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Getting Students to Describe Each Other

Jan Fluitt-Dupuy, St. Joseph Seminary College

Even advanced L2 learners have difficulties in forming precise yet grammatically accurate descriptions. The technique described here is my tried method for teaching the skills of description to advanced and intermediate ESL students in a non-credit university program. It is the result of classroom experience teaching both ESL and American writing courses.

I teach descriptive writing for three reasons:

1. Description is a necessary skill in fluent conversation and composition,
2. It increases a student's observation powers and concentration on detail, and
3. It teaches logical ordering and patterning.

Besides learning these important language and study skills, students enjoy the fun of the description activities and learn quickly to work together.

The following lesson plan is broken down into four one-hour segments but can easily be cut or expanded according to the constraints of a curriculum. In a three-hour college course, I find that four days work best in combination with the variety of classroom activities: reading, writing, pair and group work, editing, and classroom discussions. I usually teach this description unit the first week of class or soon after because it is an excellent way to introduce the students to their language class and each other. Here is how it works:

Day 1: Matching Pictures and Descriptions/Brainstorming. Adjectives

Each student is given one of two items: either a picture of a person (cut from a magazine) or a one-sentence description of a picture. The task is for students to match sentences with pictures.

After all the sentence/picture pairs are made, the teacher can put the sentences on the board in order to explicate pertinent rules of grammar. The Appendix contains several such sentences. For example, students need to know how many adjectives are appropriate to modify one noun (usually one or two and no more than three) and that adjectives can appear in either an attributive or predicative position in a sentence. Students also need to spend some time as a class brainstorming a list of adjectives expressing a subjective opinion (pretty/ugly, sparkling/dull, strong/weak, etc.). The pictures can often provide a stimulus for brainstorming.

For homework, students are given a chart of adjectives (see figure 1) used to describe facial features and are asked to look up and study meanings of any unfamiliar words. Students should be aware that the synonym and antonym symbols in the chart will help them sort out difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary without constant reference to a dictionary. Also, the arrangement of the chart corresponds to a possible arrangement of these adjectives in sentences. In particular,

Features	Type	size	shape	texture	color
Face		large/small	pointed, angular/bony*	X	X
complexion		X	X	clear, smooth, fine/ bad*, coarse*, rough*/	fair, freckled/ olive, dark, tanned
Hair		short/mid-length shoulder-length/long	X	thick, coarse*, bushy*/ thin, (baby) fine/balding straight/curly, wavy	(strawberry)blond/gray white, silver/brown, brunette/(jet)black/ red, auburn, orange*
Eyes		big, wide/small wide-/close-/deep-set sunken*/circled*	baby/bulging*/ almond-shaped, oriental, slanted*	X	(deep/icy/light/dark) blue/gray/green/hazel brown, black
-brows		X	straight/arched	thick, heavy, bushy/ thin, uneven	[see hair color]
-lashes		short, stubby*/long	X	thick, full/thin curly/straight	blond, red/brown, black
Nose		big*/little, small wide, fat*/skinny, long	round/pug, upturned/ Roman, aquiline/sharp pointed, straight	X	red*
lips		thin/full	X	X	rosy, (cherry)red/ colorless*, pale*
teeth		small, fine, baby*/ large	pointed, square/ even, straight, pretty/	X	(pearly)white/ yellowed*, stained*
Cheeks		full, big	high/hollow*, sunken dimpled	soft, smooth, firm/ rough, coarse, pitted*	rosy, apple(red)/pale
beard		long/short, trimmed clipped	moustache, goatee[nouns]	groomed, well-kept/scraggly ill-kept	[see hair color]
Chin		double*/long*	prominent/receding*/ square/pointed/clefted	X	X

N.B.: , indicates synonyms

/ indicates antonyms

() indicates an optional modifier

* indicates the adjective is not complimentary

Figure 1. Chart of descriptive adjectives for facial features.

with the exception of adjectives of opinion, the horizontal listings of adjectives by semantic groups represent the order proposed by Celce Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983): opinion + size + shape + texture + color. Likewise, the facial features are listed vertically in a top to bottom organizational pattern.

Day 2: Interviews and Out-of-Class Writing

The class period begins with the students asking questions about the vocabulary from the chart. The teacher should point out irregular plurals and count/non-count nouns to prevent later subject-verb agreement errors (e.g. His teeth *are* small and pointed; his beard *is* long).

The rest of the class period consists of the students breaking into pairs to interview and observe each other in order to write a description of his/her partner's face later. Students take notes about their partner's facial features by circling words on their vocabulary charts. Students must be aware of the aim of the assignment: to produce written paragraphs describing their partner. The paragraphs will then be read aloud in class, with the names deleted, so that other students can guess who is being described. Here, a short explanation of polite social norms is usually in order, so that no student will be offended by his or her description. A first draft is assigned for homework.

Day 3: Peer editing

Students are introduced to peer editing techniques and asked to edit the papers describing their own facial features, suggesting changes in structure and

vocabulary if necessary. Rewrites are to be completed at home. Note: this step can easily be omitted by teachers wary of the peer-editing technique. However, having the students read their own descriptions helps to insure that the paragraphs remain complimentary.

Day 4: Teacher Reads the Papers Aloud

At the beginning of class, the teacher collects the final drafts and reads the papers aloud to the class, slipping in necessary changes to smooth awkward grammar and omitting embarrassing statements. After each paragraph, students guess who is being described. The guessing forces students to look around the room and to learn the others' names. Plus, this activity usually produces some good-natured blushes and much laughter.

Benefits

In this lesson plan, students get to know one another through close pair and group work and through various information-gap activities. Presenting description in this fashion is not only fun, but also builds the four skills because the students must talk and listen to the teacher and each other as well as read and write descriptive paragraphs.

Indirectly, they are learning essential social and cultural aspects of the language (what one can and cannot say about a face to that face). In addition, students begin to learn the rudiments of logical organization of a paragraph, either top to bottom, or from most to least noticeable feature, or a combination of the two. Students begin preparing for other uses of the skill of description in life—both academic,

(ranging from reporting technical experiments to analyzing literature), and social, (ranging from enhancing personal description in conversation to building powers of observation).

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Appendix Sample Descriptive Sentences

The lashes surrounding her *wide, baby* eyes were *short, and stubby*.

He wore his *goatee* and *moustache* impeccably *trimmed*; he was a well-dressed man in every aspect.

Her beautiful *long, wavy* hair falling about her face softened its *bony* features.

Her *tiny pug* nose was sprinkled with freckles.

His cheeks were badly *pitted*; in spite of this imperfection, he was still a handsome middle-aged man.

The older man's *silver* hair was *thin* on top and was quickly *receding* at the temples.

The ten-year-old child ran into the house from the cold; her cheeks were *rosy* and her lips *cherry red*.

The woman was in her forties. Her make up was perfect; even her eyebrows had been carefully *plucked* into a delicate arch.

About the Author

Jan Fluitt-Dupuy, a former Fulbright teacher-trainer in southern Italy, is Director of ESL at St. Joseph Seminary College near New Orleans, Louisiana. Her research interests include writing theory and computer-assisted language learning.

IIE Reports Record Foreign Student Enrollment

For the first time, Asian students were more than 50 percent of the U.S. foreign student enrollment which reached 356,200 in 1987-88, according to figures released by the Institute of International Education. IIE conducts the annual census of foreign students in the United States, published as *Open Doors*, with grant support from the U. S. Information Agency.

Figures for the 1987-88 academic year showed that the top five places of origin were all in Asia, led again by Taiwan with 26,700. The People's Republic of China was in second place and increasing rapidly, with 26 percent growth from 20,000 to 25,200 over the past year. India, Korea, and Malaysia completed the top five. Chinese students have been the fastest-growing group in the foreign student population for five consecutive years.

Open Doors 1987-1988 can be ordered from IIE Books, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. The book is 150 pages long and costs \$32.95.

Beyond Cultural Differences

Keumsil Kim Yoon, William Paterson College

An Intercultural Experience Through Film

A hundred English as a second language teacher trainees viewed a Japanese film in one session of the International Film Program at William Paterson College. The objective of this program was to augment intercultural study elements of the academic curriculum and heighten students' awareness of cultures.

The ESL teacher trainees were very eager to know more about Japanese culture, partly due to the increasing population of Asian students in the New York metropolitan area where they were teaching. Many of them currently had Asian students, including Japanese, in their classes. They were looking forward to experiencing cultural differences through the Japanese film. They had read and been told about differences between American and Japanese cultures—differences in foods, housing, school systems and so forth.

The film they saw was "Ikiru" (to live) directed by Akira Kurosawa. In the film a petty municipal official learns that he is dying of cancer. For the first time in his life he realizes that he has accomplished nothing, has never enjoyed anything. He spends the money he has saved on a wild spree in a red light district, but this brings him no satisfaction. Later he looks for a clue for the meaning of life by trying to establish significant communication with his son, but also finds disappointment in this. Finally, he returns to the office and

uses all of his strength to bring to realization a petition which has been months on his desk and the desks of others—a request for a playground in a slum neighborhood. Despite opposition from almost every quarter, he pushes his project through. Finally it is complete, and that night, sitting on a swing in the park, with snow falling on him, he dies.

Reaction

The ESL teachers' reactions to this film were very revealing. Some of them expressed their disappointment: "I didn't find anything significantly different from our American culture." "Red light districts exist regardless of geographic areas." "Even a Japanese father cannot establish a profound relationship with his son and daughter-in-law." "Their bureaucracy is just the same as ours." Others revealed their misconception of people from different cultures: "I thought that the emphasis on Asian culture and education was on controlling emotions...but that young girl from Watanabe's office giggles a lot and enjoys moments of life." "Since Japanese people look very serious, I thought the funeral scene in Japan would be serene, but they also get drunk." "How come the young people behind the scene sing a birthday song in English, not in Japanese?"

The Outcome

The aforementioned reactions had been anticipated and were meant to be a challenge to the trainees' obsession with

experiencing and finding cultural differences. This was a hidden but main objective. It was hoped that their spontaneous reactions would make them reexamine their attitudes toward other cultures and search for the beauty in universal humanity.

Intercultural Differences

It has been assumed that a teacher must be aware of sociocultural differences to operate effectively in the classroom. In this respect, Saville-Troike (1978 p. viii) states "we can never hope to be culture-free in teaching and evaluating our students, but we can at least attempt to be culture-fair by being sensitive to our own biases and by recognizing that cultural differences do not represent deficiencies."

ESL teachers have been pressured to augment their awareness of cultural differences of their students in order to understand them better. In this way they have been encouraged to look for cultural differences to the extent that, in their minds, the more they know about cultural differences the better they are in teaching. Their minds have been filled with the anxiety of finding differences.

Thus, many ESL classes concentrate on differences: "Tell us about your school?" "Tell us about how different the food is" "What was the most difficult habit to be broken due to the cultural differences?" All questions and topics focus on differences.

To go back to the Japanese film session, the ESL teacher trainees who had been obsessed with the idea of differences overlooked the message of the film. They were so anxious to find cultural differences that they missed perceiving the human

similarities which would allow them to establish deep relationships with people from other cultures. "Ikiru" is not an ethnic film which would satisfy the curiosity of people who look for surface cultural differences. It raises no barrier of culture or tradition to baffle the audience. The story is simple but universal; it tells us something about life which increases the measure of truth in the universe, it probes the heart and mind of an individual on a scale that transcends national boundaries.

A Concern

Knowing and understanding cultural differences is certainly an asset in communicating effectively. However, conversations based only on differences create problems: when people thus trained approach anybody who is different, the sense of difference creates a "wall" and even a "fear." Later this difference creates a feeling of isolation and prevents people from developing deeply emotional and joyful relationships. My concern is not just for ESL teachers, but also for their students who are looking for and waiting for close contacts with their teachers and peers. (Fantini et al. 1984; see pedagogical suggestions on "Fears and Expectations")

Intercultural Similarities

Beyond cultural differences there are universal humanistic similarities to be searched for, to be appreciated and to be enjoyed. Why shouldn't we then talk about things in common first? Why shouldn't we look for similarities beyond surface cultural differences? While recognition, appreciation, and maintenance of cultural differences is a worthwhile endeavor, pursuit of universal similarities is a

humanitarian task. This has been social workers' task (Aptekar 1967) and it should be ESL teachers' task too.

Language minority students, especially those with a different physiognomy, who are already experiencing a great number of difficulties—linguistic, cultural, and psychological—are very sensitive to their differences including their physical difference. When these are emphasized, they feel excluded. Why should we thus generate more stress to the painful situation?

A Proposal

How about first talking about human similarities and building a "bridge" rather than a wall? The study of cultural differences could come afterward.

Furthermore, accepting Singer's (1987, p. 3) view that "the world is shrinking at an incredible rate," I suggest extending ESL programs to intercultural education (Dye & Frankfort 1983), which requires behavioral as well as theoretical learning including examination of our self-perception and our perception of other cultures. In this increasingly small planet, we may expect that the traditional focus on sharp national and East-West divisions will be erased, and a new, more enlightened focus on universal ideals and qualities will become prominent. To many enlightened people, it is no longer western history and ideals which matter entirely, but universal history and ideals. It is a question of integrating world education into the curriculum.

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An Analysis of Factors that Hinder TESOL Innovations in China

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In the past several decades, English language teaching in China has undergone many changes because of political reasons or economic needs. In the 50's, China copied indiscriminately the Soviet experience in many aspects. Naturally, Russian was the major foreign language. "But in the 60's, English gradually gained popularity, and soon China faced a large shortage of English teachers" (Yang 1987, p. 29). During the past decade (1978-1988), with the implementation of the "open door to the outside world" policy, China has been making rapid strides in English teaching and learning, not only at full-time schools, but also at TV and radio colleges, correspondence schools, and evening universities, as well as various training classes.

Under these circumstances, the question arises: Does China have adequate materials, effective methods, and/or enough qualified English teachers to "meet the needs of the millions of pupils and university students who are currently learning English in thousands of schools and less prestigious institutions scattered throughout the country"? (Scovel, T. 1983, p.85). Lamentably, the answer to this question is "No."

Meeting the Need

Among the problems, the most pressing is the shortage of teachers. In order to solve this problem, "Chinese colleges and other institutions have invited large

numbers of English teachers from various foreign countries to join their staff" (Wu 1983, p. 111). "Hundreds and hundreds of former Russian teachers" have gone "through retraining programs to learn English" and become English teachers (Scovel, J. 1983, p. 107). In addition, various training classes have been held for English teachers. After six months or a year of training in English language skills (not in teaching methodology), these teachers are assigned to teach at middle schools. Some of the teachers are merely middle school graduates. They "are chosen to be teachers because they have a talent for language and have learned some teaching techniques from their teachers" (Hou 1987, p. 25). "Even those who cannot speak more than a handful of words and have no training find jobs" (Scovel, J. 1983, p. 107). It is true that quite a number of teachers are not qualified for their work. "It was even more the case six or seven years ago" (Yang 1987, p. 29).

In order to upgrade these teachers' English language skills, the government has made great efforts to encourage them to go to spare-time schools, to take courses offered by TV and radio colleges or correspondence schools, or to attend special training classes held for them. In this way, the pressing situation of the shortage of teachers has been alleviated to some extent, and the English language skills of the teachers have been much improved, but innovations in teaching methods are slow to catch on.

Values and Traditions

In China, the study of methods for teaching English to speakers of other languages has never been highly valued, even in teacher training programs. In describing teacher training in China, Maley writes, "Most Chinese host institutions take this (teacher training) to mean language improvement for their teachers. No notion of methodological improvement enters into their calculations. [The assumption seems to be] if their teachers 'know' more English, they will teach better" (1983, p. 97). Under the guidance of this mistaken axiom, TESOL programs in China are virtually non-existent. Consequently, "the majority of English teachers in China are not systematic trainees in the methodology of second language teaching.... The development of research in linguistics and many effective techniques are completely new to most Chinese English teachers" (Hou 1987, p. 25).

Due to this lack of systematic training, most Chinese English teachers "teach in the way in which they have been taught" (Patrie and Daum 1980, p. 393). The methodology used in the past for second language teaching in China has always been a grammar-translation approach. "The result of the approach was that students learned how to analyse sentence structures but were handicapped in listening and speaking" (Yang 1987, p. 29). When they spoke, they talked like a book; when they read, they were actually doing word for word silent translation. Of course, their reading speed was extremely slow.

In recent years, influenced by the new concepts of language pedagogy and new achievements in linguistic and

communicative approaches, many teachers have tried hard to break away from the traditional grammar-translation approach, and to adopt the advanced strategies from abroad. After several years' efforts, a new methodology has been formed. It is most commonly described as "eclectic" or "composite". Teaching activities are drawn from "grammar translation", "direct" and "audiolingual" approaches. Obviously it is "a move from primary reliance on grammar-translation activities to increased use of techniques associated with audiolingual methodology," though "there still are proponents of grammar-translation activities and rigidly enforced teacher-as-dominant/student-as-submissive role relationships" (Cowan et al. 1979, p. 474). But the move is not radical. Grabe and Mahon comment on the issue, saying that the newly-formed methodology, "most commonly used in language classes in China today," is just a variety of the grammar translation approach "modified by the audio-lingual method" because its emphasis is still "on close analysis of syntax and discussion of word meanings" (1981, p. 207).

Hindrances to Innovation

What are the main factors that hinder the innovation of TESOL in China? Attempting to answer the question, Grabe and Mahon cite such factors as the traditional nature of China's educational system, the fear of teachers that using new methods would not serve the examination preparation needs of their students, individual teachers' limited influence on educational policies in terms of methods selected for actual use in the classroom, and the preference which teachers consider their students to have for traditional methods (Osburne 1988). Other factors

that have been mentioned are the deep influence of Confucian thought and Russian teaching methods (Porter 1983, p. 80, Scovel, T. 1983, p. 85, Scovel, J. 1983, p. 108, Yan 1988, p. 8). I do not disagree with these reasons. However, in this article I would like to categorize and analyse them.

China's Educational System

The traditional nature of China's educational system is the most decisive factor. In China, education must serve politics, while teachers, teaching methods and materials must suit the needs of the educational system. "As in all nations, scholastic tests are an important part of the educational system, but because of the strong traditional values placed on education and the longstanding importance of tests stemming from the Confucian tradition of civil service examinations, tests are viewed with almost reverential respect by students, teachers, and administrators" (Scovel, T. 1983, p. 88). It is these "neo-Confucian examinations" that determine the students' academic future and professional career in China today. They are so frequently abused that a student has to pass at least a hundred formal examinations involving scores of subjects from the day he enters primary school to the day he completes graduate school.

In recent years, English teaching and learning have been greatly intensified. English has become a required course not only for students at schools, but also for intellectuals in various circles. A senior middle school student cannot enroll in a college or university if he cannot make a good score on his English examination. An undergraduate may be turned down by a

graduate school simply because his English is not good enough. Similarly, an intellectual cannot be promoted into a higher position if he cannot pass his English examination. All these examinations, however, are written ones with the emphasis on sentence structure, comprehension, vocabulary, and translation.

In order for their students to pass these examinations successfully, teachers must adopt appropriate methods in their teaching. Due to "the wide gulf between the new materials, methods, and approaches that are entering Chinese classrooms from abroad and the contents of the national and local examinations administered to the students" (Scovel, T. 1983, p. 88), methods such as the Total Physical Response or the Silent Way cannot be considered appropriate in helping students pass these tests though they may help accelerate the acquisition of the English language. Fitting quite properly into the demands of these examinations is the traditional Grammar Translation approach with the emphasis on close analysis of syntax and discussion of word meanings.

Without a complete reform of the educational system, there will be little innovation in testing. Consequently, there won't be any radical changes in teaching methods and materials.

China's Traditional Method

China's traditional teaching method is deep-rooted, and its influence constitutes another factor that hinders the adoption of methodological innovations in China. Stemming from the time of Confucius (551-479 B.C.), the traditional teaching

methodology has lasted for more than two thousand years.

In Imperial China, "texts were memorized mechanically with the belief that years later, as the child matured, appropriate quotes would return in flashes as needed and would then be comprehended" (Scovel, J. 1983, p. 106). Scholars had to spend at least ten years memorizing The Four Books (*The Great Learning, The Doctrine of Mean, The Analects of Confucius, and The Book of Mencius*) and The Five Classics (*The Book of Songs, The Book of History, The Book of Changes, The Book of Rites, and The Spring and Autumn Annals*) before they could take the official Imperial examination.

Today, "the Confucian emphasis on memorization is still important and, in fact, primary" in teaching (Porter 1983, p. 80). Commenting on the emphasis on memorization in China today, Janene Scovel put it this way:

Today the method of teaching Chinese children at the elementary level is comparable to that used to teach the Confucian classics, except that the content is socialistic (Unger 1977). Even at tertiary levels of education, students continue to memorize lessons. Barnhouse (1981:3) found in her teaching at Shanxi Agricultural University that "students not only memorize English readings, but biology and animal husbandry lectures as well. The professors also deliver their lectures from memory. (1983, p. 106)

Mechanical memorization and detailed analysis of scholarly works are the core of

the traditional teaching methodology. "Fitting quite comfortably into this tradition is the Grammar-Translation approach to language teaching with its emphasis on close analysis of syntax and discussion of word meanings" (Grabe and Mahon 1981, p. 207).

When it was first introduced into China in the mid-1800s and early 1900s, English was taught and learned by the grammar-translation method. In this manner, an additional methodological tradition was established.

Having entered the 1980s, China has made great progress in English teaching and learning. But the traditional approach is still predominant in English classes. The advantage of the method is that grammar can be taught divorced from the texts. Grammatical rules are singled out, illustrated with examples, and then they can be easily memorized and recited by the students mechanically. New words and expressions are explained in Chinese or English before the text is explicated. The text is dissected segment by segment. Sentence patterns are memorized, substitution drills are practiced, dialogues are recited, sentences are analysed grammatically and paraphrased in different ways, and finally translated into Chinese with accuracy, expressiveness and gracefulness (Scovel J. 1983, p. 105). Because vocabulary words and grammar rules are taught separately, students have the concept that English is grammar plus vocabulary. The result is that sometimes students can analyse a complex sentence so well that they know the grammatical function of every word, but they still do not understand the idea it carries though none of the words used in the sentence are new to them.

The weak points of China's traditional method of mechanical memorization are obvious. But "the discipline to memorize and learn by rote is believed to be an essential characteristic necessary for successful language learning in China" (Scovel J. 1983, p. 106). In fact with this very discipline China has been able to "produce stellar students, superb teachers, and magnificent translators" (Scovel, T. 1983, p. 84). Grabe and Mahon (1981) admit that Chinese teachers of English have been successful in turning out fluent speakers of the language (p. 207). These facts prove that China's traditional method has not been a total failure though it has never been a great success. Since most Chinese teachers still believe that the record of the traditional method should be assessed as 70 percent merits and 30 percent demerits, they won't discard it easily and completely.

The Russian Influence

The Russian influence is the third factor, and it cannot be underestimated. Professor Yan Guocai points out that right after liberation, The People's Republic of China sided with the Soviet Union without reservation. In education, China adopted the whole system of teaching methodology created by Ivan Adreyevich Kairov, a well-known Soviet educationist. His theories on education exerted a tremendous influence on China's teaching methodology (1988, p. 8). Thus China's traditional method with the emphasis on memorization and attention to detailed analysis was "enhanced by the influence of Russian educators in the early 50's whose European tradition of explication *de texte* fit suitably into the Chinese milieu" (Scovel T. 1983, p. 85).

Porter points out that the Russian method could be accepted easily because it was not far removed from the Confucian, and the two methods complemented each other (1983, p. 80). This enhanced method is also called the cramming (forced-feeding) method or teacher-centered approach based on the belief that language teaching is regarded as a process of "knowledge-imparting" while language learning is seen as a process of "knowledge-receiving."

This approach is still widely used for language teaching, especially with non-English major students at colleges and universities and with students in middle schools. Teaching activities are centered on textbooks which are thought of as an embodiment of knowledge, wisdom and truth by many Chinese teachers and students. "Knowledge is 'in' the book and can be taken out and put inside the students' heads" (Maley 1983, p. 98). What teachers have to do is to take out knowledge from the textbooks and put it inside the students' heads.

To do this work well, the Preparing Lessons Collectively method, modeled on the Soviet system, is readily accepted since many "teachers do not have much confidence and do not feel proficient in English" (Scovel J. 1983, p. 108). In making preparations, the teachers who teach similar courses sit together to discuss teaching programs and materials, to solve difficult language problems, to analyse complex sentences and translate them into Chinese, to work out correct answers to every exercise their students will do. In this way, they will certainly have enough "knowledge" to impart in class and won't be frustrated by students' questions. In class, they keep reading,

analysing, paraphrasing, practising patterns, translating, doing exercises until the class is over. Treated as passive recipients, according to Hou Zhiming (1987), the students don't have to take any initiative. They just wait there to be filled with knowledge. To evaluate the method, he writes:

Because of teacher-as-dominant, student-as-submissive role relationships, students are accustomed to being silent. A fear of losing face, a desire to avoid confrontation, a reluctance to be singled out, a fear of making mistakes, a hesitancy about answering questions make students reluctant to participate in class activities. (p. 26)

The result is that after ten years' hard work at English they are still very handicapped in listening and speaking though they can read and translate with the help of a dictionary.

In spite of its drawbacks, both Chinese teachers and students seem reluctant to abandon this method. Some of the Chinese teachers are unwilling to depart from the established curriculum and materials because they lack confidence and proficiency in English (Scovel J. 1983, p. 108). Many Chinese students prefer this method because they are "accustomed to teacher-dominated classes and expect the teacher to deliver knowledge to them" (Wu 1983, p. 113).

From my observations, the influence of the Soviet system of education has actually enhanced China's traditional method, and this makes current innovation even harder. Janene Scovel (1983) also points out, "The longstanding Confucian emphasis on language structure and

memorization of textual material along with the more recent influence of the Soviet system of education established during the 1950s continue to affect the way the Chinese teach and learn English" (p. 109). She warns, "Cadres, administrators and teachers who are interested in changing the learning and teaching of EFL in the PRC need to consider the enduring legacy of these two influences very seriously before launching any meaningful pedagogical reforms" (p. 109).

China's Traditional Culture

The fourth factor is the deep influence of China's traditional culture. China is an ancient country with a splendid traditional culture that produced a lot of miracles. The theoretical basis guiding the traditional culture is Confucianism.

Confucius was an outstanding Chinese philosopher in history. At an early age he devoted himself to study of ancient writings, and gained reputation for scholarship. Later he was made Prime Minister of the state of Lu. Resigning when the ruler gave himself up to pleasure, Confucius wandered for twelve or thirteen years from state to state teaching. His precepts, dealing with morals, the family system, social reforms, and statecraft, are so deeply ingrained in the Chinese mind that they still influence the daily life of the Chinese people.

In an article, Garrott (1987) includes a student's unedited composition which has the following comment on the influence of Confucianism:

In China for nearly 2000 years, people admired the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. It laid down three cardinal

guides, which means ruler guides subject, father guides son, and husband guides wife, and five constant virtues, which refers to benevolence, rightness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity. (p. 28)

The Chinese people have traditionally believed that by following these morals and ethics, society would be peaceful, and the economy would be prosperous. The composition goes on, "They didn't want to do anything which broke the rule. Perhaps that is one reason why Chinese feudal history lasted so long" (p. 28).

Chinese culture is deep-rooted, it has never been conquered in the past, and will never be conquered in the future. "The Chinese system works for the Chinese, and foreigners should not meddle with a civilization that produced silk, acupuncture, gunpowder, and the Great Wall" (Scovel T. 1983, p. 84).

Nurtured in the traditional culture, the Chinese people are resistant to any radical changes. Therefore any attempt at rapid transformation in teaching methods will evoke strong opposition. To Chinese people, the English language is foreign, but the method of teaching it should be Chinese.

Rays of Hope

The above analysis indicates that the obstacles blocking TESOL innovation in China are still formidable. But for other reasons the prospects for at least some changes are bright.

First, reform is the main trend in China today. With the development of economic and political reform, at least some educational reform is inevitable.

Second, China already possesses the prerequisites for carrying out innovation in TESOL. In the past decade, large numbers of scholars and students have been sent abroad for advanced study, and most of them have completed their studies and returned to China. In addition, many foreign experts have been invited to China to train Chinese teachers and students. "They have brought new concepts of language pedagogy and introduced new linguistic and communicative approaches. Thus some English specialists in China have realized the problems in English teaching" (Hou 1987, p. 27). To discuss the best ways to improve the teaching of English, many national conferences have been held, and finally, in the fall of 1985, a new "College English Teaching Syllabus" was established by the Ministry of Education of the PRC. At the same time, "a large variety of EFL materials from Britain, the United States, and other English-speaking countries have been used...as the basic course materials...[and] guidelines given in the accompanying teacher's manuals are followed. This naturally brings about changes in methods and techniques" (Wu 1983, p. 112).

Third, there is evidence that the composition of teachers, teaching materials and methods are all changing. Many TESOL experts have noticed this too. In 1979, Cowan et al pointed out, "the Chinese are seeking new viewpoints on English language teaching" (p. 477). In 1984, "Oatey asserted that attitudes in China towards methodology may be changing" (Osburne 1988). and then in 1986, Osburne demonstrated in her successful teaching of a standard methodology course at Hunan University of China that "Oatey's assertion...is not overly optimistic."

Conclusions

Changes will certainly occur, but at a slow pace. "One should not expect to sweep the existing educational system and its methods away overnight with the newest methodologies and ideas" (Meyer 1985, p. 20). Chinese are Chinese after all, and they will not discard completely their traditional system of education, based on rote learning, and copy indiscriminately the Western system of education, where meaning and understanding are everything (Patrie 1980, p. 393). Therefore, the only possible way for TESOL innovations to succeed in China lies in integrating the advanced communicative approaches of the West with China's existing educational system, traditional methods, and deep-rooted culture.

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The Jaw That Moves

(Continued from page 80)

cardboard guides (as shown) to serve as a guide for the filmstrip.

Filmstrip

After the words have been enlarged with a copier or by hand, make the transparency and cut it into a filmstrip 2 1/2" wide. Place the filmstrip on top of the cardboard frame, on the right side between the filmstrip guides.

Transparency

With a copier or by hand, enlarge the facial diagram to almost fill the 5" x 6" cut out. Cut this sheet so that the part of the drawing with the lower jaw, lower lips and teeth is separated from the upper lips, teeth, nose and throat (see small illustration). Using transparent tape, attach this jaw to a sheet of white paper. To a second sheet of white paper, tape the top part of the face with its lips, teeth and throat. Mark the pivot points on both sheets of paper before making a transparency of each one. (If only one transparency [with both jaws] is cut apart to allow lower jaw movement, the cut edge of the smaller, jaw transparency will project as a line on the screen, alerting the audience and diminishing the surprise of the moving jaw.)

The transparency of the top part of the facial diagram including the nose, upper palate and throat is taped to the back side of the cardboard frame, filling the larger cut out. The jaw transparency remains loose, and is placed on top of this frame.

In using this transparency, the instructor presses down on one of the desired pivot

points with the left hand while the right hand (grasping the top right corner) moves the jaw transparency upward. Depending upon which pivot point is used, (left side or bottom) the jaw, moving upward, will touch either the upper lip or the upper teeth.

Pivot Points

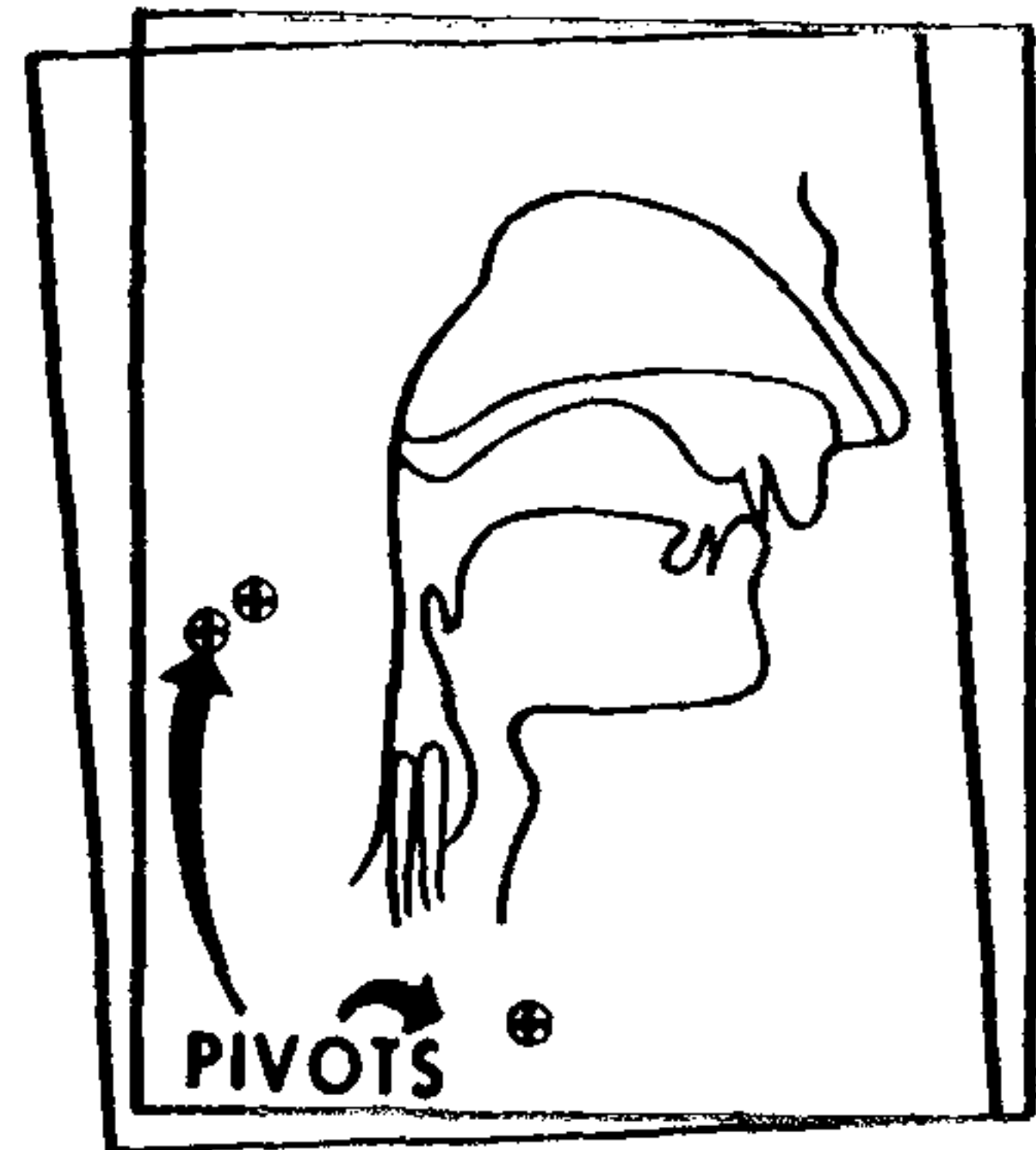
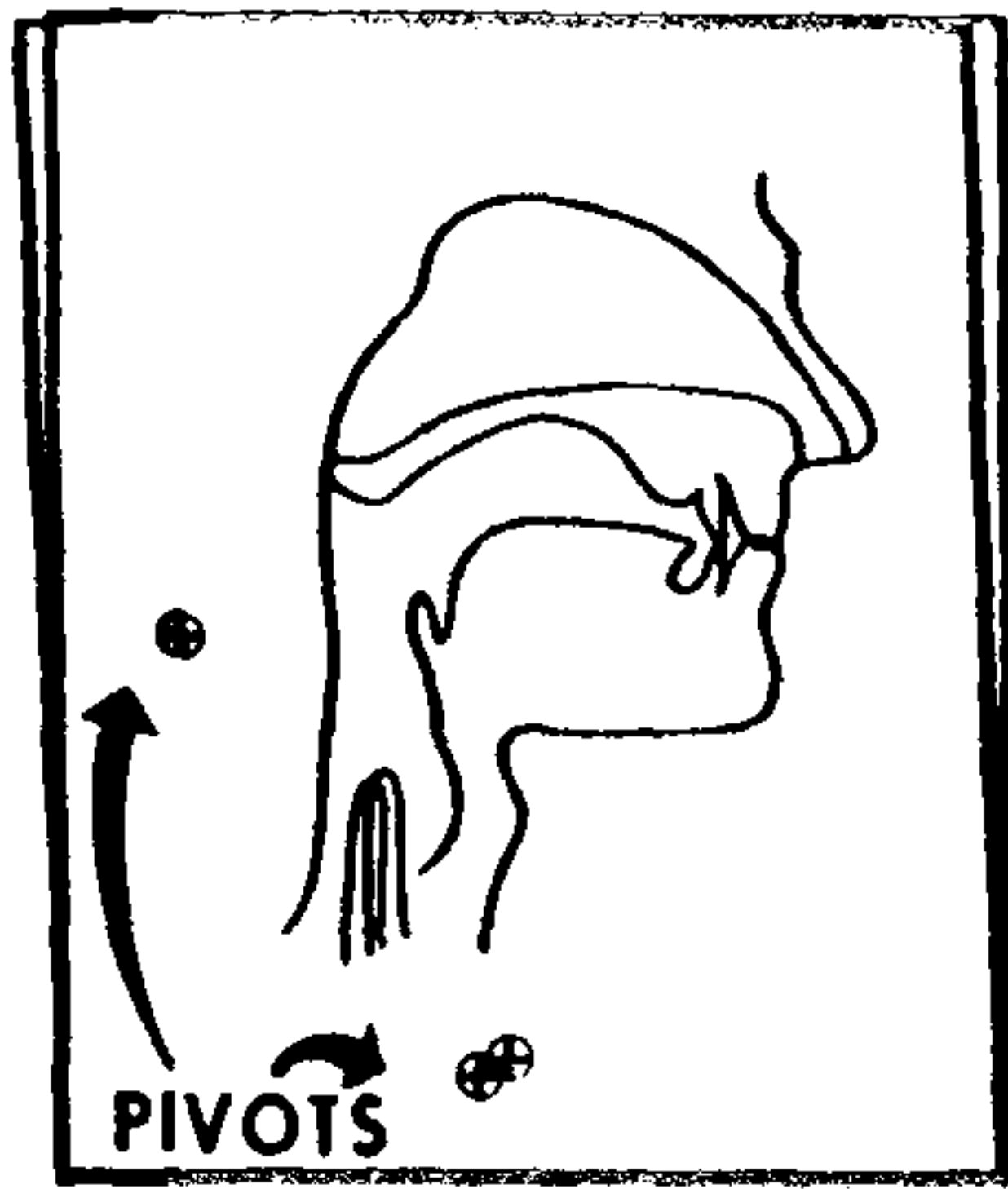
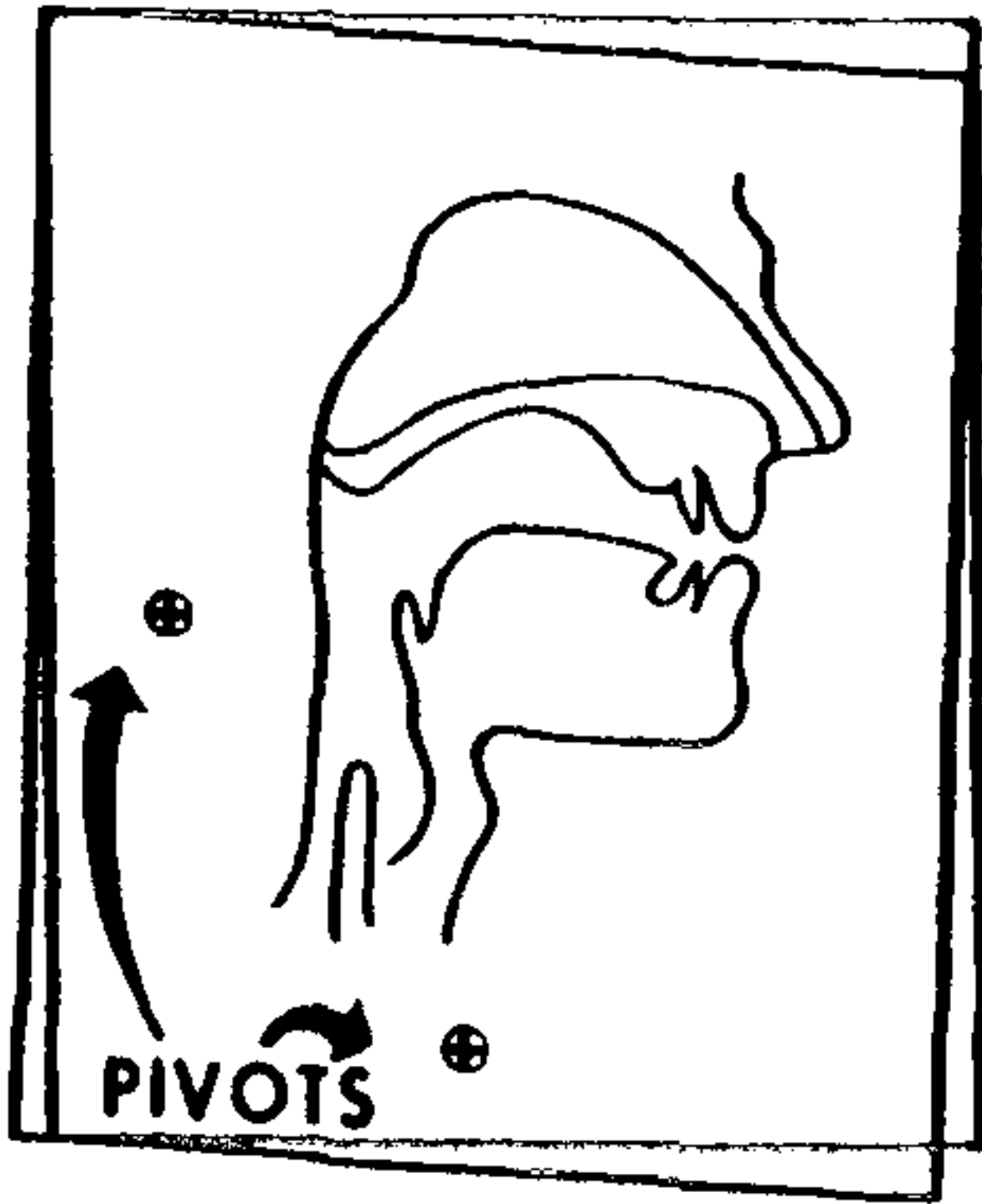
Large dressmaker snaps (if not snapped together) have proved satisfactory for use as pivots. These snaps have two parts. One has a projection which normally is "snapped" inside the other. But in this use, this projection is not snapped inside, but only rests on it.

Pivots can be improvised from other materials. For example, a plastic push pin can be placed through the movable jaw transparency. Or, a thumb tack can be inserted from the back of the frame. For storage, protect either of these alternatives with a pencil eraser.

Procedure

With the projector off, advance the filmstrip to the desired word, Next, place the pivot point on the movable jaw transparency above its matching part on the transparency beneath. Third, after turning on the projector, with the left hand press the top pivot point down, in the matching snap part. Fourth, with the right hand, swing the other transparency end upwards, thus moving the jaw. When the left pivot is used, the two lips will touch, for words like *ban*. With the bottom pivot, the lower lip will touch the upper teeth, for words like *van*.

Once they have seen it, your students will never forget the jaw that moves, nor the articulatory concepts it demonstrates.



ban
 van
 best
 vest
 violin
 voice
 vacuum
 valentine
 bane
 vein
 vegetable
 violet
 base
 berry
 very
 void
 victory

FILMSTRIP →

valentine
 bane
 vein
 vegetable
 violet
 base
 berry
 very
 void
 victory

THE JAW
THAT MOVES

PIVOTS ⊕

The Jaw that Moves

Mark W. Seng, University of Texas at Austin

"Unforgettable" characterizes this ingenious transparency created by Esmael Ghadessy some years ago in a foreign language media class at the University of Texas at Austin.

When using this transparency, the teacher first projects the large picture of the facial diagram on the screen. The instructor then pronounces the word, *voice*, also appearing on this transparency. To everyone's surprise, the jaw actually moves, until the lower lip touches the teeth, nicely showing the correct position of the lips.

The teacher then slides the transparency filmstrip down to reveal and project the word, *boy*. *Boy* is pronounced. The jaw moves again, but this time, the lower lip touches the upper lip, instead of the teeth.

This transparency instantly and clearly demonstrates exactly how these two

sounds are produced. In addition, the device can illustrate other concepts. The names for the parts of the face and mouth can be taught, as they are pointed out with a pencil. Or, for a quick review, a transparency overlay with the names can be placed over the facial transparency.

Construction

Cardboard Frame

The construction of this device is simple and requires only ordinary materials. Select a piece of brightly colored cardboard about 10" x 11". Cut out two windows as follows: one 5" x 6" opening (on the left side) for the face transparency, and one slot (on the right side), 1/2" x 2 1/2" for the filmstrip opening. The filmstrip, which slides up and down, allows the teacher to select, then project a single word. Glue two

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