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TESL REPORTER

The Association of B.C. TEAL announces its call for presentations at its sixteenth annual convention to be held March 10 - 11, 1983 at the Sheraton Landmark Hotel, 1400 Robson Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada. The theme is "New Trends in ESL." Deadline for application is November 12, 1982. Contact: Rose Marie Watson, Vancouver Community College, 2750 Oak Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3N2, Canada.

The American Language Academy is pleased to announce an expanded schedule of workshops and seminars in Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) for the 1982-83 academic year. Six *two-day* workshops will be held in different locations:

Washington, D.C.	November 18-19, 1982
Boston, MA	January 13-14, 1983
Colorado Springs, CO	January 27-28, 1983
Philadelphia, PA	February 17-18,1983
Cleveland, OH	March 3-4, 1983
Tampa, FL	April 21-22, 1983

Two intensive *five-day* seminars will also be held:

Tampa, FL	November 9-13, 1982
Boston, MA	August 9-13, 1983

Both the workshops and seminars will provide the theoretical background and hands on experience necessary to enable participants to make practical use of microcomputer-assisted instruction.

For more detailed information, please write or call the Executive Offices of The American Language Academy, Suite 200. 11426 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, phone (301) 984-3400.

TESL REPORTER

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Manuscripts relevant to teaching English as a second language, teaching standard English as a second dialect, bilingual education, and intercultural communication may be submitted to the editor. Articles dealing with classroom aspects of teaching are especially encouraged. Manuscripts should be double spaced and typed, generally not exceeding six pages. Authors should also submit a short (less than 50 words) bio-data statement. Book reviews should be limited to two pages. Contributors are asked to give an assurance that the manuscripts they submit are not under consideration by any other journal. The opinions and statements expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or Brigham Young University–Hawaii Campus.

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Abstracts of articles published in the *TESL Reporter* appear in *Language and Language Behavior Abstracts.*

Using the Overhead Projector to Bridge the Communication Gap

by John Pentick

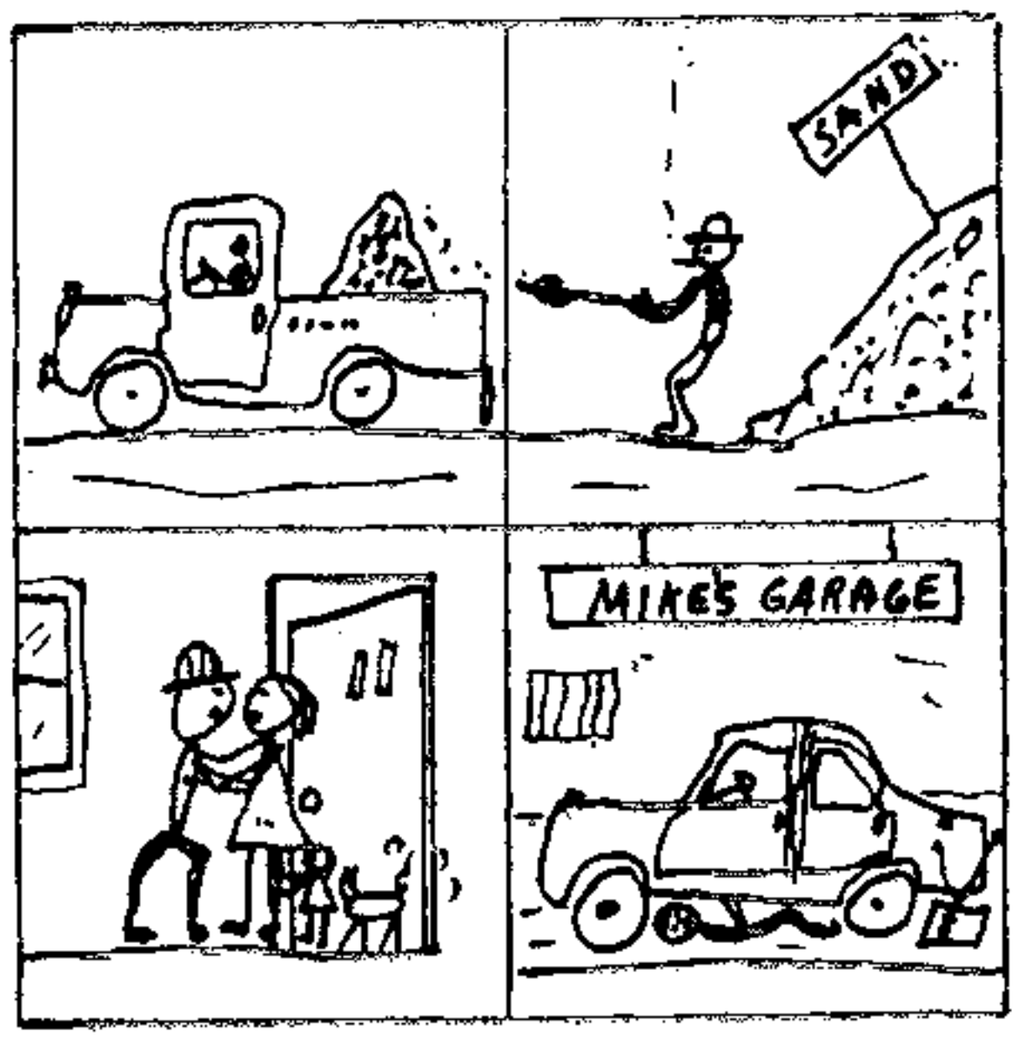
As a teacher of adult immigrants in a community college setting I was often disappointed with the way my students communicated, or more accurately, failed to communicate once they left the classroom. There seemed to be a large gap between the competence they displayed in class and the garbled English they showed in the 'real world' outside. I resolved to try to develop an approach which would allow me to bring that 'real world' into the classroom where we could work with it. The result was a series of overhead projector transparency lessons depicting scenes from real life.

The Rationale

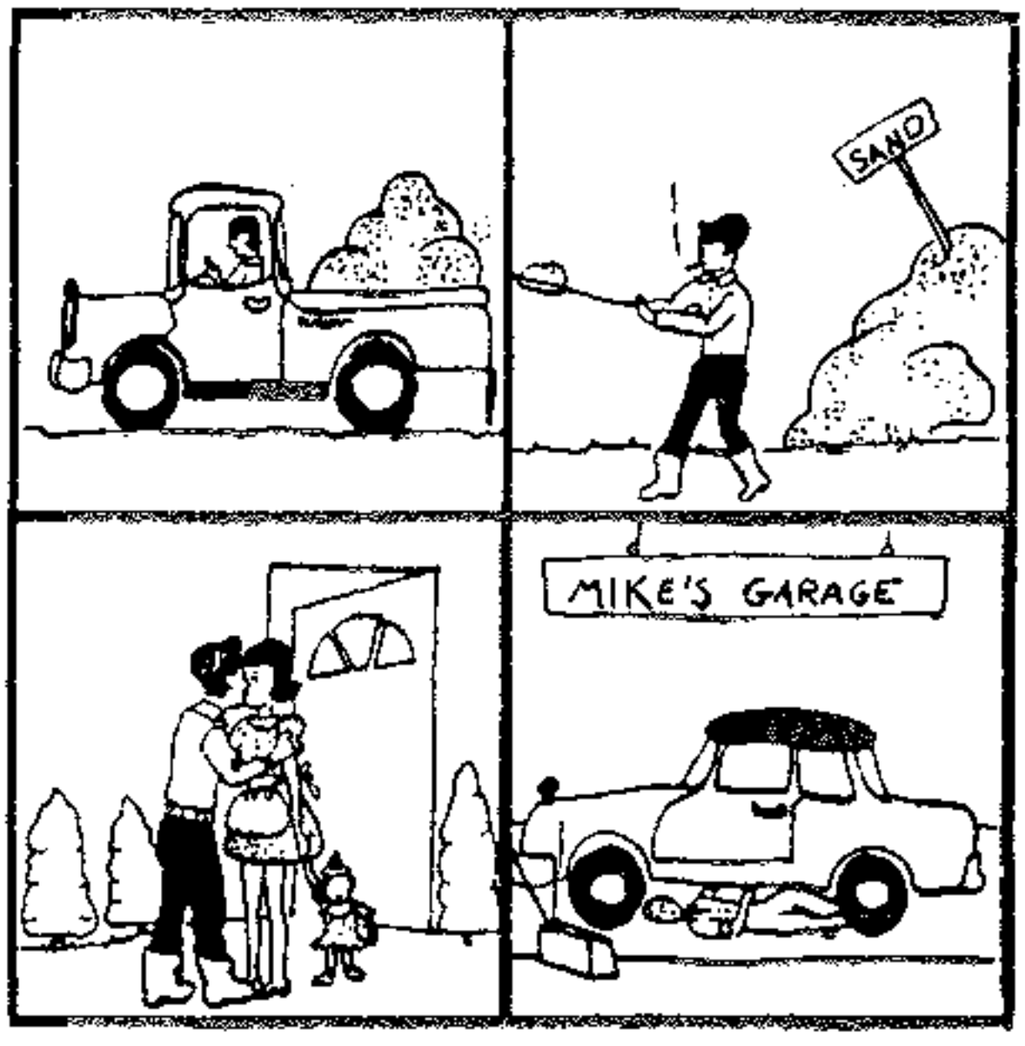
I chose the overhead projector for a number of reasons. It is a simple, easy-to-use machine that is readily available in nearly every school. And although the transparencies can be used in a lighted classroom I often found that a partially darkened room encouraged shy students to speak out with a confidence that might otherwise disappear. Furthermore, the transparency is a permanent addition to one's teaching materials and, as such, can be recalled for review or testing. Finally, this type of lesson is an excellent way to handle those Friday afternoon doldrums.

The transparencies I used were usually drawn in rough by myself—see drawing A. An artistic student (or friend) would transform the crude original into the quality of art you see in the finished product, drawing B.

Using example B, I set the lesson up, as follows:



My Drawing (A)



Finished Product (B)

VOCABULARY:

DRIVE a truck
SHOVEL sand
SMOKE a cigarette
KISS her husband
HOLD her mother's hand
WATCH TV/ television
FIX/REPAIR the car
SUPPOSED TO BE fixing the car

STRUCTURES:

Habitual Tense:
What does he do?
He drives a truck.

Continuous Tense:
What's he doing?
He's driving a truck.

Simple Past:
What did he do?
He drove a truck.

Activities

Introduction of New Vocabulary/Structures. Teacher models statement and/or question for the first picture. Students practice chorally and then individually. Class continues through all pictures.

Teacher-Controlled Practice. Teacher chooses one student to come to the projector to ask the questions. Teacher circulates amongst class correcting pronunciation and helping weaker students.

Student-Controlled Practice. Students come forward to 'Ask the Teacher' for answers to the ones they didn't get.

Writing Practice. Teacher puts the written sentence pattern on the blackboard but leaves blank the space for the verb. Students fill in the blanks. Advanced students can supply the answers in any number of different verb tenses.

Questions at Large: Teacher asks questions about the personal life of each figure in the pictures: e.g., "How old is he? What's his phone number", etc. Students give the answers or make up new questions of their own.

For Advanced Students. Advanced students are directed to examine some detail of one of the pictures. The teacher might ask: "What do you think is wrong with the child in picture #3?" or "Why do you think he's watching T.V. in picture #4?"

Conclusion

It has been my experience that most students approach transparency lessons such as the one described above with enthusiasm. Because they are able to relate to these scenes from real life, they are anxious to acquire the skills needed to communicate what they see. The vocabulary and exercises involved in the lessons become meaningful and, thus, more effective learning takes place. With knowledge comes confidence, and the students are more willing and better able to transfer what they have learned in the classroom to the outside world. The use of the overhead projector in the teaching of a second language is, therefore, a worthwhile aid in helping to bridge the communication gap between the classroom and life in the community.

John Pentick began teaching ESL in 1969. He has coordinated ESL and remote community programs and has pursued interests in teacher training and adult education. Currently he is a community college teaching master, specializing in ESL and communications, at Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

Language Testing Newsletter, a twice-yearly publication designed to help maintain contact between all interested in language testing and evaluation, includes news of tests, research and meetings, and reviews of books. Contact the editors: Don Porter & Arthur Hughes, Department of Linguistic Science, Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences, University of Reading, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 2AA, England.

Beyond Communicative Competence: Teaching Culture in ESL

by Harry Krasnick

It is paradoxical that communicative competence is sometimes treated as part of language rather than as social interaction. Strictly speaking, just as language is part of culture, so communicative competence is part of cultural competence. Even though communicative competence is often described in such purely cultural terms as sociolinguistic appropriateness (Hymes 1974) or social etiquette (Paulston & Bruder 1976; Saville-Troike 1976), the role of culture in ESL remains largely unexplored, and certainly under-developed. A conceptual framework for incorporating culture into the ESL curriculum is offered below, along with several suggestions for modifying the curriculum to include culture.

Communicative Competence as Cultural Competence

The relationship between culture and behavior is so deep and so pervasive that in everyday life it is taken for granted that "this is the way things are." To the anthropologist, however,

> . . . there can be no such thing as natural behavior. Every kind of action carries the imprint of learning, from feeding to washing, from repose to movement . . . (Mauss, cited in M. Douglas 1973:93).

This applies above all to language and communication. But while language is used *for* communication, and *in* communication, it is not the case that language alone *is* communication. In fact, the role of language in communication is considered to be less important than the nonlinguistic competent, which includes use of space, gesture, posture, touch, facial expression, gaze, odor, bodily decoration, dress, artifacts, and consumer goods (see M. Douglas 1978: 298; Montagu & Matson 1979:xii; Widdowson 1978:73; Wolfgang 1979:171).

The complexity of everyday communication is significant:

> We alternate "channels" and mix sensory effects like expert technicians; we execute delicate bodily maneuvers and choreograph our gestures with the rhythmic grace of dancers; we change roles, put on and take off masks, and stage our continuous performances like the most gifted of actors (Montagu & Matson 1979:xi).

This, the communicative competence of the native member of a group or society, is cultural competence. Much richness is lost in taking a "contrastive Emily Post approach" (Paulston & Bruder 1976:59) to communicative competence in ESL.

Language as Social Action

Dewey saw language as "fundamentally and primarily a social instrument" (cited in Seelye 1974:13); Malinowski considered it "a mode of action, and not an instrument of reflection" (cited in Hudson 1980:109). This notion may be unfamiliar to those whose primary concern is with language in classroom settings; but in everyday life, as Schutz (1972:130) observed, communication is for some purpose. This view is shared by Stevick, who defines language as "purposeful behavior between the same people" (1976:128).

Actually, this view is anything but esoteric. People want to do things, there are established ways of doing most of them, and language plays a major part in many cases—as everyone knows. The point is that, regardless of whether we also believe that "doing things" is language's most important function, the basic truths that have shaped our thinking about communicative competence—language is used in appropriate ways, and for communication—must be supplemented. Communicative competence is

"social competence" (Argyle 1979:154), or "interactional competence" (Speier 1973: 59).

Language and Social Reality

Much of our reality is created through language use (see Berger & Luckmann 1966; Edie 1976). This is not part of "what everybody knows"—to the contrary, the linguistic (i.e., man-made) basis of social reality goes virtually unnoticed. "Social categories are seen as part of the outside world, along with physical surroundings, artifacts, beliefs, etc." (Gumperz 1971a:222). This relationship between language and society is not only fundamental (see Fishman 1977:57) but truly interactive.

> Language is both the principal means whereby individuals externalize themselves into the objectivations that make up society and the means whereby society talks back to these individuals shaping them to its intentions (Lemert 1979:154).

This aspect of language, too, has significant implications.

Deviance, both as studied by sociologists (see, for example, Scott & Lyman 1970) and as determined in formal proceedings, is an excellent example of the linguistic creation of reality. How does one demonstrate an attribute such as character, or a condition such as delinquency, other than with words? This most fundamental aspect of language use is seldom addressed in ESL teaching.

Language also preserves what is, as Berger and Luckmann (1966:65) note: "The edifice of legitimation is built upon language and uses language as its principal instrumentality." One example of this is the social inequality of the sexes, which is seen as perpetuated by language structure (Wilden 1980:76-78) and usage patterns (Lakoff 1978:51-64).

Since language is always about something, rather than nothing, even the language produced by the ESL teacher and incorporated in the materials creates or reinforces some social reality. That relatively little attention is paid to whose reality that is, and what its characteristics are, and what the effects are, is not the point here. What is relevant for communicative competence in ESL is that, as Brittan (1973:83) put it, "Communication is more than an exercise in information; it assumes a role which is equivalent, if not identical, to other sociological categories, such as structure and culture."

Culture in the Classroom

Culture means different things to different people. With respect to learning a second culture, the most useful approach is from the subjective viewpoint:

> . . . culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members (Goodenough, cited in Hudson 1980:83).

The structure of meaning in culture, and the ability of members to become culturally competent, is sometimes likened to that of language:

> . . . *all* the various non-verbal dimensions of culture . . . are organized in patterned sets so as to incorporate coded information in a manner analogous to the sounds and words and sentences of a natural language (Leach 1976:10, emphasis in the original).

> . . . culture plays a role in communication which is somewhat similar to the role of syntactic knowledge in the decoding of referential meanings (Gumperz 1971b:330; also see Cicourel 1974).

And just as the ESL teacher's speech behavior is sociolinguistically appropriate, his or her other behavior is culturally appropriate. Treating male and female students alike, asking direct questions, behaving informally in class—this is (Western) culture. In this sense, the presence of culture in every classroom is quite unavoidable.

What can, and should, be done is to recognize the inseparability of language and culture, and deal actively with culture in ESL.

The basic recommendation, then, is to teach culture, rather than leave it to be acquired.

Teaching Culture in ESL

Teaching *about* American society is likely to be no more productive than teaching *about* English. Thus if culture is what individuals know and believe, general social science description is of limited value. Another popular approach to culture is through literature, but again there is a limitation.

> The quarrel is not with the value of literature or art as a means to illustrate how the foreign people live, but rather with the restrictive inroad fiction offers as the major source of information. Since many language teachers feel uncomfortable dealing with concepts and data of the social sciences, they tend to rely too heavily on literature to teach culture. Consequently, the common dual descriptor "literature and culture" has itself become suspect: It too often means a little culture and a lot of literature (Seelye 1974:15).

At the same time, some books specifically designed for teaching culture exhibit what J. Douglas (1970:5) calls "the dichotomizing of the social world into *morally* disjunct categories–right side of the tracks versus wrong side of the tracks" (emphasis in the original):

> . . . the United States is, in fact, markedly segmented into neighborhoods, residential areas, and ghettos; right and wrong sides of town (Lanier 1978:27).
>
> "Used to be a real good, solid, middle-class neighborhood. But it's changing . . ." (Johnson 1979:3).

Fortunately, there is an excellent cross-cultural introduction to American values and beliefs, *American Cultural Patterns* (Stewart 1972), which does treat culture in subjective terms and could be used as a reference guide in the type of approach suggested here.

The basic resource, for now, must be the teacher. Though even graduate-level programs in TESL do not ordinarily include culture courses (Ochsner 1980), the teacher often is in a position to know what the student's particular social and cultural needs will be; and most ESL teachers have an adequate background in, say, American culture by virtue of being native members of the culture.

According to the conceptual framework offered above, ESL is always ESP, even if the "special purpose" is as broad as coping with a new sociocultural environment. Learning about one's world is an ongoing process, of course, for natives as well as for newcomers. This amounts to a spiral curriculum, where key items are covered more than once, at ever-higher levels of competence. Topics sometimes taught in ESL include "survival skills"; norms and values associated with higher education (EAP); informal topics such as jokes and insults; and, of course, basic aspects of linguistic communication ("communicative competence"). What is missing generally are the three basic aspects of real-life language use discussed earlier: the full range of nonverbal communication; ways of doing things with language (e.g., justifying one's behavior); and the creation of social reality (e.g., establishing a good reputation in school or community). These language use topics, along with basic social and cultural data (both subjective and objective), constitute the cultural component.

All types of language-learning activities, for students at all levels of English fluency, can be oriented to culture. For more advanced students, contact activities in the community, which form a part of some ESL curricula, offer obvious opportunities for cultural studies. What do you (have to)

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say when returning unsatisfactory merchandise? How do you describe your own status in the most favorable or respectable way? What does long hair on men mean?

In-class activites sometimes can be organized around statuses and roles that are socioculturally significant to the students. For instance, nouns and verbs, and direct objects can be studied together as they occur in real life - - e.g., counselor: offers advice, approves courses, maintains records; policeman: gives directions, arrests lawbreakers, directs traffic; student: attends classes, does homework, participates socially. Such a method has three important characteristics: grammar and syntax can be treated in ordinary ways; vocabulary is a direct function of actual student need; and culture is built-in. In principle, this method can be used at all levels.

Another method of potentially broad application is where students make attributions of meaning. In one sense, this is the opposite of role-playing. In role-playing, speaker-actors start with some subjective conception or meaning which they try to act out or display appropriately, while in the attribution method of culture teaching, hearer-viewers are presented with some display or performance which they try to understand or explain. Thus where role-playing tends to be production-oriented, the attribution method emphasizes receptive skills.

The teaching process begins with some initial cultural input from the teacher or, in written versions called culture assimilators (see, for example, Brislin 1981:101-105), the materials themselves. The students then apply the general cultural input to a number of specific situations, seeking to make culturally accurate attributions as to subjective meaning. In use, this method may appear indistinguishable from ordinary elicitation of language using visual or written stimuli. The critical difference can be seen in the fact that the teacher asks, for example, not "What is the man doing?", but "Why is the man doing that?", or "What is the man thinking?" A correct response to the question represents an attribution based on the initial input, assuming that the situation or behavior portrayed is not plainly obvious to members of the student's culture. Even without culture assimilators or other formal materials, teachers can adopt the subjective approach to culture that is at the heart of this method.

Student reaction to cultural material may provide a point of departure for follow-up activities involving cross-cultural comparisons or other student-generated communication (e.g., imitating, modeling, or exaggerating). Before introducing new methods of teaching culture, it would be advisable to confront the practical aspects, e.g., establish that students do not object to learning culture; survey students' cultural backgrounds to avoid uncomfortable situations; and, of course, decide how much culture to attempt to include. It makes sense, too, to start the culture teaching with the norms and values of the language-learning situation itself—e.g., values: punctuality, individual responsibility, equality, informality, directness; norms: arrive on time, do not give or accept (unauthorized) assistance, treat all classmates the same, address classmates by first names, express personal ideas and feelings.

The suggestions offered above are only examples of incorporating a cultural orientation. Developing a conscious awareness of one's own culture is a satisfying undertaking in its own right, and teachers who wish to help others understand their culture will surely develop many better methods and techniques. What is important at this point is to realize that the need, and the challenge, are there.

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Chinese Educators Learn at BYU-Hawaii

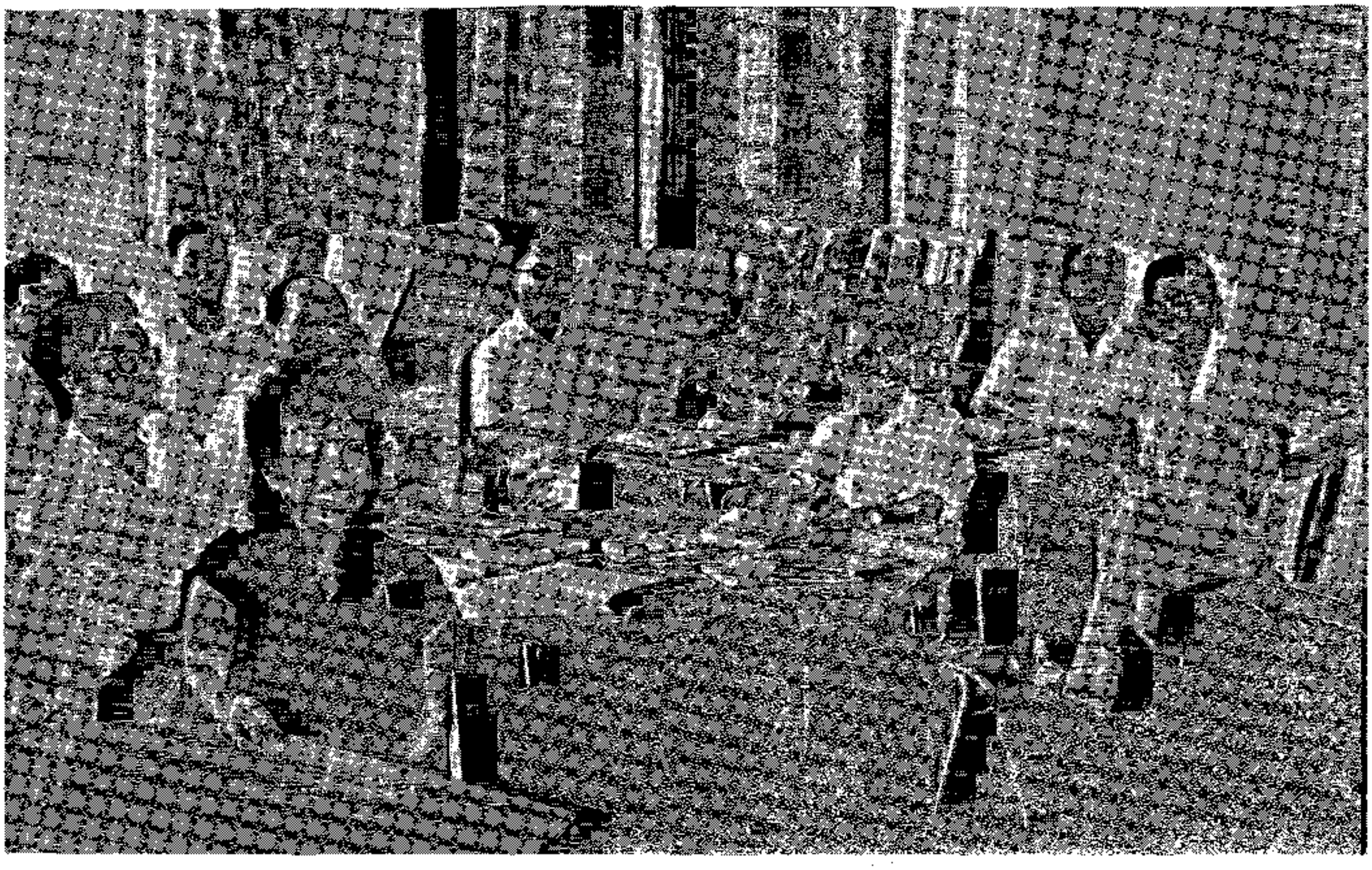
by Richard Timms

Twenty-eight educators from Keelung, Taiwan visited Brigham Young University—Hawaii Campus for five days, August 10-15, to attend an orientation seminar held on campus. The group of elementary and junior high school principals and teachers was on the first leg of a 15 day trip to the United States, sponsored by the Keelung City Government, to learn more about the American educational system, especially in the area of teaching English as a second language.

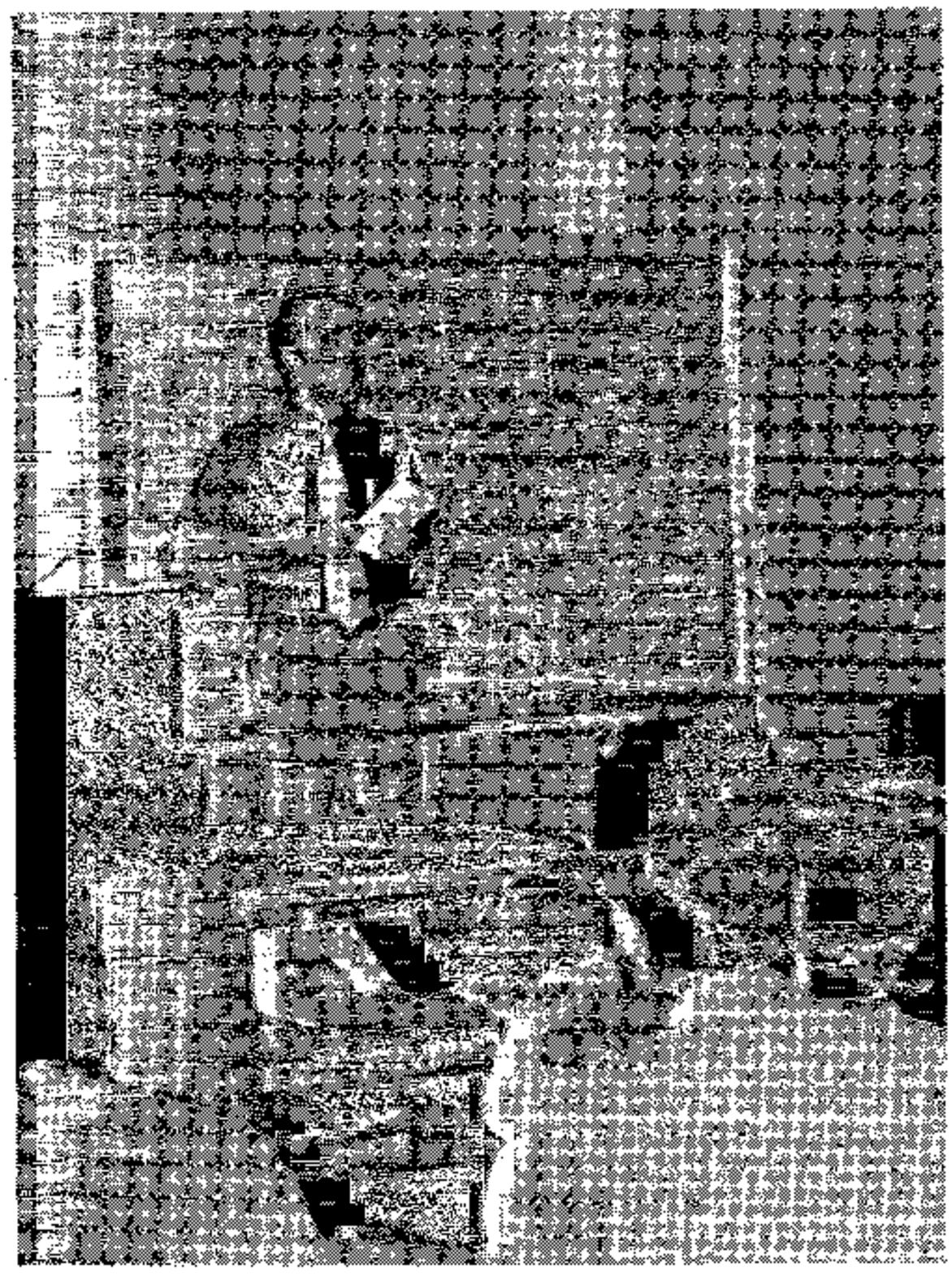
While on campus, the educators attended lectures on the American educational system and experienced ESL from a student's point of view in classes taught by BYU—HC instructors. They also received a general orientation to the field of TESL as well as to the University's English Language Institute program by E.L.I. director Lynn Henrichsen. Then, they enjoyed a " hands on " experience with TESL materials in the Campus English Skills Center.

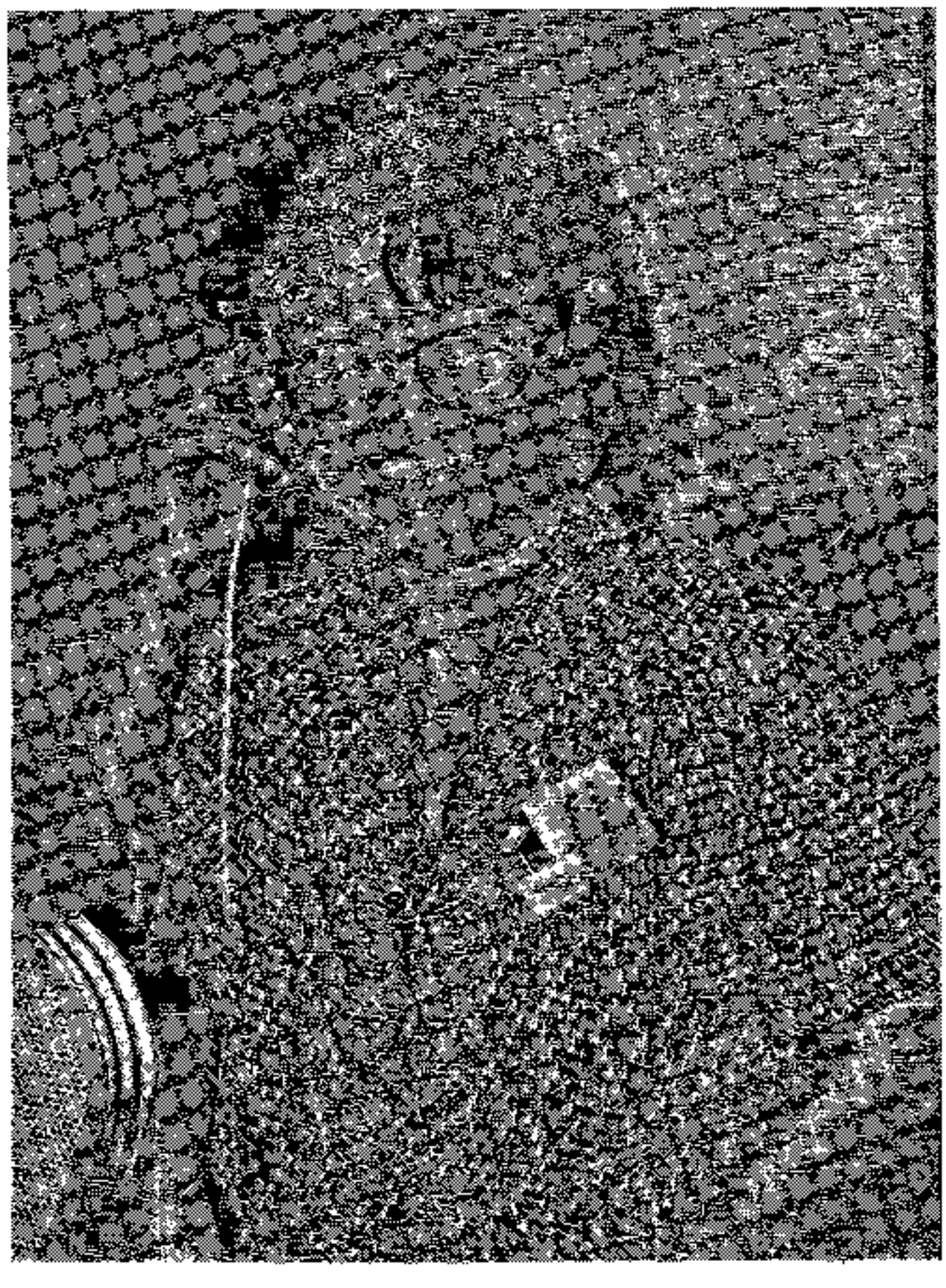
In spite of a busy schedule of meetings, the educators also enjoyed a wide variety of other activities. They experienced student life first hand, living in the student dormitories as well as eating and talking with students in the cafeteria and elsewhere on campus. Not only did the group learn while in Laie, they also taught, explaining about life and education in Taiwan. They also spent a day at the Polynesian Cultural Center, where they learned more about the cultures of the Pacific Islands, and toured other scenic areas of Oahu.

After their stay in Laie, the group went on to Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and San Francisco. There they learned more about the United States, before returning to Keelung with many memories of their experience in America.

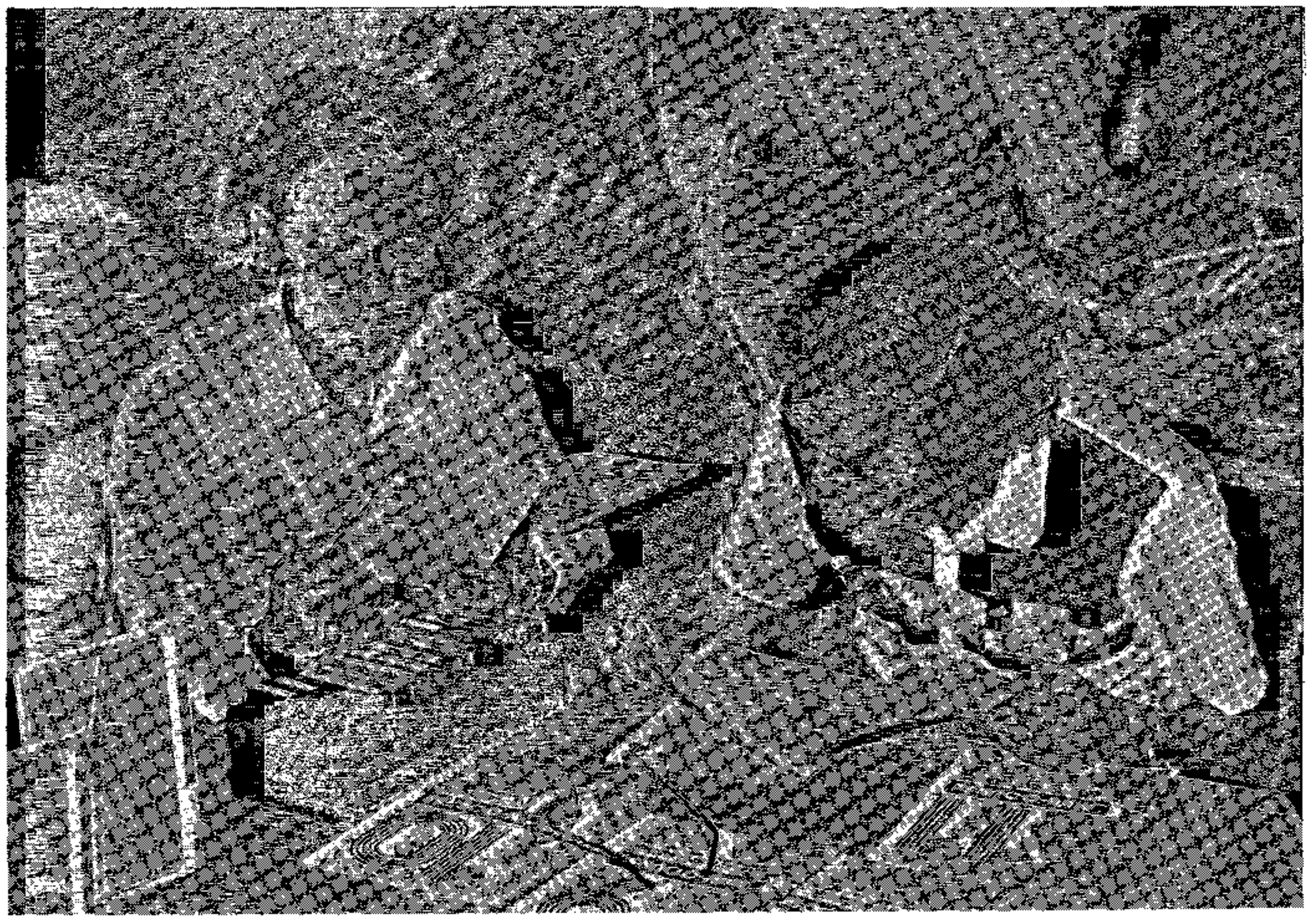


Attentive principals and teachers visit BYU—HC English Skills Center.





Visitors enjoyed attending educational lectures and experiencing TESL materials first hand.



Educators examined individualized English learning programs with interest.

Correcting Without Frustrating

by Mauricio Pilleux

Error analysis has viewed the second language learner's errors as a genuine linguistic system in its own right and has rejected the traditional stigmatizing characterization they had had in the past. Terms such as "transitional competence" (Corder, 1967), "idiosyncratic dialect" (Corder, 1971), "approximative system" (Nemser, 1971) and "interlanguage" (Selinker, 1972) have been used to describe the second language learner's utterances in the foreign language.

Errors have been found to represent strategies of communication and assimilation which result from the attempt to communicate in the target language without having completely acquired the grammatical forms necessary to do so (Richards, 1975). Among these strategies, *over-generalization* caused by extension of the target language rules where they do not apply has been the most widely studied. Other strategies include *avoidance* (Kleinmann, 1977), *simplification* (Richards, 1975), and last, but not least, *teacher-induced* errors (Stenson, 1975), which result from "pedagogical" procedures contained in the text or employed by the teacher.

The teacher in the classroom, however, may ask himself how all these findings can help his students learn the foreign language better. The purpose of this article is to suggest some techniques for correcting errors.

The techniques suggested vary according to the language activity in play, communicative competence, oral drilling, pronunciation, composition, or listening comprehension.

Communicative Competence

In communicative competence activities the ultimate goal is to allow our students to "get meaning across" (Paulston and Bruder, 1976:59). In other words, the student is concentrating on communicating some idea and should not be interrupted to consider language forms or structures. At this level of communication, error correction is unnatural, stifling, and confusing to the student. Since we assume that errors should be viewed as a natural, unavoidable, and even necessary corollary of second-language learning, then error correction should be considered as feedback the student receives only *after* he has finished expressing what he has to say. Interrupting the student in order to correct an error disrupts the flow of his thoughts and frustrates his interest in communicating in the foreign language. Contrary to the perfectionist doctrine of the classical audio-lingual method, it is more important to offer the student the satisfaction of having communicated his ideas than to insist on his producing accurate allophones and invariably correct grammatical agreement.

The question then arises as to what to do when a student gets stuck or seems unable to continue in a communicative activity. One possibility is to allow him to resort to the native tongue and then go back to the foreign language. The teacher will then jot down the word or expression whose meaning he will convey after the student has finished his participation. Another possibility is to have the teacher help with vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation, but only when the student requests it. Useful phrases the students should be familiar with are "How do you say this in English?" "What's the word for a thing that . . .?" "Is that right?" Since communicative activities lend themselves to group participation, a third possibility is to use peer correction. Again, *this should be done after the student has finished talking.*

Oral Drilling

Two stages will be considered in the learning of a structural pattern: the mechanical drill stage, and the meaningful drill stage.

Techniques for correction vary with the class of drills and the nature of the mistake, but the most important point that the teacher must learn is not to correct every mistake the student makes. In mechanical drills, all mistakes on the new pattern and those of last week should be corrected. The students are working on internalizing new forms and obviously they must learn correct forms. The teacher simply supplies the correct form and the student repeats. (Paulston and Bruder, 1976:44).

Since errors at the mechanical drill stage are due to faulty learning of the pattern, the best model can only be provided by the teacher; it is totally inadvisable to have peer correction or self-correction at this level. An example. Suppose there is a transformation drill going on in which the cue is *He came here two years ago.* The student responds, "He has come here for two years". The teacher says, "come". The student repeats, "He has *come.* . .

At the meaningful drill stage the teacher may have the students self-monitor their mistakes whenever possible. Attention is called to the mistake and the students themselves are asked to do the correcting. Paulston and Bruder (1976:45) suggest three ways in which the teacher can indicate that there is a mistake:

> For instance, in a drill on the present tenses, the student says: "He is working every day." The teacher can (1) repeat the incorrect word with an incredulous expression and question intonation, here *is working???* thus signaling "You can't really mean to say this;" or he can (2) repeat the word that triggers or co-occurs with the correct response, usually the cue, here *every day*,which signals the habitual present; or, finally the teacher can (3) simply mention the label for the grammatical category the student has wrong, here *habitual present.* Which of these is the best technique depends on the nature of the pattern and the mistake.

If the teacher wants to stimulate class response, he may avoid (at this meaningful drill stage) providing the correct response when the student hesitates or answers incorrectly. Instead, he may rephrase the question, cue, expand the incomplete but meaningful answer, or generate new sentences from the incomplete structure provided by the student (Holley and King, 1970).

Rephrasing the question

The teacher can help the student by reformulating his previous question or by breaking it up in several simpler questions that lead to the same answer. For example, the teacher asks: "Why didn't Peter come today?"

Student: . . . (hesitation)
Teacher: Is Peter here today? (Student answers)
Where is he? (Student answers)
Why is he not here? (Student answers)

Cueing

If the student does not give the correct answer in 10 seconds, then the teacher can hint at the answer by giving grammatical variations. Example:

Student: *He has . . .* (pause)
Teacher: *eat, ate, eaten*
Student: *He has eaten his food*
Student: *I have lived here . . .(1976)*
Teacher: *for, since*
Student (hopefully): *I have lived here since 1976.*

Expansion

Ungrammatical, but meaningful sentences, can be expanded into correct forms by the teacher. In some cases the student is not asked to repeat the correct form but simply listens to it. Example:

Teacher: *Did you swim in the pool last summer?*
Student: *Yes, I swim.*
Teacher: *Good. So you swam last summer.*

Generating new sentences

An incomplete answer given by a student can serve as a starting point for creating new sentences with the same structure.

Student: *He has . . .* (hesitation)
Teacher: *eat, ate, eaten*
Student: *He has eaten all his food*

Teacher: (one possibility, among others): *What have you eaten?* (Student answers) *Have you eaten dinner?* (Student answers), etc.

Pronunciation Errors

Pronunciation errors at an early stage should be corrected immediately. The word "immediately" refers to cases wherein the class is engaged in a specific pronunciation drill exercise; this does not apply in conversational exchanges or in structure drilling exercises. The following procedures may be used to correct errors in pronunciation.

Plain imitation is the shortest and most economical procedure. The teacher models and the student imitates.

Comparing the troublesome sound to one in the native language may be useful to make the student hear the difference between two sounds which are not phonemic in his native language but which are in the foreign language.

Diagramming a simple sketch of the vocal organs and explaining how the sound should be produced is particularly useful with adult students.

Correcting Errors in Composition

In written work it is important that the students get feedback as soon as possible. Compositions may be divided into controlled compositions and free compositions (Paulston, 1972).

Controlled Composition

The possibilities of making errors in controlled compositions are minimal since these consist "of a written model of some type with directions for conversions or specific language manipulations in rewriting the model" (Paulston, 1972:39).

In controlled compositions where all the students use the same model for rewriting, the teacher may indicate the errors in any of several ways:

By correcting the exercises orally in class with each student checking his own, or somebody else's, exercise. Here the teacher has two possibilities: give the correct forms himself or ask the students to provide them.

By correcting the compositions outside of class and underlining the errors, the teacher may provide the correct form or refer the student to a text or reference grammar where he can find out the correct form by himself.

Free Composition

In correcting free compositions the teacher may use the procedure described above for out-of-class correction. It is also useful to acquaint the students with a list of symbols for common errors. This list lessens the burden of correction for the teacher and tells the students what is wrong with their written work. A list might include, for instance, symbols such as:

w.o	word order
w.a	wrong auxiliary
sp.	spelling
prep.	preposition

In cases where this system cannot be used, the teacher writes the correct form next to the erroneous pattern.

Recopying

The important thing is to make sure the students really recopy the words, phrases or sentences. Otherwise, the time spent on correction will be a sheer waste of time. Paulston and Bruder (1976:230) suggest that if the teacher explains to the class that

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he will not record the grade or credit for the composition until he has okayed the corrections, the students will soon chase the teacher with their corrections, rather than the other way around.

This procedure can be implemented by establishing a system in which there are no failing grades, except, of course, for the student who refuses to hand in the corrected versions of his compositions. This means that students will only be graded (with a passing grade) if all the errors that the teacher noted on the first draft have been corrected by the students on the second draft.

However, there may be cases where errors in syntax make the first draft incomprehensible. This is returned to the student for rewriting; then, the second version of the composition is considered as the first draft. By eliminating failing grades for those students who correct their compositions, and allowing the students to re-do the compositions in which they have failed, students are encouraged and their language learning experience is enhanced. Compositions treated in the way described here become a powerful learning device.

Listening Comprehension

Errors in listening comprehension can be found in the phonological code (e.g., distinguishing between *sheep* and *cheap, ice* and *eyes*) or in the grammatical code (e.g., *he's eaten* and *he's eating*).

Correction of comprehension exercises can be done by the students themselves, especially in language lab activities where they can check their own work from an answer key. To detect other errors in listening comprehension, but more importantly to encourage active listening, the teacher may form the habit of stopping at random and calling on students to piece together what has been said up to that point either by fellow students or the teacher. In this way no one student bears the entire burden of summarization; he need only make a contribution. Furthermore, this review not only serves as a check but as reinforcement for the entire class.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper has been to show some techniques that can aid the teacher in helping students overcome communicative errors, structure errors, pronunciation errors, written errors, and aural comprehension errors. However, the attitude of the teacher toward error correction can no doubt help make the difference between a rewarding, successful learning experience and a distasteful, frustrating one.

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Reply Requested: 30 Letters of Advice

Book Review by Glen Penrod

REPLY REQUESTED: THIRTY LETTERS OF ADVICE. Richard C. Yorkey. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1981. pp. 127. $4.95.

Richard C. Yorkey uses a collection of letters to Ann Landers as the main reading text of his recent book, *Reply Requested: 30 Letters of Advice.* Each chapter begins with a different letter from the popular newspaper column.

After reading each letter, the students are required to complete a series of exercises which check their comprehension of the passage and help them understand the vocabulary and expression used therein. The students then discuss the letter-writer's "problem" and give their ideas as to what should be done in this and similar situations. In this process, the teacher is often required to explain cultural items, making the lesson more valuable and interesting.

After completing the exercises, students are asked to write their own reply to the letter as if they were Ann Landers giving advice. Toward the end of each chapter, Yorkey includes the reply "from the desk of Ann Landers." This gives the students a chance for further vocabulary building, language practice, and discussion. To provide an additional listening exercise, someone could be called on to read the reply for the whole class with some discussion before the rest of the class turned to the page to read it for themselves.

One note of caution: the natural tendency for students when they get their hands on a textbook like this is to read through the letters and then the replies, skipping over the skill-building exercises. If the teacher could somehow convince the students not to "peek" or read ahead the reply to next week's letter, the self-revealing nature of the discussions would be a more meaningful and authentic learning experience.

All in all the book is an excellent teaching aid, and provides ESL students with an interesting way to learn English as it is actually used in real life situations. Yorkey even includes elements of sarcasm and expressions of displeasure to make the language authentic and current. This book gives good overall practice in reading, writing, and speaking, and can be adapted to provide students with different learning activities. I recommend *Reply Requested* as a true to life experience in American English and U.S. culture.

TESL Seniors at BYU-HC Present Seminar Projects

The TESL program at Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus is now in its fifteenth year of preparing teachers. One of the oldest such programs in the United States, it continues to be one of the few TESL programs in the country at the bachelor's degree level.

Three years ago, the requirements for a major in TESL at BYU-HC were modified to include a new "senior seminar" course. One of the requirements of this course is to prepare and present a senior project (a mini-thesis). The most recent of these were completed this past June.

"What Happened with the Cloze Test," by Norma Murray, investigated the relationship between twelve different variables in cloze passages (such as time allowed per blank, readability level of the original passage, etc.) and scores on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP), a standardized, discrete-point examination. This investigation was part of an attempt to explain why previously strong coefficients of correlation between cloze scores and MTELP scores of students in BYU-HC's English Language Institute had declined in strength in recent administrations. Murray found that the unexpected drop in these coefficients of correlation was due to changes in the characteristics of the students taking the tests. There was a strong inverse relationship between the strength of correlation and both the level and spread of students' abilities. As their level of proficiency rose and the standard deviation of MTELP scores was reduced (the result of tightening standards in the ELI program) the correlation between MTELP and cloze scores decreased. Since these characteristics (level and range of abilities) of examinees are critical factors when determining the relationship between different tests, they should not be ignored in future research.

"A Comparison of Conceptual Tempo Between Polynesian and Asian ESL students" by Uinise Langi examined cultural differences in the reflectivity/impulsivity dimension of cognitive style. An underlying assumption of the work was that conceptual tempo, although not as yet related by research evidence to language learning outcomes, will prove to be a variable which affects second language acquisition. Two measures were used in the study: 1) the Matching Familiar Figures test, a visual test used in past research, and 2) the Matching Familiar Sounds test, an aural test developed by Langi. The measures were administered individually to 62 subjects; 32 Asians and 30 Polynesians. An analysis of the data from each of the tests showed statistically significant differentiation between the two groups, with the tests themselves correlating at the .73 level.

Research project topics for previous senior seminar students at BYU-HC have been diverse, as the following listing of their titles shows:

"Forces Affecting Lexical Borrowing: A Study of French-English Interaction," by Joëlle Janowski (1982).

"Perception of Lexical Connotaion: Professed Socio-Cultural Distance of Chinese Learners at BYU–HC," by Miranda Chan (1981).

"Nonverbal Expressions in Intercultural Communication," by Kimiko Arizono (1981).

"Analysis and Treatments of Noncount Nouns of Abstraction," by Yoshihiko Taniuchi (1981).

"A Contrastive Analysis of Fijian and English Phonology in the Framework of a Hierarchy of Difficulty," by Lynda Aupouri (1981).

"Male-Female Differences in Verb Inflection Errors in the Speech and Writing of Tongan Learners of English," by Lorinda Cluff (1980).

"Sexism in Language," by Elisabeth Ekedahl (1980).

Send Me A Letter! A Basic Guide to Letter Writing

Book Review by Andy Demaret

SEND ME A LETTER: A BASIC GUIDE TO LETTER WRITING. Sol Gonshack and Joanna McKenzie. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982. pp. 245. $6.95

The title of this text represents its contents well. The book is a guide to help the student of ESL learn to correspond better in a diversity of daily life situations through the medium of the formal written letter.

This book is *not*, however, your everyday Secretarial Science 101 textbook. Nor is this text just a series of cut-out lessons from some other text with an "ESL" title pasted on the front, as is sometimes the case with ESP materials. It is, rather, a fine example of what can be done in a specialized area of ESL.

Each letter form is introduced with a story situation in which essential words and phrases are glossed. Exercises follow that check the students' comprehension and reinforce vocabulary. Some of the exercises are constructed to further define the situation or problem which the students will later have to write about. A sample letter is then introduced within the context of the introductory story line. The final assignments of each unit ask the students to write a letter from a similar situation outlined in the assignment.

A broad array of different types of letters is covered: complaint, information, goods and services, reservations, jobs and resumes, and finances. Each of these major areas is divided into a handful of different situations or units.

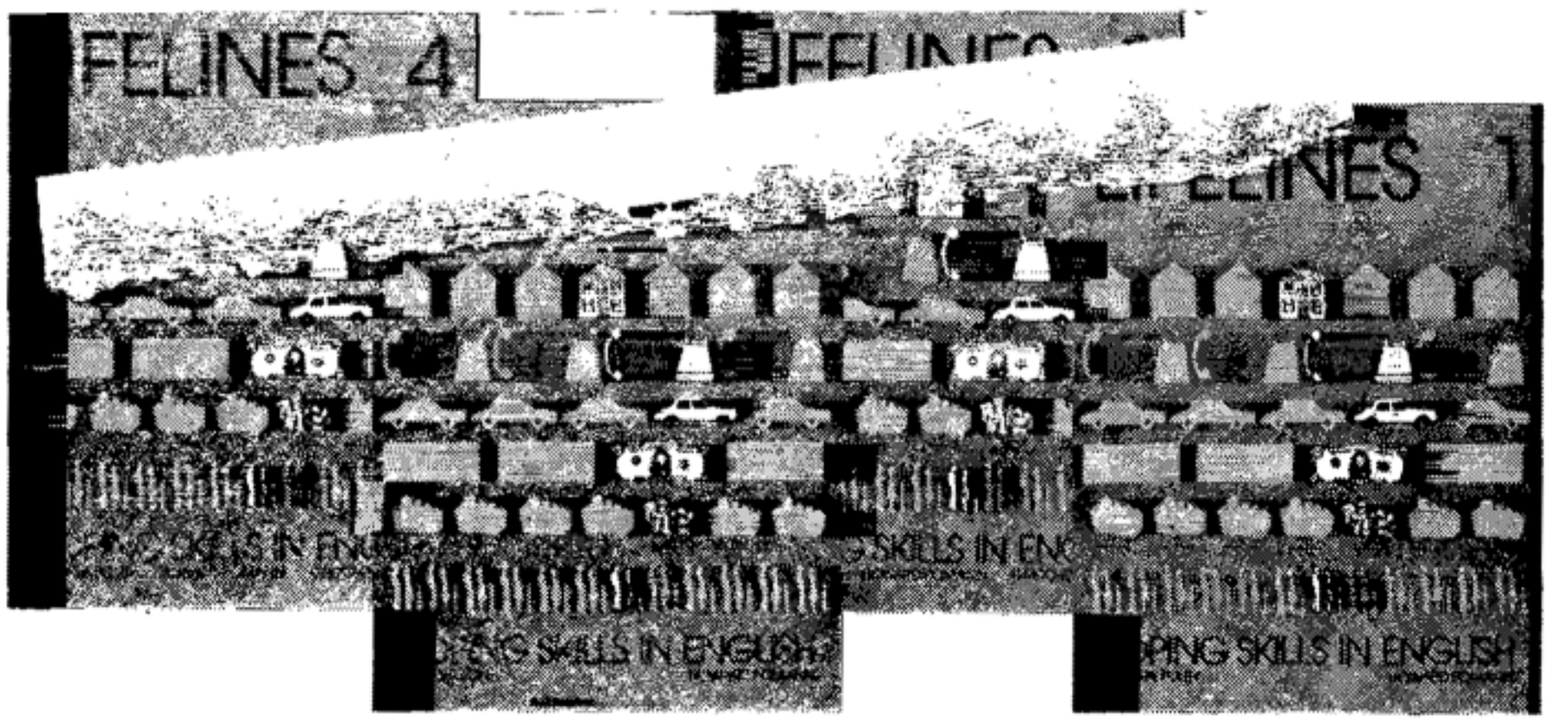
These thirty units are preceded by an introductory chapter on the "anatomy of a letter," which is a useful section for students who, because of their personal or cultural backgrounds, have had no previous exposure to or knowledge of formal letter writing. There is a final unit on writing short notes, but the coverage of this diverse subject is cursory. In this reviewer's opinion, this unit should have been either expanded or left out.

As mentioned in the book's introduction, *Send Me a Letter* is a "functional text" intended primarily to help high-intermediate to advanced ESL students at the high school, college or adult-education level handle some of the many everyday life situations requiring written communication. To this end, it seems this text will be a success.

Conference Announcements

The Western Humor and Irony Membership (WHIM) announces its second conference on linguistic humor to be held in Phoenix on the 1983 April Fool's Day weekend (March 31 - April 2). The theme of the conference is "Far-Fetched Figures: The Humor of Linguistic Deviance." Proposals dealing with any aspect of humorous metaphor are now being accepted by Don L.F. Nilsen, English Department, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona 85287 U.S.A.

MEXTESOL (Mexican Association of Teachers of English) will hold its ninth national conference November 26 - 29, 1982 at the Hyatt Regency and La Palapa Hotel in Acapulco, Mexico. For information or registration contact: Joaquín Meza Coria, 1982 Convention Chairman, MEXTESOL, A.C., Av. Nuevo León 213-102, Colonia Hipódromo Condesa, México 06170 D.F., México.



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Richard Timms, a BYU–HC TESL student from Indiana, explains English teaching materials to a visiting Chinese educator (story on page 50).

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