

# TESL

Teaching English as a Second Language

# REPORTER

Published by:

English Language Institute  
The Church College of Hawaii

Vol. 1 No. 3

Laie, Hawaii

Spring, 1968

## Communication by Each Student In the Language Learning Process

BY GERALD DYKSTRA, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Aspects of the following are taken from the report of the Teaching English as a Second Language Materials Development Center: An investigation of new concepts in language learning.

The language teaching profession is challenged today by a number of important needs. Two of those are taken here for special consideration: (1) providing for a high degree of individual participation by each student and (2) simulating in classroom work, much more nearly than heretofore, the functional use of linguistic signaling.

---

Dr. Gerald Dykstra is presently a professor at the University of Hawaii and principal planner for the Language Arts for Elementary Schools at the Hawaii Curriculum Center.

---

Choral practice by a whole class of students simultaneously responding to a teacher's cues constitutes one beginning attempt to meet the first of these needs. Language laboratories have also been developed in response to the first of these needs. Other responses have been made as well. Each of these responses succeeds in one fashion or another in getting more people participating simultaneously

in exercises. Very few attempts have begun to succeed in meeting the second need. The classes which most nearly simulate the functioning use of linguistic signaling are not language learning classes so much as classes in which the basic language has been learned and in which the language is then used as a medium of communication in continuing with further learning of other related areas such as literature, culture, linguistic analysis, etc. These are important but they go beyond the basic skills in the language. In this presentation the central question is: Can we, from the very early stages of the course, use language more nearly

### Contents

Communication in Language Learning by Gerald Dykstra	Page 1
Tonga II: Peace Corps Program by Eric Shumway	Page 3
Grammars as Classifications by Yao Shen	Page 5
Why Pattern Practice? by William D. Conway	Page 7
1968 TESOL Convention	Page 11
Asia-Pacific TESL Group suggested	Page 12

as it used outside of the classroom, that is, to communicate meaningfully and, to at least some extent, non-predictably to accomplish purposes the listener may be unaware of until he hears the spoken utterances. It has been shown that it is now clearly possible to accomplish this, and thereby to meet the second need, within the classroom. A U.S. Office of Education project report on the TESL Materials Development Center (Project HE-084), recently completed and available through the U.S. Office of Education's ERIC dissemination services, demonstrates language practice in which each learner is in a responsive environment of other learners. In this program each learner, individually, within the matrix of social situations, is constantly engaged in making language related decisions. The student is alternately required to select the language appropriate to accomplishing a task he has been set, and to select an overt physical response that is appropriate to a non-predictable request that is made of him. The form of the request in these experimental materials, is non-predictable by the hearer within the limit of the contrastive utterances that are being presented in any given unit. As such it may be said they are not as non-predictable as utterances by a native speaker. Recognizing, however, that

these utterances are made by beginning learners to other beginning learners, it is conceivable that degree of effective non-predictability may be a reasonably close approximation to what it is in many if not most out-of-classroom situations among native speakers.

### **Overt Response Required**

The principal innovation of the experimental material is that they feature communication of this more realistic nature and that the success or failure of each communication attempt itself serves as the primary reinforcement for correct responses or punishment for incorrect ones. After initial presentation and practice, a pupil hearer must respond actively (overtly) and appropriately to a pupil speaker whose message he cannot predict. Preparing materials which are to be used in accomplishing this requires careful attention to the details of sequencing and provision for abundant individual practice through multiple-unit classroom organization in which the teacher does not have to be present with each group at all times. To do anything less means that the pupils would not have sufficient opportunity to individually make selections of responses or to select the language stimuli which, put into use, will permit them to accomplish a variety of nonlinguistic or supra-linguistic goals.

In the 150 illustrative units, Communication Activities are always preceded by Presentations. In the Presentations, pupils learn new language content and get intensive patterned practice in saying the words and sentences they will use in the Communication Activities. At the same time, while learning the meanings, they will usually make the objects used for the Communication Activity. The Communication Activity is the crucial part of each unit. The presentation functions as an introduction or preparation.

The Presentation and Communi-

(Please turn to page 8 )

## **TESL Reporter**

A quarterly publication of the English Institute and the BATESL program of The Church College of Hawaii.

Editor ... William D. Conway, Assistant Professor of English and TESL

Staff ... Mrs. Alice Paek, Instructor of English and TESL

Articles relevant to teaching English as a second language in Hawaii, the South Pacific, and Asia may be submitted to the editor through Box 127, The Church College of Hawaii, Laie, Hawaii, 96762

Manuscripts should be double spaced and typed, not exceeding three pages and typed, not exceeding three pages. Deadline for the Summer edition is May 1, 1968.

# Communication - Controlled

(Continued From Page 2)

ation Activity booklet demonstrates how each Activity works. Immediately after each Presentation there must be a demonstration of the Communication Activity with one group of pupils (detailed instructions are given for dividing the class) while the other groups observe. Only then do the other groups begin the Communication Activity. When the groups are active, it is the teacher's job to supervise them and see that each group is working smoothly but as much as possible without help from the teacher. The Activities must work--if only briefly-- without the immediate participation of the teacher.

That part of the conceptual framework which deals with communication aspects of the materials is the following:

## Primary Concept

Primary Concept: (other primary concepts of the project are not presented here) Controlled but non-predictable, functional use of communication.

Corollary Concept #1.1: Communication implies control over a range of signals. Since these are to be learned and used cumulatively but substantially without error, proper sequencing or programing of content is an inherent requirement. Programming is to be such that it will help avoid errors in matters that are not part of the teaching point itself.

Corollary Concept #1.2: Communication requires an ability which implies preliminary learning. This is to be accomplished in presentations which make use of choral and individual drill and pattern practice in situations which illustrate and clarify meanings.

Corollary Concept #1.3: Not much communication practice (as defined below) can take place in a large class unless more than one communicating process is going on at

once. Small group work in the framework of a multiple unit class design is almost inherent in the communication requirement.

Corollary Concept #1.4: Communication will approximate social use of language more closely if it develops out of a supra-linguistic purpose rather than only out of a test situation designed to see if a pupil can do what he is supposed to be able to do. Furthermore it is the contention here that part of the test must include setting the pupil in a situation in which he determines, selects, and uses the language elements which will be of benefit to him in accomplishing his supra-linguistic goals. Accordingly, a superordinate purpose will be incorporated as an integral part of each Communication Activity.

Corollary Concept #1.5: Checking on comprehension can be accomplished more readily when the appropriate responses to linguistic cues are overt physical responses.

Corollary Concept #1.6: To effect communication the pupil will select both linguistic responses and overt physical responses to linguistic stimuli out of a repertoire of such responses available to him.

Corollary Concept #1.7: The superordinate purpose implies that out of a range of possible linguistic and overt physical responses only one of several, or a limited number of many, will be the correct response.

## Cue is Unpredictable

Corollary Concept #1.8: The linguistic cue will be unpredicable to the pupil listener whose overt physical response must nevertheless be appropriate.

Corollary Concept #1.9: The small group must constitute a responsive environment for both speaker and responder in the communicating situation. Toward obtaining such an environment each communication activity is required to call for overt responses.

# But Not Predictable

Corollary Concept #1.10: Since there will be many "Communications" operating simultaneously, and since the teacher will not be able to monitor each communication, the success or failure of the communication itself must provide for the reinforcement of correct responses and the extinction of incorrect ones. A system of automatic breakdown or cessation of activity in case of error is to be built in.

## Phatic Communication

Corollary Concept #1.11: Since the operational definition for communication is such that much of language does not lend itself to contrastive use in communication activities, there must be other provision for inclusion of practice in the language used for ritual and celebration (e.g., greeting, polite expressions, stories, and song). This includes language content that Malinowski refers to as "phatic communion," as well as those elements of language that are redundant or that do not occur as linguistic signalers exclusively but require accompanying gestural or situational signals.

Corollary Concept #1.12: Inclusion of language elements which do not lend themselves to functioning use in communication activities implies exclusive reliance on other modes of language instruction for their teaching. These will include songs, physical education activities, pre-playlets, playlets and improvisations, as well as the repetition and pattern practice drills of the presentations referred to above and reading and writing materials.

Corollary Concept #1.13: Each mode of teaching can be so presented that it helps to "teach itself." Materials can aim toward a format that permits use without the requirement of prior special teacher training programs.

Corollary Concept #1.14: Good materials may well be teacher educating and thus constitute a type

of in-service teacher education.

Corollary Concept #1.15: The ideas of materials that stimulate and educate teachers, and of teaching language in a variety of modes give rise to the concept of art in teaching and the possibility of promoting it by giving teachers graduated experience in selection among alternate possibilities.

In this conceptual framework, communication means that the individual speaker is to have multiple choices of linguistic content; that he is to participate; and that only by the use participate in a situation in which he has a purpose superordinate to that of language practice; and that only by the use of recently presented or newly learned language forms will he be able to accomplish his superordinate purpose. His hearers are not able to predict his linguistic choices, but are nonetheless required to respond overtly to his linguistic signals by selecting one of a range of potential responses. When the speaker repeatedly and consistently accomplishes his purpose without the necessity of repetition or extraneous signals like translation, communication is to be assumed.

## Materials Not on Market

Communication has a restricted meaning here such that no published foreign language materials include it in their design. Only in rare instances can one find something resembling it, and in those instances it is usually sporadic and peripheral to the materials in which it is found.

The major hypothesis for the project was that the concept of communication could be manifest in English as a Second Language materials for children. A corollary hypothesis was that such materials would be operable in the classroom.

The appraisals were, first, of internal consistency - the realization of the concepts in the classroom to the extent indicated by feedback from the try-out centers. The first ap-

## **Communication--**

praisai constituted a major part of a doctoral dissertation. The second appraisal began in the summer of 1964 and includes observation and analysis by project personnel, supervisors and teachers in ten try-out centers in various parts of the world: New York City, the Choctaw reservation in Mississippi, the Navaho reservation in New Mexico, Puerto Rico, Saipan, Peru, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Japan and New Guinea. Internal appraisals and feedback reports separately served as the stimulus for repeated revision of all materials.

We feel that the results of research on this project presage the day when the language teaching profession will consider the controlled introduction of communication as part of the language learning process. Sets of materials - for adult level, secondary school level, and primary school level - are now being built on the basis of the TESL center research. Other materials development efforts elsewhere are proceeding along very similar lines.