-native speakers' (NNS) language in small groups (Doughty & Pica, 1984; Pica & Doughty, 1985, 1988) have concurred to strengthen the underlying claim of the interaction hypothesis.

Task-based approaches to teaching have been adopted on several grounds. These include their emphasis on the learning process as appropriate content during language learning (Breen, 1987, p. 161) and their focus on the process of communication and/or language learning by confronting learners with the unpredictable nature of language in use (Hull, 1992, p. 81). Other proponents have cited the potential of task-based approaches to promote language fluency through practice (Johnson, 1982, p. 149) and their influence on learners by directing attention to particular aspects of content and specified ways of processing information (Gibson & Levin, 1975; McConkie, 1977). Further benefits include their potential to offer real benefits in diagnosing students' particular problems, opportunities to demonstrate and improve communication skills by aiding fluency through the use of natural and spontaneous language, and contributing to the learners' linguistic development by improving accuracy through the discovery of new linguistic terms (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993, p. 203). Communicative language teaching has been part of this movement.

Peer-teaching/learning or collaborative teaching/ learning in the EFL classroom took a cue from research from several disciplines. In social psychology especially, it has been theorized (and empirical research has corroborated the claims) that cooperative learning (i) promotes learning and intellectual abilities (see Kagan, 1989; Smith, Johnson &

Johnson, 1991), and (ii) shows gains in various aspects of academic performance (see Armstrong, Johnson & Johnson, 1981), and in the improvement of interpersonal relations and skills (Cohen, 1980; Slavin, 1979, 1983b). This teaching/learning approach has, therefore, been strongly recommended for use in teacher programs (e.g., Shaw, 1992; Whitaker, 1990; Woodward, 1992).

Concurrently, empirical research on non-native speakers' (NNS) language in small groups (see mainly Doughty & Pica, 1984; Pica & Doughty, 1985, 1988) has suggested that this teaching/learning format is more effective than the teacher-fronted type of classrooms because it (i) promotes comprehension (Wintsch, 1984); (ii) creates opportunities to achieve facility in using the target language (Long & Porter, 1985; Rivers, 1987); (iii) allows the provision of feedback, one of the ingredients for acquisition (Pica, Kanagy & Falodun, 1993); and (iv) contributes to increasing the learners' linguistic accuracy (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993).

On the other hand, peer learning through interaction can be faulted for the risk to which learners are exposed, namely: the possibility of sharing incorrect input (e.g. Schweers, 1995), the risk of encouraging the use of learners' first languages (L1s) (see Prabhu, 1987), and the finding that interaction might not have the purported effect on learning (see Schweers, 1995). The learners' low level of attainment in English might result in them not having anything new or useful to share and might instead involve sharing faulty input. This fear of sharing faulty input, the need, called for by Ramani (1990), to gain understanding of the theoretical justification for the use of classroom procedures, and the lack of data on the real effect of interaction on L2 learning all warranted an in-depth case study. Thus an empirical study was carried out on the effect of peer interaction on EFL learning among Zairean students.

The present paper reports on a portion of the results of that study, namely peer speech repairs and the potential positive and negative effects on the learning of the target language. Both space and the need to present a detailed description of speech repairs do not allow a full discussion of other aspects of interaction.

Assumptions

EFL learning (as is the case in Zaire) is assumed to be more difficult than ESL learning because in the former context learners operate in a language environment in which exposure and practice opportunities in English are few and far between. This poor provision of input is compounded by the school-home language switch from English to mother tongues.

One way of improving the learning environment might be to encourage the learners to seek practice opportunities in and outside the classroom by involving them in interaction-inducing tasks in the classroom and extracurricular activities in which the use of English is very likely, if not inevitable. The creation of an input-rich environment, our study assumed, would create a pattern of language use and a set of interactional routines among the learners, which, in turn, would have a positive effect on their English language development.

Context, Subjects, Procedure, and Hypotheses

A cross-sectional study (see Kasanga, 1994) was conducted at the University of Lubumbashi, Zaire, in early 1993, with several aims, two of which are most relevant here. Firstly, the study set out to critically test the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1980, 1981). This theoretical model, drawing largely from Krashen's (1977, 1980) claim that comprehensible input is necessary for acquisition, sustains that interactional modifications through negotiated conversation, help to make input comprehensible, and are therefore conducive to learning. Secondly, a need was felt to provide theoretical backing to current classroom procedures worldwide (also adopted in Zaire) requiring students' involvement in communicative-rich activities.

The study involved 54 subjects selected out of a total population of 150 multilingual, French-speaking students majoring in English language and literature at the University of Lubumbashi in Zaire. A stratified random selection was used to obtain a representative cross-gender sample within and across proficiency levels. English language proficiency was equated with the year of study, following previous studies (e.g., Nsakala, 1990; Ntahwakuderwa, 1987) which showed that the use of the year of study was a fairly reliable estimate of the level of attainment in English.

The subjects were paired within, then across proficiency levels. Each pair was asked to perform two types of tasks: a map task and a topic discussion task. In both tasks, the activity was repeated (with a second map or topic) so that the members of each pair could alternate positions. By so doing, the researcher could ensure that in no instance could a subject be given unfair advantage to dominate the activity. If there was any evidence of domination, this should only be a result of the level of proficiency, one of the variables posited as likely to affect the rate of interaction.

In the map task, the two subjects had at their disposal colored maps of the same African country (Angola, then Liberia), but with different information. This created an "information gap" (Doughty and Pica, 1986; Pica and Doughty, 1988) which would require both participants to contribute information to find the solutions to sub-tasks. In the topic discussion task, each member of a pair was asked to suggest a topic for discussion.

Three main working hypotheses were formulated for statistical testing (t-tests). Seven subsidiary hypotheses were derived from the first hypothesis above. Each these subsidiary hypotheses is relevant to a type of modifications of interaction. Each of the main hypotheses is stated and justified below.

Hypothesis #1. It was predicted that convergent tasks (map tasks) would result in more modifications of interaction than divergent tasks (topic discussion tasks). If they were concurrent with the above prediction, the results would strengthen earlier suggestions that the type of task is a determining factor in speech performance (e.g., Nsakala, 1990) and interactional behavior (e.g., Pica, Holliday, Lewis, Berducci & Newman, 1991; Young & Milanovic, 1992).

As for the seven subsidiary hypotheses derived from the above main hypothesis, a "blind prediction," as it were, was formulated to the effect that the rate, in percentages per T-units and fragments, of the production of individual modifications of interaction (clarification requests, confirmation and comprehension checks, other- and self-repairs, elaborations, topicalizations) in both types of tasks would not show a significant difference.

Hypothesis #2. It was predicted, in the second main hypothesis, that in mixed-proficiency dyads in both tasks, the more proficient students would initiate and achieve significantly more modifications of interaction than their less proficient counterparts. This prediction was based on the assumption that more proficient students would feel confident about their knowledge and in their use of the target language and would therefore check their interlocutors' comprehension, make their speech more comprehensible, or initiate and achieve repairs of their own and their interlocutors' incorrect or infelicitous speech.

Hypothesis #3. Following the prediction made in the second main hypothesis of the study, it was hypothesized that the proportion of modifications of interaction achieved by learners would increase with their level of proficiency.

To strengthen the validity of the statistical results, qualitative data were also collected. These consisted of students' verbal protocols collected by means of a semi-structured interview. It was hoped that through a triangulated interpretation, a better picture of the interaction and learning processes would emerge and concurrent quantitative and qualitative results would confirm (or disconfirm) the theoretical claims. To date, few studies of interaction and L2 acquisition (SLA) have included such additional probing procedures to establish the strength of the quantitative results. There is more than one reason for using both quantitative and qualitative procedures: Not only can they be combined in one study (see Strauss & Corbin, 1990), but the use of both in some studies

can ensure that "quality research" is not represented only by one particular paradigm (Johnson & Saville-Troike, 1992).

The Data: Results and Discussion

Although both the quantitative and qualitative data were tape-recorded, only the former were transcribed for statistical analysis. The recorded interviews were submitted to a content analysis (see Mostyn, 1985) in which a set of pre-determined categories allowed us to group the data before an inferential analysis was performed. For the purpose of this paper, data and results relevant to repairs will be discussed extensively, whereas those relevant to other modifications of interaction will only be briefly stated. A summarized account of the results is provided in the next section, but a fuller discussion can be found in Kasanga (in press-a).

Strong or partial support was found in the data for the three main hypotheses. The results for Hypothesis #1 (see Table 1, Appendix B) overwhelmingly supported the prediction: task type appeared to be a critical factor in the amount of peer interaction. The results thus reinforced those of a previous study by Pica & Doughty (1988) in which it was found that manipulation of the task pattern produced significant differences in the rate of interaction.

The blind prediction of no difference in performance on individual modifications of interaction between the two types of tasks was rejected in five of the seven cases (Table 2, Appendix C), viz.: clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, self-repairs, and topicalizations.

Although the results for other-repairs and elaborations showed no statistical difference at alpha .05, this failure was outweighed by the results for all the other interactional modifications. The above results for the main hypothesis and the blind prediction seemed to confirm previous assertions that the type of task in which the learners were engaged was a determining factor in the speech performance (Nsakala, 1990) and interactional behavior (Pica, Holliday, Lewis, Berducci, & Newman, 1991) .

Hypothesis #2 was partially supported by the data: The results of all seven modifications of interaction taken together suggested that the level of proficiency was an influential factor in the production of modifications of interaction: More proficient students outperformed their less proficient interlocutors.

Strong support was found for Hypothesis #3: The ability to initiate and achieve modifications of interaction seemed to increase with the increase in the level of proficiency. Only between the modifications of interaction by Third and Second Year students was the difference weak.

At this stage, a partial conclusion can be made. If modification of interaction is posited as important to second language comprehension (e.g., Doughty & Pica, 1986), and, in turn, to the acquisition process itself, as is implied in the Interaction Hypothesis, participation pattern stands as an important ingredient in the increase of the potential for learning.

In the search for convergence (or divergence) of the quantitative results and the qualitative data, the students' verbal protocols were examined. The self-report data relating to the perception of dominance by peers at a higher level of English proficiency seemed to support the quantitative results on the level of proficiency and the rate of interaction by showing a link between the level of English proficiency and the increase in proportion.

Regarding the possible effect on interaction of the types of task, in their responses to the relevant questions, the interviewees, in their majority, expressed their preference for the topic discussion tasks over the map tasks, citing the demand of completing the sub-tasks and finding the appropriate solutions in the map tasks as the main reason for their preference. The majority of the respondents in the interview perceived the map tasks as being more conducive to a greater amount of modifications of interaction than the topic discussion tasks.

This perception seemed to be in agreement with findings from a study of pausological aspects of speech development by Sabin, Clemmer, O'Connell and Kowal (1979, pp. 51-52) in which they stated:

> The tasks of reading aloud, retelling and narration yield distinct levels of verbal performance, reflecting variations in the complexity or demand characteristics involved in planning, organizing, and formulating utterances, retrieving material from memory; making decisions; monitoring one's utterance, etc.

The increase of the ability to initiate and achieve modifications of interaction as a function of the increase in the level of proficiency could not be verified from the students' protocols. However, it may be tentatively assumed from the results regarding the possible dominance in the course of interaction that the higher the level of proficiency in the target language, the greater the potential (ability) for initiating and achieving modifications of interaction.

Now, let us turn to the discussion of the significance and effect of repair in the learning process. As mentioned earlier, repair is one of the interactional features extensively mentioned in the SLA literature, although under different labels, such as

"correction", "repairing repetition" (Doughty & Pica, 1984; Ellis, 1985; Pica & Doughty, 1985). Repair is a generic term that encompasses corrective and non-corrective moves, and as such, was chosen to serve as a superordinate term which could best define ways in which errors, unintended forms, or misunderstandings are corrected by speakers or others during interaction (see also Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992). To conceal the students' identity, two precautions were taken: only initials, not related to their names were used and they are all referred to in this paper as "she" or "her". The symbols used in this and other excerpts of transcripts are described in Appendix A.

1a)	NL	So I know that our country is=have many many possibility
•	OM	Uhh ↑
•	NL	possibilities to pay a bus.
b)	NL	The second reason is that it is one of the co the language I I I love
	OM	Yes
•	NL	Er if I can say it. One of the languages I love
•	OM	You prefer.
c)	MF	Yes. I think that we have to: to look for er the transp transportation which is er which cost er lower
•	KK	Lower ↑
	MF	Yes
•	KK	Which is cheap ↑
	MF	Yes.

In (1a), NL, a First Year student, initiated a self-repair, in other words a repair of her own speech, and finalized it without the assistance of her partner, OM, a Third Year student. However, in (1b), although she also initiated the repair by a trigger (Er, if I can say it.), and eventually achieved the self-repair (**One of the languages I love,**) her partner, OM, moved to further repair (**You prefer**) the repaired speech which she found still inaccurate. But in (1c), MF did not realize the incorrectness of her speech; her partner, KK, on realizing the incorrect speech initiated the repair (**Lower↑**) and after realizing that MF did not repair her speech, she (KK) repaired it for MF (**Which is cheap↑**). This is called an "other-repair", as is the second move by OM in (1b). In this instance, only after the other-repair by KK did MF realize the defect of her speech and acquiesced (**Yes**) to it.

The cases above of self- and other-repairs which are achieved implicitly, that is without any attendant accounting, are called "embedded repairs" (see Jefferson, 1987). Day, Chenoweth, Chun, and Luppescu (1984) would call this type of repairs "off-record feedback" and, unlike Jefferson's embedded repairs, which apply to both self- and other-repairs, off-record feedback would refer only to other-repairs. Repairs achieved explicitly with an accounting of the error provided are referred to by Jefferson as "exposed repairs".

In Day et al.'s nomenclature, these repairs are called "on-the record feedback"; once more, this designation applies only to other-repairs.

Jefferson's classification, which seemed more pertinent to the data of the present study, was adopted. Exposed repairs are illustrated in the excerpt below:

2a)	AY	Umm I can give you another datum for instance by (1.5) er by car
	MC	By car ((?)). Let's say by road.
b)	AY	That's a natural that's a natural effect. You can't be afraid of it. And er (.5) you know I I love the:: the rainy season again
	ME	Just say I like it.
	AY	Yes I like it. I like I can say. Thank you for the correction.

In (2a), the other-repair also includes a side-comment by MC, a Third Year student who repaired faulty speech by AY, a First year student. In (2b), ME, who repaired AY's faulty speech, made a side-comment about the repair (**Let's say . . .**), as did AY (**. . . I can say. Thank you for the correction**).

In the following discussion, repairs will not be differentiated along the lines mentioned above. Both self- and other-repairs, exposed or embedded, will simply be lumped together, given that the research design and questions did not require the examination and analysis of individual types of repairs.

As predicted in one subsidiary hypothesis, the results showed a significant difference between the rate of repairs initiated and performed by the students at different levels of proficiency. The students at a higher level of English proficiency initiated more often repair moves of their own and their partners' speech at a lower level of attainment than did the latter.

Repair moves frequently occurred throughout the activities and across aspects of the language, such as: pronunciation, syntax and grammar, and vocabulary. However, looking at the proportions, it was found that grammar and syntactical repairs outnumbered by far the other types. Also noteworthy were the findings that (i) students at a higher level of proficiency tended to repair their own speech and that of their interlocutors at a lower level more often than the latter, and (ii) against expectations, male students outperformed female students in repairing faulty or infelicitous speech, regardless of the proficiency level of the female students (for a detailed description of gender effect on interaction as found in this study, see Kasanga, in press-b).

The students' verbal protocols confirmed the above quantitative findings. The protocols also suggested that the students were aware of slips, mistakes, and errors that

went unrepaired, mostly after the recorded activities had been played back, or belatedly when it would seem inappropriate to attempt a repair move. An examination of some students' recorded performance in both tasks revealed a number of instances of long pauses being followed by a variety of phenomena: hesitation, repetition of previous stretches of speech, drawls, and even self-repairs. These phenomena confirmed the students' statements suggesting widespread monitoring of their own speech.

One more phenomenon, as part of the study, needed close examination: the extent to which the fear, expressed by some (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993), that misleading input would be shared by learners, could be justified. Out of the more than 18 hours of tape-recordings converted into over 400 pages of typescript, only one case of incorrect speech repair, illustrated in the following excerpt, was found:

3	ME	(. . .) And the ball goes at er over the other:: team. °Do YOU say team↑°
	AY	| Yes team |
	ME	*Steam*. And what happen↑. If for instance the man who: has to::to kick the ball kick it in order to go again in the er the first *steam* it goes outside (56 turns)
	AY	Mmmm
	ME	They are going towards the other *steam*. So they have to keep the ball in order to kick it in the basket.

The italicized mispronunciation (*steam*) in the excerpt above was an unfortunate and freak occurrence of a misleading speech repair. The repair was provided by AY, a first year student, at the request of her interlocutor, ME, a second year student, who appealed for assistance regarding the use of the word "team." Unfortunately, AY's feedback (**Yes team**), although a correct repair, was misheard and misconstrued by ME as (**Yes steam**). Sadly, the misunderstanding persisted throughout the stretch of the free talk, as can be seen in the excerpt: 56 turns later, ME still used the incorrect word and AY could not realize the mistake, or if she realized the mistake, she did not attempt to repair it.

Although the above misrepair was the only case of incorrect input found in the data, there were quite a number of cases of errors that went unrepaired, such as the following:

4	ME	You may be right but you must take into consideration (.5) er what you call (.5) the engagement. And you ((?)) take into consideration the engagement. Since you've been engaged with someone your area is *limit limitated*. You can't just
	MJ	So in which way
	|	|

ME for instance
MJ Is it *limitated*?

The above example was the most infelicitous, and hopefully, one of the very few cases of misrepairs in which an inaccurate self-repair (**limitated**)—a coinage—was offered by one student (ME) to her peer (MJ), who accepted unquestionably and even used it, probably with a view to incorporating it in her lexicon. MJ seemed uncertain about which of the misrepair (**limitated**) and the alternative word previously used (**limit**) was correct.

Surely, the help of a teacher or a native speaker would be desirable in both these cases in which incorrect input was provided or a misrepair was adopted by the interlocutor. In one semi-structured interview, another student expressed her disappointment that neither she nor her interlocutor could provide the correct pronunciation of one word (**spiritually**) which she desperately wanted to use. She obtained the correct pronunciation only later when she looked it up. The desirability to have assistance from the teacher at hand was also clearly expressed by another student in the interview in the following terms:

> (. . .) [T]eacher-fronted lectures and teacherless small-group or pair-work in my view, (. . .) cannot be compared equally favorably: in lectures we learn from the teacher many new items and notions which help us to improve our knowledge and grade, but in peer activities, we have only practice opportunities which may not be enough to improve our vocabulary.

However, it must be borne in mind that (i) these cases of misrepair and incorrect input were few and far between, and (ii) the context in which they occurred was a speech simulation of an L2 classroom, not a stretch of naturally occurring classroom speech. Even if it was an occurrence in a real classroom situation, unless it is individual, self-directed, self-instructed, most learning, including through pair-work or small-group activities, occurs under the watchful eyes and close guidance of a competent instructor who can provide correction and feedback.

Some Implications

In considering the findings of this study, the first thing to observe is that on the balance of evidence from this study, the support for the interaction hypothesis, as currently discussed, is strong enough to warrant its use as theoretical justification for the use of classroom procedures involving peer activities. Here perhaps, Holec's (1984, p. 2) idea of linking individual learners' capacity, in self-access learning, to assume responsibility for their learning with the contribution of other learners finds an echo.

The pattern of peer-correction found in the study reported in this paper seemed to diverge from that in native-nonnative interaction: It has been found, both in longitudinal (Gaskill, 1980) and in cross-sectional (Chun, Day, Chenoweth and Luppescu, 1982) studies, that native speakers tend to ignore nonnative speakers' errors. In Chun et al.'s study of 28 ESL learners of mixed proficiency interacting with native speakers, not only was there a low incidence of other-repairs (below 9% of the total number of errors committed), but it was also found that only factual and discourse errors, rather than language-based ones (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) were attended to. Schwartz (1980), too, in a study similar to the one reported in this paper, found a low incidence of other-repairs among nonnative speakers and a much higher rate of self-repairs. One explanation for the differential distribution of the types of repairs found in previous studies might be sociocultural differences. These may influence individual learners' choice of the types of repairs with which they feel at ease. In some socio-cultural contexts, other-repairs may be face-threatening to one party (or to both), a feeling that may not be felt strongly in other contexts.

Regarding the finding in the study reported here about the low incidence of misrepairs, one implication is that, despite a relatively higher number of unrepaired inaccurate speech confirmed by students' reports, this should convince those who might be skeptical about the use of peer-led activities that there is very little to fear from these procedures.

Also evidenced by the data is the low incidence of the use among the students of languages other than English in the fire of the debate. This alleviates the fear by Prabhu (1987) that learners sharing one or two languages would tend to use one of these in the classroom instead of the target language. One explanation of the low incidence of the use of L1 could be, to borrow from Kramsch (1993), a set of parameters of the context, such as time constraints, stated purpose of the activity, interactional pull, and size of the group.

APPENDIX A:
Symbols Used

[ ]	simultaneous speech by two speakers
=	latched speech
(.5)	interval or pause
↑	rising intonation
o o	soft speech
((?))	inaudible
((...))	omitted stretch of speech
•	presentation symbol to draw attention to an utterance or part thereof
(*n* turns)	number of turns deliberately ellipted from the data by the analyst.
italicized words/prhases	particular stretch of speech which needs highlighting.

APPENDIX B

Table 1

Difference between Percentages of Individual Interactional Modifications per T-unit and Fragments for Convergent and Divergent Tasks

	CR		ConC		OR		CC		E		SR		T	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Convergent	25.2	20.75	22.76	3.3	8.02	5.32	11.53	8.64	7.64	6.87	34.7	7.3	5.94	5.36
Divergent	4.28	6.87	7.9	13.75	1.02	1.97	1.8	4.59	5.9	4.86	9.64	6.7	3.74	3.86
	6.78		5.5		8.4		7.05		1.46		18.02		2.36	

(CR= clarifications requests; ConC=confirmation checks; OR= other-repairs; CC= comprehension checks; E=elaborations; SR= self-repairs; T=Topicalizations. N=54; df=53; p= .05; underlined values indicate statistical significance).

APPENDIX C

Table 2

Difference in Performance on Individual Interactional Modifications (2A= comprehension checks; 2B= elaborations; 2c= self-repairs, 2D= topicalizations; 2E=confirmation checks and clarification requests + other-repairs)

	2A		2B		2C		2D		2E	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
More proficient	2.76	2.11	1.45	1.82	4.9	3.9	1.39	1.8	2.76	1.29
Less proficient	2.16	1.03	1.19	1.81	1.1	1.06	.59	1.16	1.16	1.03
t	1.33		.53		<u>15.75</u>		1		<u>3.437</u>	
df	52		52		26		52		52	
N	54		54		28		54		54	

(N= means; SD standard deviation; underlined values indicate statistical significance.)

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Vocabulary and the ESL/EFL Curriculum

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Introduction

Using the literature of curriculum studies and second language (L2) education, this article discusses the fundamental role of vocabulary within the L2 curriculum. In doing so, certain aspects of curriculum will first be outlined, and then the L2 curriculum will be considered in light of the field of curriculum studies. Next, I will argue the central place of English vocabulary within the English as a second and foreign language (ESL/EFL) curriculum. Finally, some of the educational implications of this reality will be noted by suggesting topics and questions that ESL/EFL educators are encouraged to reflect on and act upon in their own pedagogy and classroom research.

What is Curriculum?

In the educational literature, curriculum is viewed in both a narrow sense and a broader one, as Jackson (1992a) makes clear. Tyler (1975), for example, declares that the term is used both as "an outline of a course of study" and to refer to "everything that transpires in the planning, teaching, and learning in an educational institution." Writing in a major curriculum journal, Egan (1978) noted that curriculum specifically centers on two essential questions in educational practice: what is taught and how it is taught. Beyond this point, however, "curriculum is the study of any and all educational phenomena. It may draw on any external discipline for methodological help but does not allow the methodology to determine inquiry" (Egan, 1978, p. 71).

Curriculum handbooks like Jackson's (1992b) reveal that writers in the field of curriculum studies use both narrow and broader conceptions of curriculum in order to produce knowledge which is relevant to their respective areas of specialization. Beyond these perspectives, curriculum specialists in various disciplines have found Schwab's (1960) four curricular commonplaces particularly valuable in conceptualizing curriculum in their fields. These commonplaces are the subject, context, learning, and teaching. Whatever one's specific area, curriculum within a specialized discipline involves these essential aspects. Clandinin and Connelly (1992) have expanded our current understanding of curriculum. By declaring that they have two views of curriculum, one as "a course of study," and the other "a course of life," they have distinguished what one

usually experiences in school (the former) and what one experiences in life — both in and out of school (the latter). In this view, there is an obvious interaction between the two, with what one learns in life affecting what one experiences in school, and vice versa. Curriculum as both a course of study and a course of life leads to an understanding of a curriculum which "teachers and students live out" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1992, p. 365). This view is also important in considering the L2 curriculum.

L2 Curriculum

Turning now to the L2 curriculum, it is important to state, as Nunan (1988) does, that "until recently there has been a comparative neglect of curriculum theorizing in relation to ESL" (p. 15). He believes that this is because:

> Language learning has been seen as a linguistic, rather than an educational matter, and there has been a tendency to overlook research and development as well as planning processes related to general educational principles in favour of linguistic principles and, in recent years, second language acquisition research. (Nunan, 1988, p. 15)

Such influences from linguistics have been reflected in work on L2 curriculum (see Yalden, 1987) and trends in L2 pedagogy, as with the direct, audiolingual and communicative language teaching methods. Despite a general lack of attention to curriculum studies, some authors within L2 education have nonetheless incorporated general curriculum principles.

One such author is Stern (1983), whose work presents a general model for L2 teaching. The influence of curriculum studies is evident at each of the three levels of Stern's interactive model. Level one recognizes the disposition towards linguistics noted earlier by describing linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics (and related fields of anthropology, sociology, and psychology) as "foundations" along with educational theory and the history of language teaching. Level two reflects Schwab's four commonplaces in the "interlevel" by centering on educational linguistics and four essential aspects of L2 pedagogy: the target language (Schwab's subject or content), context, learning, and teaching. Level three, "practice," is devoted to methodology and organization in L2 pedagogy (Stern, 1983, pp. 45-50). In one sense, level three, also described in Stern (1992), focuses on Egan's question of how we teach, while levels one and two focus on what we teach, although there is obvious overlap.

Other writers in L2 and ESL/EFL education have also been influenced by the larger field of curriculum studies. Stating that "the current need is for language curriculum designers to look beyond linguistics to the general field of educational research and theory

for assistance," Nunan (1988, p. 20) builds on Tyler (1949) and Stenhouse's (1975) work to develop his learner-centered curriculum. Combining both the product-oriented model of and process-oriented approach to curriculum, Nunan stresses that language learning is both process- and product-oriented. Similarly, Johnson (1989a) includes both process and product in his L2 curriculum framework, which is expanded on by others in Johnson (1989b). Richards (1990) is also influenced by Stenhouse (1975), and without referring to Schwab, he emphasizes the four curricular commonplaces in his language teaching matrix.

To return to the conceptions of curriculum outlined earlier, within the L2 specialized field "curriculum" also often refers in its narrow sense to a programme of study. In its broader sense:

> . . . the curriculum of a language course becomes virtually synonymous with language pedagogy and can be defined as a comprehensive, explicit or implicit plan of language teaching which organises into a more or less coherent whole the goals, content, strategies, techniques, and materials, as well as the timing, sequential arrangements, social organisation, and evaluative procedures of a course or programme or of a set of courses or programmes. (Stern, 1992, p. 20)

While this definition echoes Tyler's broad one above, Stern (1992, p. 20) notes that in the L2 field "this comprehensive interpretation of curriculum . . . is not accepted universally."

The ambiguity of the larger field of curriculum studies is also evident within the L2 field. Some writers prefer a narrow perspective, while others such as Breen (1984) and Candlin (1984) use a broad definition. For example, they note the spontaneous nature of curriculum as it is negotiated between the teacher and learners in a given context. Such a view echoes Clandinin and Connelly's (1992) "course of life" perspective. When we view curriculum as defined by Stern but explicitly add that it is negotiated in the classroom, we recognize that both teachers and learners bring what they experience in their "course of life" into their L2 "course of study." Particularly with ESL and EFL education, one's experience in life outside is connected to the learning that takes place within the classroom. With this holistic view, a person's experience is connected with his or her learning in various environments. We will see that this understanding is essential to ESL and EFL learning and teaching due to the central place of vocabulary within the curriculum.

Vocabulary and the ESL/EFL Curriculum

When one reviews many ESL and EFL programmes or individual course outlines and peruses their curriculum materials, it becomes evident that ESL/EFL teaching and learning

is often divided along the lines of the four major skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, although sometimes culture, a fifth dimension (Damen, 1987), is added. Despite its importance within the ESL/EFL curriculum, vocabulary is seldom explicitly mentioned, yet is always present. A glance at a programme or its materials will not necessarily reveal this reality, however, nor will much of the literature on vocabulary learning and teaching.

McCarthy (1990) begins his vocabulary book by stating that "it is the experience of most language teachers that the single, biggest component of any language course is vocabulary" (p. viii). Whatever skill one is teaching, in ESL/EFL education vocabulary represents a major part of one's course content (Egan's what we teach). Equally important is the fact that in ESL/EFL contexts where English is the medium of instruction, English vocabulary is also the *means* by which we teach and students learn (Egan's how we teach). However, vocabulary has only recently begun to attain greater stature in the ESL and EFL learning and teaching literature, a fact which is reflected in the appearance of various pedagogical works on the subject (such as Carter and McCarthy, 1988; Morgan and Rinvolucri, 1986; Nation, 1994; and Taylor, 1990, 1992).

In a survey article on L2 vocabulary, Maiguashca (1993) declares that even in the recent communicative approach, "vocabulary continued to play a marginal or ancillary role" (p. 84). She then summarizes why:

> The underlying assumption was that words and their meanings did not need to be taught explicitly since, it was claimed, learners will "pick up" vocabulary indirectly while engaged in grammatical or communicative activities or while reading. In short, lexical learning was seen as taking place automatically or unconsciously, as a cumulative by-product of other linguistic learning. (Maiguashca, 1993, p. 84)

As a result of this thinking, vocabulary has been referred to as the "poor relation" of L2 teaching (Carter, 1987).

In her article, Maiguashca (1993) goes on to declare that "the study of vocabulary is perhaps the fastest growing area of second language education in terms of research output and publications" (p. 85). While this appears to be true, she then mistakenly, from my perspective, suggests that vocabulary has therefore become the "guest of honor" of language teaching. In essence, Maiguashca appears to have missed two important points that I believe must be addressed within L2 education generally, and the ESL/EFL curriculum in particular.

First, while it is true that publications reveal greater research interest in vocabulary within applied linguistics (see, for example, Arnaud and Bejoint, 1992; Hatch and Brown, 1995; Huckin, Haynes, and Coady, 1993; Meara, 1992; and Schreuder and Weltens, 1993), both observation studies and curriculum materials suggest that it is inappropriate to equate such academic and research interest with a greater focus on vocabulary in the L2 classroom or curriculum. For example, one French immersion classroom observation study reported this important finding:

> We conclude that vocabulary teaching in the immersion classes occupied a rather narrow place in the overall teaching plan, and that it mainly involved meaning interpretation, with little attention to other aspects of vocabulary knowledge. (Allen, Swain, Harley, and Cummins, 1990, p. 64)

This perspective is reiterated in other research on French as a second language (FSL) students' vocabulary learning which also incorporated classroom observation (Sanaoui, 1992). Many English language educators would argue that the same situation generally exists in most ESL/EFL pedagogy, where "meaning interpretation" through synonymy is perhaps most common.

Beyond observation studies, however, an examination of many current, commonly used ESL and EFL texts reveals little systematic focus on English vocabulary learning and development within them, although some progress must be conceded in a few recent texts. This anecdotal and observational evidence points to vocabulary as a neglected aspect of the ESL/EFL curriculum, although one major exception is Willis' (1990) lexical syllabus. Lewis's (1993) lexical approach should also be noted, though no observation studies on this methodology in ESL/EFL have appeared to date. Perhaps after Lewis (in press) appears there will be more opportunity for such research.

Second, Maiguashca (1993) underestimates the importance of vocabulary in L2 pedagogy if she believes that the image of "guest" is at all appropriate, even to describe progress in the field. Vocabulary — words, phrases, idioms, etc. — is at the heart of all language usage in the skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as culture (Luo, 1992). Furthermore, three minimal and widely recognized aspects of L2 lexical knowledge are form, meaning, and use. While vocabulary might at first glance easily be equated with "meaning," it is also inherent in form (spelling, reading, etc.) and use (register, idioms, written vs. oral language, etc.). Vocabulary's role in ESL/EFL and L2 pedagogy is therefore much more than that of a simple, although perhaps often honored, "guest." The following quotation from McCarthy (1990) puts it this way: "No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2

are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way" (p. viii).

As noted above, vocabulary is both a major part of what and how we teach in ESL/EFL pedagogy. Beyond programme components and materials, therefore, English vocabulary is at the centre of the ESL/EFL curriculum. In summary, vocabulary remains a neglected aspect of the ESL/EFL curriculum despite its central place within language learning and teaching and significant vocabulary research activity in the L2 field. We turn, therefore, to some educational implications of this reality for ESL/EFL educators.

Suggestions for ESL/EFL Pedagogy and Research

In light of the discussion on curriculum above and the recent focus on reflective teaching and teacher research in L2 education (Edge and Richards, 1993; Freeman and Richards, 1996; Richards and Lockhart, 1994), this section will offer questions and suggestions concerning the role of vocabulary in ESL/EFL pedagogy and classroom research.

Pedagogy

As McCarthy (1990) states, ". . . vocabulary often seems to be the least systematized and the least well catered for of all the aspects of learning a [second] or foreign language" (p. viii). In terms of ESL/EFL pedagogy, then, one major implication of the argument above is that both curriculum and instruction need to incorporate English vocabulary more systematically. Beyond "meaning identification," ESL/EFL educators need to address what it means to know and use vocabulary in a broader way, including those aspects summarized by Nation (1990, pp. 29-49; see also Schmitt, 1995). Resources now exist to help teachers address these areas, yet until materials include such aspects of vocabulary knowledge and learning, ESL/EFL teacher training must incorporate appropriate methods for teachers to do so in order to supplement current texts and other materials.

In practical terms, ESL/EFL teachers might begin to address vocabulary teaching more systematically in their classes by seriously asking and reflecting on Egan's (1978) two curricular questions: for each class, what is the vocabulary I will, should, or need to teach in this lesson, and how might that best be accomplished? More specifically, Schwab's curricular commonplaces suggest four further questions: What is the vocabulary of the topic, situation, or function at hand? How can it or is it usually used in various contexts? How do native English speakers and ESL/EFL students often learn it, and is this information helpful for these learners? How might I best teach such vocabulary in this course? When ESL/EFL educators answer these questions and act upon the information they provide, we view curriculum in the comprehensive sense Stern (1992) outlined above,

and vocabulary should no longer be a simple "guest" in our ESL/EFL classrooms, but rather at the centre of our curriculum.

In addressing such issues, classroom practitioners will be well aware of the vocabulary used in their lessons, texts, and materials and make the most of it. As for programmes, perhaps vocabulary should become a required or elective course, as culture is, in some intensive ESL programmes. In such a class, as well as in general ESL/EFL courses, one could concentrate on vocabulary teaching for specific levels of language proficiency and train learners in vocabulary learning strategies, as outlined by Cohen (1990), Oxford and Crookall (1990), and Schmitt (forthcoming). In both ESL and EFL contexts, more work needs to be done to help learners acquire vocabulary on their own both within the classroom (in one's course of study) and outside it (in one's course of life). As Nation, quoted in Schmitt (1995, p. 6), has declared, "... learners can benefit far more per time spent learning vocabulary strategies than being directly taught low frequency words." One example of an instructor challenging students' approaches to ESL vocabulary development through vocabulary learning strategies exists in Lessard-Clouston (1994).

In addition, ESL/EFL texts need to be developed which present and deal with vocabulary more creatively, and which present real life vocabulary usage (McCarthy, 1996). Word lists and translations in texts may be useful (Meara, 1995) but are insufficient where we are dealing with learners who have a variety of learning styles. As Sanaoui's (1995) studies indicated that one's review of vocabulary is important in lexical learning, course materials should review, both implicitly and explicitly, vocabulary presented earlier. While Willis's (1990) lexical syllabus does this at earlier stages, a particular need exists for such curricula at advanced levels of English proficiency, as well as in English for Academic and Specific Purposes materials. As Nunan (1988) noted above, L2 learning involves both process and product. ESL and EFL materials need to address this fact by incorporating both vocabulary items and ways for students to develop and use vocabulary learning strategies on their own beyond their texts and courses, in their "course of life."

Research

Turning briefly to research, teacher researchers should understand both the narrow and broader conceptions of curriculum discussed above and consider specific (What vocabulary is being taught in this lesson?) as well as broader research questions (What incidental vocabulary learning may be taking place here?) which include and reflect both Clandinin and Connelly's (1992) "course of study" and "course of life" perspectives. In doing so, we also need to recognize the centrality of vocabulary in ESL/EFL teaching and learning by maintaining and increasing recent interest in L2 vocabulary research. A better understanding of what it means for students to know a word, especially in terms of breadth

and depth of vocabulary knowledge (see Nagy and Herman, 1987; Wesche and Paribakht, forthcoming) is needed, and we must move beyond models in linguistics and recognize the individual nature of vocabulary learning and knowledge (Lessard-Clouston, forthcoming). As Maiguashca (1993) has rightly noted, much of our understanding in L2 education centers on grammar, which "amounts to a system of rules and constitutes . . . a coherent and structured whole. The same cannot be said, however, for vocabulary" (p. 91). We thus need to study both incidental ESL and EFL vocabulary learning and teaching in a variety of educational contexts (Ellis, 1994).

The observation of vocabulary instruction in different settings, for example, could detail what teaching is actually taking place in ESL/EFL classrooms. Descriptive studies of the processes of ESL and EFL vocabulary instruction like Sanaoui's (1996) FSL study would provide a good start. It would be wonderful if future studies actually prove Maiguashca (1993) to be right and reveal vocabulary clearly at the centre of the curriculum. Furthermore, how has vocabulary teaching changed with the new vocabulary texts (including McCarthy and O'Dell, 1994, and Wellman, 1992) and resources now available for teachers? Experimental studies involving targeted instructional approaches, especially Lewis's (1993) lexical approach and other methods that place systematic focus on vocabulary, could research specific ESL/EFL vocabulary teaching techniques and their effectiveness for various groups of learners. In addition, what impact does the meaning interpretation Allen et. al. (1990) referred to actually have on ESL/EFL students' vocabulary acquisition? Does an oral or written context for lexical learning have the same effect? What is the relationship between vocabulary teaching and ESL/EFL reading or listening comprehension? Is teaching students individual vocabulary learning strategies more effective than using more generalizable ones? These and many other questions must be asked and answered in order for learners and teachers to understand vocabulary acquisition and use better.

With the development and use of technology in ESL/EFL education, research into vocabulary learning and teaching must also consider varied means of vocabulary instruction and acquisition. With computer programmes in courses, for example, the teacher is no longer necessarily the main source of lexical input in some contexts of L2 education. While some work on vocabulary learning and teaching through such means does exist (see Green and Meara, 1995, and Kang, 1995, for example), much more research needs to be carried out on such educational technologies before a more comprehensive understanding of vocabulary acquisition and use with such materials is attained.

Much L1 research has focused on vocabulary size (Nagy and Herman, 1987). Although there are various estimates, Willis (1990) asserts that educated native English

speakers are "likely to have a vocabulary of some 50,000 words" (p. 39). In addition, they may have encountered the 88,500 distinct word families which appear in printed school materials in English (Carroll, Davies, and Richman, 1971). Given these realities, research questions of interest to those who are teaching ESL and EFL students who will pursue post-secondary education in English include: 1) what vocabulary is needed by adult ESL/EFL learners who will do their academic work in English, and 2) how might they best learn the specialized vocabulary of their academic disciplines? Since Saville-Troike (1986) and Casanave (1992) have demonstrated that vocabulary is crucial to ESL students' academic success, these questions also need to be answered. In essence, vocabulary learning and use in academic contexts is where a student's ESL/EFL "course of study" interacts with and is fundamental to his or her present and future "course of life." Accordingly, the relationship between general and special purposes vocabulary (Nation and Hwang, 1995) is yet another aspect of L2 vocabulary use and acquisition that requires further study.

Conclusion

In this article I have briefly considered an essential aspect of L2 pedagogy by relating the central place of English vocabulary in ESL/EFL learning and teaching to the L2 curriculum. Suggestions have been made for ESL/EFL teachers to consider in their pedagogy and questions were raised for their classroom research. For ESL and EFL students, understanding thoughts and ideas expressed in English vocabulary and putting their own thoughts and ideas into English with words and expressions is crucial — in oral and written contexts, both within and beyond the ESL/EFL classroom. It is time for ESL and EFL teachers and researchers to act on this reality not only by recognizing vocabulary's important role in the curriculum, but also by giving it a central place in our teaching, materials, and research.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to Sharon Lapkin, Wendy Lessard-Clouston, and TR's reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions during the evolution of this article.

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Exploring Ways to Understand Learning and Improve Teaching

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As a teacher of English as a second and foreign language, I have been involved in a long-term process of exploring how the language is taught and learned. I am particularly interested in finding out how my students experience their learning and how they perceive my teaching. I believe this effort of exploration brings me some first order knowledge a teacher should have. It helps me build convincing connections between what I want my students to do and their own experiences. That means I can achieve understanding from them as to why they should take what I say seriously. It may also bring to light problems they are facing and mistakes I am making which otherwise I might miss. All this should help me to make better decisions about how and what to teach. In this article, I will describe a classroom inquiry project I conducted when I was teaching two ESL classes at the Adult Learning Center, Lehman College of the City University in New York.

Context, Purpose and Method

Both ESL-3 and ESL-3/4 were the most advanced levels of the Adult Learning Center's ESL classes, meeting 12 and 6 hours a week respectively. Students in these two classes generally had some basic or surviving English competence in carrying out their daily communicative tasks. Some were even working in an English environment, particularly the evening students. Although most students came from Spanish-speaking countries, I did have Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Bangladesh, Russian and Albanian students.

As their teacher, my primary goal was to provide a supportive environment that would promote the most learning. But how would I achieve this goal, or simply, what kind of decisions should I make about how and what to teach? It was this eagerness to improve my teaching that motivated me to conduct a study on my students' learning experience. After a careful review of the related literature (e.g. Auerbach, 1992; Brookfield, 1994; Nunan, 1987, 1988, 1990; Wenden, 1987) and discussions with my colleagues, I decided to build into my curriculum a regular effort to discover how my students were thinking, and to collect data from both learning and reflective activities such as interviews, student journals and responses to a Learning Experience Questionnaire (Appendix A), which is a revision of Brookfield's "Critical Incident Questionnaire" (1994).

Process of Exploration while Teaching

I designed a step by step investigation through a consistent curriculum containing various kinds of learning activities. At the beginning of the semester, I did a mind-map activity with my students to elicit their learning interests and negotiate with them the general curriculum. During the semester, I now and then reminded them of their original ideas on the mind-maps and our general plan. Also, I conducted several reflective activities to capture my students' experiences over time, from which most of my data were collected. Finally, at the end of the semester, I brought back to the classrooms the same mind-maps and asked the students to check on what we had done so far and how much we had learned during the semester. Following that reflection and summary, we discussed our plan for the next cycle.

Considering my students' interests and needs expressed on those mind-maps, I organized and conducted five major projects that overlapped throughout the semester. For the first one, the Magazine Project, my students worked individually and collaboratively to produce a written summary about one of the articles they felt most interesting from People Magazine. For various reasons, some students finished the project earlier than others. For those students I introduced the second project, the Learner Biography Project, turning their attention from people in the magazines to their own classmates. After drawing a picture of their chosen classmate, they interviewed one another and then wrote a short biography of their classmate. After everyone had finished their projects which had been read and edited in groups, I helped them put up a class wallpaper in the corridor of the learning center to demonstrate their work. To celebrate their achievement, I took a class photo in front of the wallpaper. Then I held a reflection period from which I collected students' responses to the questionnaire. (Findings are discussed in the next section.)

After that, I responded to my students' request to learn some study skills by launching the third project, the Learning Strategies Project. I asked students to form groups and to fill out the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1989) and then to discuss the strategies they used. In the next few weeks, students were asked to pick a new strategy each week to practice at home and whole class discussions were held regularly on ways to improve learning. Meanwhile, I distributed small readers and started the Book Report Project, organizing and collecting weekly oral and written reports. The Folder Study Project, adapted from Auerbach's "on-going assessment tools" (1992), was conducted at the middle and at the end of the semester to help students to reflect on their own learning from the written work done during those five learning activities. Again students' voices were heard and responded to, and new decisions about how and what to teach were then made.

Whenever I started a new project or activity, I spent much time discussing with my students the meaning and purpose of what we were going to do and invited their input on how to get the most learning out of it. I always tried to make sure that they understood how important it is for them to take full responsibility for their learning and to cooperate with the class to achieve the best result. As those projects were always open-ended, students were allowed to work at their own speed and to help each other to catch up with or finish the work. One strong sense I tried to build among my students was that it was never too late to learn. Almost every student was involved in at least two projects at any give time in addition to other smaller learning activities such as language lab listening, computer writing for publication, regular grammar review mini-lessons, trips to the library, the art gallery, the new gym, and even the International Dance Show that was on campus that semester.

I spent much time on examining and analyzing all the data collected from those projects and activities. I listened to and transcribed tapes of class and individual interviews. I studied several students' written reflections on different activities over time to see if there was any change in their learning attitude and why. I also paid attention to giving timely feedback to my students after those reflective activities. Whether it was a student's journal or a class reflection period, I usually first read or listened very carefully, then either wrote or reported back to students a summary of the main issues that emerged from their voices. I would explain how I would change something in direct response to their comments, and I would try to clarify any actions, ideas, requirements or exercises that seemed to be causing confusion.

Findings and Discussion

Looking at all the data collected, I found generally three themes based on my students' reflections on their learning beliefs and experiences. In this section, these insights will be explained and illustrated with examples of statements from the sources mentioned above.

Correctness and grammar. It seemed that students laid much stress on the importance of being able to produce correct English both in speaking and writing. For that purpose, many considered learning grammar and vocabulary as the only and best way. Repeated voices were heard about their interest in learning about the language: "I came because I want to improve my grammar and learn more new words." Or "For me, grammar study is the most interesting and helpful." Being adult learners of a second language, the fear of making mistakes also strengthened their belief in grammar learning as the right recipe. They usually attributed their mistakes to lack of grammatical knowledge and their incompetence in joining in English conversations to their limited

vocabulary. One learner complained: "My problem is speaking. I am afraid of making mistakes. I always think in Spanish. I need practice in grammar." Another declared: "What I need most is grammar. I like it because I always make the same mistakes and I want to know why."

While most learners expressed their need for grammar instruction, their views varied on correction of mistakes. Some sincerely and earnestly urged others to correct their mistakes: "I like to have my every mistake pointed out and corrected. This is very important for me." Others would feel resentful if their mistakes were corrected all the time: "I hate to be interrupted by others because this makes me more nervous." Or "To be honest, I hate to see red marks of correction on my writing." These divergent opinions could probably be traced to their different past learning experiences, particularly the influence of their past teachers. As one Cambodian learner said in retrospect: "My first English teacher always started her lessons with a grammar exercise, usually error correction. She always made sure we wrote correctly. I think it's the right way of teaching." But an Ecuadorian student told a different story: "My former English teacher never corrected me in the open. He always encouraged us to speak as much as possible and not care about mistakes. I feel I learned a lot in that program and that's why I'm not afraid of talking in English now."

Hard work and lots of practice. This second theme emphasizes the students' belief in the need of deliberate and conscious effort on the part of themselves as learners. Although they varied on what the result of this conscious effort would be, there is a note of intensity in their belief not present in the preceding theme, e.g., "I feel very motivated to keep trying. I have to try hard and push myself because that's the only way to success."; "I keep telling myself that I should practice more . . . I didn't watch English TV a lot before, but now I try very hard to watch it everyday. I think I can understand better if I try hard like this."; "I know the key is hard work and lots of attention . . . I always listen very carefully to others talking in English. Sometimes I ask questions if I don't understand. I also try hard to speak to my husband and kids in English."

Evidence of achievement. Most learners viewed this as one important reason for their continued effort in learning. Many expressed their care and interest to see evidence of their learning such as better understanding and increasing use of English, e.g., "I felt most excited last Monday because I found I understood better than my first semester here. I got everything right. I realize I'm learning."; "Now I can answer phone calls in English. Before my son helped me. Also I can finish my homework myself and can talk more. This makes me happy and I want to come more." To emphasize her progress, Felicida added: "In my job they are proud of me. I am the only Spanish person working in the office. My manager told me that he now understands my English, but two years ago he couldn't." For

some students, loss of fear also demonstrated their progress: "I've learned a lot in this class. And the most important thing for me is I have lost the SCARE. I've thrown it into the garbage." Or "Before I felt afraid to speak to another person. Now I've lost that fear and I'm trying to do the best things. "

Along with their language development, change of attitude and improved motivation were also seen as evidence of progress. Robert, for example, who showed such strong resistance to the Magazine Project at first finally completed more projects than the others. He even volunteered to attend two extra magazine tutoring programs, for which he chose to take special trips to the learning center just to read more magazine articles. During one taped class reflection period, Robert talked about his experience: "This class is very good. I learned a lot. Before I didn't like reading magazines. There are too many new words. You told us to try and you showed us how. So I tried everyday, at first just some sentences not the whole story. Gradually I found myself understanding more. So I feel very happy and ready to go on."

With the above ideas and standards in mind, students seemed to have their diverse criteria as to what was helpful or not helpful in the classroom. Those who believed that correctness and grammar should be the focus of instruction judged an activity by whether or not it involved some error correction or grammar learning. Thus Boris said: "I like the Learner Biography Project because it helped me learn new words and grammar from a dictionary and from my classmates. I rewrote it three times and I'm happy about my learning." However, those who viewed hard work and practice as the best way to achieve success stressed the opportunity to use the language that a learning activity could offer. They favored those involving practice of all skills: "Some activities are more helpful than others because students can practice more skills in them. Some characteristics of a good activity are that they offer us lots of chances to read and write, listen and speak." They also liked activities that were not too easy but manageable "The Magazine Project, for example," said Francisco.

Learners who considered personal factors important to learning were found to have their affective criteria. They noted the relevance of what they were learning. They also commented on the qualities of a good teacher and classroom environment. Jennifer, for example, found the Book Report Project more helpful than others because "I like reading and I have to read to my kids sometimes, but I don't always understand what I'm reading. Now my classmates read the same book and we talk and I understand more." The groupwork was also viewed as helpful because "My classmates were very supportive and we helped each other all the time." She even had very explicit ideas of a good teacher: "My opinion of a good teacher is not to let students get afraid. She should always listen

to students and explain clearly. She should love her students and have interest in improving her teaching too."

Conclusion

Generally speaking, my data seems to have provided substantial answers to my question of how my students experience their learning and how they perceive my teaching. This knowledge has greatly influenced not only my philosophy of teaching but also my teaching style and my methodology. The data have confirmed my belief that students come into the classroom with their own experiences, expectations and beliefs. They not only have rather fixed ideas about what activities are most suitable for them, but also, how the teacher should go about teaching. These ideas have a great effect on their learning strategies as well as on their learning outcomes, as is reported by the findings of a number of research studies (see, for example, Nunan, 1987, 1988; Wenden, 1987). As far as this classroom inquiry project is concerned, some of the implications on my practice as a teacher are:

1. A good curriculum should come out of the negotiation between the teacher and the students. It should not be under teacher's control alone. Rather, it should be the product out of the cooperative effort of both. Similarly, what is done in the class should bear a clear connection to the needs and interests of the students. However, as Brookfield (1994) put it, negotiation does not mean giving up our aims and convictions as teachers and educators. Sometimes, we still need to challenge our students' learning desires by giving them a little push. It should not be too hard a push but just enough to make them see the long term benefits of whatever we want them to do, and the reality that most significant adult learning involves both joyful and painful elements.

2. An effective teacher should first of all be willing to make efforts to understand the students. The more we know about our students, the easier our teaching will be. In addition to a good curriculum, many other daily practices are important, such as the teacher's consistency between words and actions, responsiveness to students' concerns, and the model he or she provides as a caring person and a human who sometimes makes mistakes. Above all, what makes things work is the trust built between the teacher and students, which can never be there without our understanding effort.

Finally, this research experience has strengthened my own conviction that after all we teachers are also learners. In addition to learning about new approaches and techniques, we should learn about our students and ourselves too. And to a large extent, the latter learning is more important than the former.

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Appendix A

Classroom Experience Questionnaire

1. What was the moment in class today/this week when you were most engaged or interested in what was happening?
2. What was the moment in class today/this week when you were most bored or disconnected from what was happening?
3. What action that anyone in the room (teacher or student) took did you find most helpful or supportive?
4. What action that anyone in the room (teacher or student) took did you find most puzzling or confusing?
5. What surprised you most about the classes today/this week?

About the Author

Peiya Gu is Associate Professor at Suzhou University in China. She has been teaching EFL/ESL in both Chinese and American contexts for thirteen years. She received her MA in TESOL and M.Ed. in Applied Linguistics from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research interests include learning strategies and CALL.

English Pronunciation for Japanese Speakers

Review by Keiko Okada
Ohio University

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION FOR JAPANESE SPEAKERS. Paulette Dale and Lillian Poms. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents, 1994. Book $16.95, Cassettes $35.00, Book/Cassette Package $49.00.

English Pronunciation For Japanese Speakers is a well-written textbook for both Japanese students and the teachers who teach Japanese students. This book can be used both in ESL and EFL situations with students of any proficiency level. It also serves as a good resource book for ESL/EFL teachers.

This book consists of an introduction, three well-organized main sections, and two appendices for teachers. The introduction opens with a message from the authors clearly stating their standpoint that a foreign accent is nothing to be ashamed of. Accent reduction exercises should be used only to promote effective communication and to avoid misunderstanding. This message relieves the students who have constantly experienced a hard time because of their accents, and motivates them to acquire an effective means of communication.

There are three main sections, namely, "Consonants," "Vowels," and "Stress, Rhythm, and Intonation." The first two sections explain how to articulate a sound (with the help of understandable pictures), how the sound compares to the sound existing in Japanese, and how to avoid pronunciation problems. Each lesson is followed by exercises, self-tests, and reviews for practice and confirmation. Students can choose simple material or more difficult tasks according to their proficiency level. During the exercises, accompanying cassette tapes play an important role. Useful "notes" are offered to help students kick the habit of pronouncing English in a Japanese way. For example, on page 31, it says, "Many Japanese speakers tend to add the sound [o] to words ending in [t] (cuto, sito, cato). Be sure to avoid this extra vowel when practicing words with final [t]." This is a typical error that Japanese learners make, and this book is beneficial in that it clearly shows these errors and offers exercises to help the learners.

As an EFL teacher at a high school in Japan, I had to spend a long time teaching how to pronounce past verbs, or how to get rid of Japanese rhythm patterns. This is why I am

particularly impressed with such lessons as "Pronouncing past tense verbs, plurals and third-person verbs (Section I)," and "Stress within the sentence (Section III)."

Another noticeable merit of this book is that the authors are trying to make pronunciation exercises applicable to "real-life" situations. They do so by providing a number of common phrases and idiomatic expressions as sample sentences. They have also succeeded in making pronunciation exercises enjoyable.

English Pronunciation for Japanese Speakers casts a new light on teaching. By focusing on one particular language, it actually puts students in the center of learning. It will give a great deal of insight to all teachers who try to make ESL/EFL pronunciation classrooms more and more student-centered. *English Pronunciation for International Students* and *English Pronunciation for Spanish Speakers* are also available by the same authors.

About the Reviewer

Keiko Okada received her Master's degree in TESL/Applied Linguistics from Ohio University in June, and has just started her doctoral study in September at the Department of TESL/Applied Linguistics at UCLA.

Conference Announcements

Thai TESOL. International Conference, (JALT, Korea TESOL and IATEFL), the Ambassado Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. January 5-7, 1997. Contact Thai TESOL, c/o Naraporn Chan-Ocha, Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Phaya Thai Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand. Fax 662-2525978, 662-218-6031. E-mail fflnco@chulkn.car.chula.ac.th

TESOL. Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida. March 11-15, 1997. Contact TESOL Inc., 1600 Cameron St., Suite 300, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-518-2535.

RELC. Seminar on Learners and Language Learning, Singapore. April 21-23, 1997. To be held at the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. All communications regarding the Seminar should be addressed to: The Director, (Attention: Seminar Secretariat), SEAMEO Regional Language Centre, 30 Orange Grove Road, Singapore 258352, Republic of Singapore. Tel. (65) 737 9044. Fax (65) 734 2753. E-mail tkhng@singnet.com.sg

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A Guide to Writing English as a Second or Foreign Language: An Annotated Bibliography of Research and Pedagogy

Review by Terry Santos
Humboldt State University

A GUIDE TO WRITING ENGLISH AS A SECOND OR FOREIGN LANGUAGE: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGY. Dan J. Tannacito. Alexandria, Virginia: TESOL, Inc., 1995. Pp. 533.

The publication of Dan Tannacito's massive bibliography of L2 writing research and pedagogy is a landmark contribution to this rapidly-expanding field, and, given the author's intention of updating the guide periodically, it will no doubt become the standard, indispensable reference source for graduate students, teachers, researchers, and browsers.

With 3,461 entries, the bibliography offers the reader a comprehensive annotated listing of virtually every article, conference paper, dissertation, monograph, and textbook ever produced on L2 writing up to 1994. (The work that went into compiling this huge database is mind-boggling.) The entries are listed alphabetically by author, with the topic category identified after the one- or two-sentence description of the work. Below is a sample entry (chosen at random).

> **1252.** Hall, A., & Jobe, P. (1992, March). *Group approach to research papers: Cracking the academic code.* Paper presented at the 26th Annual TESOL Convention, Vancouver, BC.
>
> Shows how to guide uninitiated students through a common-context formal research writing project.
>
> Research Writing.

At the end of the volume are two indexes. The first is a list of names cited in the guide, while the second gives the information that is as important as the references themselves the index of subjects, with multiple listings for works that cross topic boundaries. Since it is here that most readers will start (we generally look for references on particular topics, not for names), I would prefer to see this list at beginning of the book rather than at the very end. It could be called the table of topics or the classification of subjects, with the index of names kept in the back.

Aside from that small criticism, I have nothing but praise for the valuable addition to L2 writing which this bibliography represents. With luck, we will see updated editions for years to come.

About the Reviewer

Terry Santos is an associate professor of English at Humboldt State University, where she teaches TESL training courses. Her interests include second language writing, grammar and teaching methodology.

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