

working papers  
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*Introduction: Why bilingual?*

The expansion of compulsory education is associated with problems of educational standards. Formerly, many low achievers dropped out of the system at an early stage; but now they must remain in school for a full nine years. Because many low achievers are not capable of effective learning through the medium of English, insistence on nine years' compulsory schooling has implications for language policy.

This pedagogic argument also has an economic dimension. It is commonly asserted that a mass education system in the English-medium is expensive and unproductive in a predominantly monolingual society. A 1982 report on education in Hong Kong (Llewellyn 1982:29) added that at the bottom end of the spectrum,

"attempts to teach through the medium of English leave much to be desired; this could be disastrous both for the individuals involved and for society at large."

Awareness of the political changes that will come in 1997 has provided a further reason for increased attention to Chinese.

Even with the impending political changes, however, there is a widespread concern for Hong Kong to remain an international economic centre. In turn this requires retention of the place of English. This was also noted by the Llewellyn Report (1982:28):

"Hong Kong cannot afford to reduce the emphasis of English in its schools, especially since its neighbour, China, has afforded the teaching of English a high education priority. This is especially the case as Hong Kong's future is clearly linked with China's."

From these points it is clear that both languages are needed, and, by implication, that the education system cannot afford to neglect either of them. The question then becomes one of bilingualism: how far, and in what ways, is it possible to promote both languages? This is far from a new question, but it has recently become a major focus of public debate.

Despite the importance of the issue, for many years the government has taken a passive role. As Johnson (1983) pointed out, many previous policies have existed only by default. This has fitted the government's traditional strategy of non-intervention (Cheng 1985). However, pedagogic and political pressures are now forcing the government to take a much more active role. It is now essential to devise an overall long-term plan for bilingual education.

To assist selection of the most appropriate model, this paper reviews the current system and the basic options. It concentrates on the secondary level, for that is where the most difficult decisions will have to be made. The costs and benefits of five models are set out, and the pre-conditions for successful implementation are also indicated. The final model is the one which I would consider the most appropriate. It stresses the need for positive intervention to achieve the best form and maximum degree of bilingualism.

The 1997 changes will require increased attention to Putonghua as well as Cantonese. However, when this paper refers to Chinese, it is chiefly concerned with Cantonese since (a) that is the mother tongue of the majority and much of the argument is based on the need for children to learn in their mother tongues, and (b) most people see development of the status and techniques for teaching Cantonese as the first step to The promotion of Putonghua.



#### The current system

Within the framework of government policy set out in the 1974 White Paper, individual school authorities decide for themselves whether their institutions should teach through English or Chinese. The traditional distinction is that Anglo-Chinese schools use English as the medium of instruction, while Chinese Middle schools use Chinese.

Much of the actual teaching and learning in Anglo-Chinese schools is in both languages. There are variations in the amount of Cantonese and English used from school to school, from teacher to teacher and from lesson to lesson. Johnson's (1984) survey found that of total talking-time recorded, 43% was in English, 48% was in Cantonese, and an additional 9% was in Cantonese with English words inserted. There was a gradual increase in the amount of English used from Form 1 to Form 3, but even at Form 3 only 53% of the talking-time recorded was in English. Teachers switched from one language to another on an average of about every 18 seconds.

This approach to bilingual teaching is identified as the 'mixing approach' (McLaughlin, 1978; Swain, 1986). Usually, lessons are first presented in English, then expanded and explained in Cantonese, and then restated in English. Wong-Fillmore's (1980) study of the mixing approach pointed out that students are often

"alternatively attentive and inattentive as the teachers switch between languages in their lessons. During the time the language they do not understand is being spoken, the students simply stop listening."

#### *Models for bilingual education:*

##### 1) A nine-year compulsory education in the mother tongue

###### Description:

1. From Secondary 1 to 3, all subjects other than English would be taught in Chinese.
2. From Secondary 4 onwards, all subjects other than Chinese and Chinese History would be taught in English.

###### Rationale/Benefit

1. The sudden switch in Secondary 1 to English as the language of instruction has been a traumatic experience for many children. Now, with a wider range of abilities than in the past, the problem is seriously aggravated.
2. All other things being equal, teaching and learning is generally more effective if the medium of instruction is Chinese. It maximizes the development of intellectual efficiency, strengthens the process of complex thinking and linguistic reasoning, and stimulates creative verbal communication (Siu et al., 1979).
3. To a considerable extent, formal education is concerned with teaching individuals to process and use language in L1. Spending time learning in one language benefits both languages equally. The more proficient one is in first language skills, the more rapid should be the acquisition of skills in a second language. This suggests that older learners with a good first language background will acquire second language skills more rapidly than young learners without a good background (See Cummins, 1980; Swain, 1986).
4. Secondary 4 is considered a level when students are sufficiently proficient in first language skills to acquire good second language ones.

#### Difficulty/Cost

1. The loss of exposure to English would probably result in a fall in the standard of English.
2. The shift towards complete mother tongue education would probably be rejected by elitist schools and by society's privileged minority. But if the policy is not mandatory, Chinese education would be down-graded to a second class status, as occurs at present. Forcing the policy on unwilling schools would require a change in the law and a tough political stance. Failure to force the policy would maintain a two-tier system and ferocious competition for admission to English-medium schools.
3. Good Chinese textbooks, and teachers capable of effective instruction through Chinese, are in short supply. The question of readiness needs to be considered. Any approach which marks Chinese-medium education as second rate will be counter-productive.
4. There will remain a sudden switch to English as the language of instruction in Secondary 4. Not all students will be ready for it. It is impossible completely to switch to English-medium education without jeopardising educational progress. Parallel English medium education and bilingual education will remain necessary.

#### Preparation/Remedial Strategies

1. It may be worth buying educational effectiveness at the cost of a fall in English standards. However, various follow-up measures need to be planned, implemented and evaluated to counteract the falling English standard.
2. Parents need to be informed that many Anglo-Chinese schools do not and cannot use English as the only language of instruction, so that they are prepared for changes. Also, Chinese-medium education should be strengthened so that at least it is pedagogically effective even if it remains a weak competitor in the employment sector.
3. An English language threshold level test is needed (Swain, 1986). A pass will mean that both continued second language learning and good academic achievement will be possible with the second language as the sole medium of instruction. Then, students will not suffer academic loss in education through the second language. However, it must be recognised that the precise nature of the threshold level is still not known. The topic requires further study.
4. A bridging programme is needed to help the language learners make the transition between English as a subject and as a medium of instruction. It would focus on the cognitive academic aspects of language proficiency, and use the vocabulary, structures and discourse patterns of the subject matter to be taught using the second language.

## II. Revitalisation of Chinese and English-medium education throughout Secondary 1 to 5

#### Description

This model envisages parallel but different streams amongst and within individual schools. In essence, it is proposed as Models 1, 2 and part of 5 in a recent Department of Education circular (Hong Kong 1986a), though it adds measures to revitalise the existing system and includes recommendations on ways to stream pupils.

1. Chinese Medium Education: All subjects except English and English Literature would be taught in Chinese.
2. English Medium Education: All subjects except Chinese and Chinese History would be taught in English.
3. English language proficiency tests are used to allocate students to either stream.
4. A bridging English language programme is offered at Secondary 1 to prepare students who are likely to be able to reach adequate levels to enter the English stream.

#### Rationale/Benefit

1. When two systems are offered in parallel, students who prefer and can benefit from English-medium education are allowed to opt for it. The remainder, and in particular the least able, can receive their education through the language which is most accessible to them.
2. Educational efficiency can be maintained because the switch to English as the language of instruction takes place only when students demonstrate that they have attained a threshold level of proficiency.
3. It offers real English and Chinese-medium education, because the learning medium is determined by students' actual language ability rather than just a prescriptive policy.

#### Difficulty/Cost

1. Social justice and equal opportunities for higher education and employment are difficult to achieve. The English stream may still absorb the academically more capable ones.
2. It is likely that few students would attain a threshold level in English, and the majority would therefore have to follow Chinese-medium education. It shares the difficulty of Model I: loss of exposure to English would probably cause a fall in the standard of English.
3. Many schools would be unwilling to offer proper Chinese-medium education. Chinese-medium education could become a system only for the less able and less motivated students.

#### Preparation/Remedial Strategies

The points raised here are similar to those for Model I:

1. A threshold English test should be developed to help place primary graduates in secondary schools.
2. Those who pass the test would go through a bridging programme to improve their English.
3. Those who satisfy the exit criteria of the programme would receive their secondary education in English.
4. Those who fail the test or bridging programme, or who prefer to be educated through Chinese, would receive their secondary education in Chinese.
5. For graduates of Chinese Middle schools who are academically suited for tertiary education, a high level of English proficiency could be ensured by an intensive post-secondary bridging programme.

#### III. Grouping by levels

##### Description

This is Model 3 in the Department of Education's recommended set of options (Hong Kong, 1986a).

1. In Secondary 1, all subjects other than English would be taught in Chinese. From Secondary 2 onwards, there would be a gradual shift to English.
2. The school principal would decide which subjects should move to English first. In making the decision, the teachers' and pupils' command of English, and the content and nature of the subject should be taken into consideration.

#### Rationale/Benefit

1. The sudden switch in Secondary 1 to English as the medium of instruction would be avoided.
2. Students would maintain the experience of using English to acquire knowledge, and this experience would gradually extend to more subject areas. This would prepare them for genuine English-medium education later.
3. Individual schools would have flexibility and responsibility to formulate policies most appropriate to their circumstances.
4. Social justice for equal opportunities would be observed, while the nomenclature of Anglo-Chinese and Chinese Middle schools could be discarded.

#### Difficulty/Cost

1. To decide which subjects should use English first, school principals would need to be well-informed about, and capable of good judgements on,
  - a. the teachers' and pupils' command of English,
  - b. the content and the nature of each subject, and
  - c. the teachers' and pupils' readiness for the switch to English.
2. Better students who can have an earlier start with bilingual education would be pulled back.
3. It would place emphasis on English as a subject which prepares students for gradual switching to English as a learning medium. English language as a subject would have to take on a new and specific role.
4. Lower secondary subjects lack good Chinese-medium resources in comparison with those available for English-medium education (e.g. good Chinese textbooks and teachers capable of using Chinese as the medium of instruction). The question of readiness needs to be considered.

#### Preparation/Remedial Strategies

1. School principals should be given further guidelines on how to assess their individual circumstances to formulate a sound language policy. Threshold level tests are needed.
2. English as a subject would have to prepare students to learn for study purposes. Elements of vocabulary and style, and functional and notional uses should be specified in the English Language curriculum.
3. To achieve educational effectiveness in the Chinese medium, production of good textbooks and improved in-service and pre-service teacher-training would be needed.

#### IV. Grouping by Subjects

##### Description

This is Model 4 in the Department of Education's recent recommendation of options (Hong Kong, 1986a).

1. The majority of subjects would be taught in Chinese from Secondary 1 to 3. However, a few would be taught in English.
2. When schools choose which subjects should be in English, they should consider the nature of the subject and the competence of teachers and pupils.

#### Rationale/Benefit

1. The complete switch to English in Secondary 1 is avoided. A switch in just a few subjects may be easier to cope with. The fall in standards of English resulting from reduced exposure may be mitigated.
2. Students in Secondary 1 to 3 can benefit from mother tongue education in a consistent pattern. Educational efficiency is enhanced.

#### Difficulty/Cost

1. The sudden switch to English in Secondary 4 remains, and some students will be unprepared for it. They will need support.
2. Students who can benefit from early transition to English in more subjects will be pulled back.
3. Points 3 and 4 from Model III also apply to this model.

#### Preparation/Remedial strategies

1. Threshold tests and bridging programmes are needed to determine readiness and to assist the switch to English in Secondary 4.
2. Points 2 and 3 from Model III also apply to this model.

#### V. A Tripartite system

This is the model which I myself find most satisfactory. No model, including this one, can gain universal consensus. However, I consider it to have the maximum advantages and the minimum disadvantages.

#### Description

1. The model envisages the continued existence of all three types of education: English-medium, Chinese-medium, and the mixing approach used in most Anglo-Chinese schools.
2. All subjects for university entrance qualifications (other than language-specific ones) would be examined in either English or Chinese. This would ensure at least some equality of opportunity in higher education.
3. In the English-medium secondary school system, all subjects except Chinese and Chinese History would be taught in English throughout the entire secondary cycle. Entrants would have to pass an English language threshold test.
4. In the Chinese-medium secondary school system, all subjects except English and English Literature would be taught in Chinese throughout the entire secondary cycle.
5. For those who do not wish to enter Chinese-medium education and who are not ready for a full switch to English at Secondary 1, a bilingual programme would be offered in Secondary 1 to 3. This programme would prepare students for a switch to English in Secondary 4.
  - a. Bilingual textbooks would be developed. As proposed by Cheng (1985), these are not the same as concurrent Chinese and English ones, in which few students bother to read the text a second time in English if it is available in Chinese. Bilingual textbooks, especially in the lower forms, are basically written in Chinese, but a supplement in simple English sets out the main points and elaborates on practical applications. In this way, the students can develop two languages at the same time.
  - b. For classroom language use, teachers would be trained in a separation approach to bilingual instruction. Chinese and English would be fully presented at different stages of teaching rather than interspersed with each other's grammar and vocabulary.

- c. As English would be the medium of instruction in all Secondary 4 classes (except for Chinese and Chinese History), students would have to pass an English language threshold test at the end of Secondary 3. This would ensure that educational achievements would not suffer from the switch to English.
- d. Those who fail the threshold test would have to follow a bridging programme in English during their summer vacation. After this programme they would again be required to sit the threshold test. Only if they were then successful would they be permitted to follow an English-medium Secondary 4 course in an aided school.

#### Rationale/Benefit

- 1. In this system, schools would be able to retain their various modes of language in education. Rather than denying their usual practice altogether, it would offer support to make the co-existence of the parallel modes meaningful.
- 2. It would offer real English and Chinese-medium education, because the learning medium would depend on both students' choices and actual language abilities. Educational efficiency could be maintained, and equality of opportunity in higher education could be promoted.
- 3. In the case of students who were not ready for an early switch to English, the bilingual programme would prepare them for a later switch.
  - a. Compared with the current mixing approach, the separation approach would more effectively develop both languages at the same time (Legaretta, 1979; Swain, 1986). The likelihood of a fall in English standard due to reduced exposure would be less than in earlier forms.
  - b. Secondary 4 is considered a level at which students are sufficiently proficient in first language literacy skills to acquire English language proficiency skills efficiently.
  - c. In this system, students are selected at entry to Secondary 4. Resources are used more efficiently because they are not devoted to people who do not want them. Instead, the programmes are aimed at those who are academically able to benefit.
  - d. The compromise reduces the dilemma between efficiency and equality of opportunity.

#### Difficulty/Cost

- 1. Even if students who come through Chinese-medium system are not disadvantaged in selection for entrance to universities, the preference of the employment sector for bilingual competence would still reduce the credibility of Chinese-medium education.
- 2. As noted above (Model I), the precise nature of thresholds is still not known, for they vary with the age of learners and the subject matter being taught. Construction of tests and allocation of places may still be problematic.
- 3. The bilingual programme emphasises bilingual textbooks. As mentioned above, textbook publishers currently have little expertise in this area. The programme places a heavy responsibility on them.
- 4. The bilingual programme requires teachers to be competent in the use of the textbooks and in the separation approach. These skills will have to be developed.

5. In the Secondary 4 bridging programme, English takes on a new and specific role. Instead of being a subject in the general curriculum, it has to prepare students to learn for study purposes over a short period of several weeks. Materials have to be developed from scratch. And although the bridging programme is supposed to prepare students to reach the threshold level, some may be unable to meet the requirements.

#### Preparation/Remedial strategies

The tripartite system, like most other models, requires extra resources. The following are the basic pre-requisites for effective implementation:

1. Support for Chinese-medium education: Given the unchanged status of English in the economy, English in bilingual education are still preferable to monolingual Chinese education. At present, resources for Chinese-medium education compare poorly with those available for English-medium education. For Chinese-medium education to be a true option in the system, improvements are needed - especially in textbooks and teacher training. Students from Chinese-medium streams may still be disadvantaged in the employment sector, but at least their courses should be educationally effective.
2. Threshold tests: In recent years, the Department of Education has collected extensive data on students' language proficiency. The government should use these data to help determine threshold levels and develop tests.
3. Bilingual textbooks: Parallel to the Chinese Textbooks Committee should be a Bilingual Textbooks Committee. The latter would be responsible for developing appropriate texts and for initiating and coordinating research.
4. Teacher-training: Training is needed to
  - a. assist subject teachers to use the separation approach,
  - b. develop teachers' abilities in bilingual textbooks, and
  - c. guide English teachers in ways to make the transition from English as a subject to English as a medium of instruction.
5. English bridging programmes: The programmes would be required along the lines indicated in Model I.

#### *Conclusions:*

This review of models emphasises that we are constantly confronted with what the Llewellyn Report (1982:30) called 'a classic policy dilemma'. This is:

"Whether to jeopardise the educational progress of the majority (and perhaps endanger the culture itself) in order to guarantee a sufficient number of competent English speakers; or to value the whole group (and in doing so conserve the culture) but accept the loss in capacity to deal with the international environment and hence a possible decline in the economic prosperity."

Each model attempts to break the dilemma, but none can gain the approval of all sectors of society.

With a series of recent proposals, the government appears to have taken a much more active role in the language policy field. For example, as a move to introduce positive discrimination, it has been promised that schools which agree to phase out English medium tuition in favour of Chinese will be given additional resources (Hong Kong 1986a). However, basic choices are left to the schools themselves. Reactions during the months following distribution of the 1986 government circular suggested that many schools wished to maintain the existing system and most others

wished to delay decision-making as long as possible. For example, one survey of 27 Anglo-Chinese secondary schools in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung found that a high percentage wished to retain their current status and that others were as yet unwilling to commit themselves either way (South China Morning Post, 17 October 1986).

This lack of positive response suggests on the one hand that the government has still failed to tackle the major issues or provide an attractive alternative, and on the other hand, that more decisive instructions are needed. Although the authorities propose to give extra resources to schools which are willing to use Chinese for subjects other than English itself, evidence from other countries shows that replacement of second languages as media of instruction always results in deterioration in proficiency in that language. The less actively the language is used, the more marked is the decline. There is no reason to suppose that any of the uses to which the schools can put their extra resources will in fact achieve the desired objective of averting a fall in the standard of English (Kwo & Bray 1986).

For both political and practical reasons, the government has decided against mandatory imposition of Chinese. There is, however, a middle ground where more decisive action is needed. While allowing the three basic types of schools to continue to exist, my main recommendation is the introduction of a set of English language threshold tests, a pass in which must be acquired before any pupil can enter a class which uses English as the medium of instruction. As supporting measures, I consider it essential to develop bilingual textbooks, to provide English bridging programmes, and to strengthen teacher education.

While recognising that this model will not attract universal consensus, I feel that it has the maximum advantages while incurring the minimum disadvantages. It is also much more clear cut than that most recently advocated by the government (Hong Kong, 1986a). It requires some expenditure of resources, but the costs should not be excessive and should be well within the budget which the government seems already prepared to devote to the matter.



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BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES:  
AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE MYTHS, MISCONCEPTIONS AND  
ATTITUDES AFFECTING EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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*Introduction*

The education of non-English proficient (NEP)/limited English proficient (LEP) minority students in the United States has been particularly problematic during the last twenty years. The Hispanic student population is one of the linguistic minorities in California that faces continual educational difficulties. The extremely high drop out rate for this group shows no signs of decrease and thus far 'bilingual' programs have not resulted in greater retention rates. It is this 'failure'<sup>1</sup> of 'bilingual'<sup>2</sup> programs to alleviate the problems for many NEP/LEP students that has resulted in increased concern among many educators, politicians, researchers, minority community members and others. The ideal goal of bilingual education programs is to facilitate the acquisition of English, while maintaining the regular academic progress of linguistic minority students. The 'failure' of existing bilingual programs to achieve this goal and thereby curb the educational difficulties of many LEP/NEP Hispanic students has given rise to much research.

Various investigations have revealed some of the variables involved in the failure of some bilingual programs: lack of cultural/community awareness on the part of educators (Valdes, 1986); too rapid mainstreaming attempts (Troike, 1978); assimilation and other attitudes (Lambert, 1977); insufficient development of the native language (L1) (Cummins, 1981). There are, of course, other studies that have explored other aspects of bilingual programs; the above factors, however, represent main issues<sup>3</sup> that are currently considered critical to the success of bilingual education, especially in regards to the Hispanic minority.

The overwhelming majority of bilingual programs in the U.S. are implemented without considering the above factors.<sup>4</sup> These programs are of the early transitional type, which stress mainstreaming NEP/LEP students into all English classrooms as quickly as possible. Incorporating the above factors into bilingual programs would require the inclusion of two 'maintenance-like' elements, which could be considered diametrically opposed to the goal of early transitional programs: 1) development of NEP/LEP students' language and 2) respect and understanding of the NEP/LEP students' home socialization.

Resistance to incorporating 'maintenance-like' elements into bilingual programs is one of the reasons for the predominance of early transitional programs. The predominance of early transitional programs also reflects a blatant disregard of the wishes of many members of the Hispanic<sup>5</sup> community which prefer more maintenance type bilingual programs. This short paper is an attempt to shed light on the strong resistance to minority language/cultural maintenance that has existed through much of the educational history of the U.S. The paper begins with a history of educational policies/practices and attitudes in the U.S. that have affected NEP/LEP students. This is followed by a discussion of the myths, misconceptions and attitudes that 'support' the resistance to incorporating 'maintenance-like' elements into bilingual programs.

The United States, as a country composed almost entirely of immigrants, has had to face the question of how to educate NEP/LEP immigrant students for many years. The immigrant NEP/LEP students of the past were assimilated into American culture/society through the school system. It was at school that many young immigrants were introduced to the language and culture of their new society. This 'apparently successful' naturalization process, for the overwhelming majority of NEP/LEP students, took place in all-English classrooms which offered no special help for the NEP/LEP students (Wong-Fillmore, 1984). As is the case today, however, many immigrant NEP/LEP students were unable to maintain regular academic progress. These students, facing complex linguistic, cultural and social problems, often left school without completing their education (Wong-Fillmore, 1984).

Not every immigrant student of the past experienced all-English classrooms. Bilingual schools and non-English schools, where English was taught as a subject, existed in various parts of the United States from the late 1700's to about 1919 (Anderson and Boyer, 1970 cited in Cohen, 1975). These schools, which were mainly private parochial elementary schools, were established across the United States in an attempt to maintain immigrant groups' native languages (Garcia, 1982 cited in Ramirez, 1985). German schools were established throughout the country; French schools in New England; Scandinavian and Dutch schools in the midwest; and Spanish was used as the medium of instruction in New Mexico (Cohen, 1975).

The first bilingual public school was established in 1840 in Cincinnati, where many German immigrants lived. The German proponents of this program (and the similar programs that were later established throughout the mid-west) stressed social-psychological and political rationales for bilingual programs rather than pedagogical concerns. Non-German proponents were concerned with the competition from private German-English schools and the need to 'Americanize' the German immigrants (Schlossman 1983). The concerns of the St. Louis superintendent of schools in 1874 are expressed by Schlossman as follows:

"The key question for Harris [the superintendent] thus became 'How in the quickest way may all learn to understand each other and be one community?' The answer seemed clear: let the public schools make the minimal adaptation necessary to draw in the bulk of second-generation German children, without diluting the public school's prime mission as the quintessential agency of Americanization."

The concern that the Americanization of young immigrants would be impeded by the use of languages other than English in the schools was expressed throughout the U.S. Espinosa (1917 cited in Cohen, 1975) reports that in 1896, the New Mexico public school system attempted to have English taught in all of its schools. Espinosa states that in some cases "the American authorities... in their enthusiasm for the English language have gone so far as to forbid the use of Spanish by the Spanish children during play." The maintenance of Spanish in northern California was greatly affected by the Gold Rush which resulted in a large wave of Anglo-Americans entering California. Leibowitz (1971) notes the changes in public policy that reflect the Anglo-American attitudes towards Spanish<sup>6</sup>: in the early 1850's, statutes suspending the publishing of State laws in Spanish and requiring that all court proceedings be in English were passed; in 1855 the State Bureau of Public Instruction stipulated that all schools had to teach exclusively in English; in 1894 the State Constitution was amended to restrict voting to only those who could read and write English.

The onset of World War I supported the ongoing development of a strong American identity based on a democratic ideology opposed to the "typical European nationalism" (Glazer and Moynihan, 1964). The resulting Americanization movement included the passage of statutes requiring English to be the medium of instruction in public and private schools. Such laws were passed in 34 states by 1923. Cohen (1975) states: "This same rejection of alien cultures and languages in favor of everything American carried through the World War II period."

The schools during the 1940's continued their roles as assimilators of immigrants by offering English as a second language (ESL) programs "with no effort to develop the children's knowledge of their own language and culture" (Cohen, 1975 from Canon, 1971). Interestingly, for national security purposes, the 1950's saw an increase in the number of foreign language programs offered to native English speaking adults. During the 1960's these programs were extended to include English speaking children attending elementary school classrooms. The goal of these programs, however, was not to develop bilingualism for the sake of bilingualism, but rather to defend the country against foreign insurgent bilinguals.

### *1960 to the Present*

Regardless of statistics indicating the high educational retardation and consistently high drop-out rate of language minority students of the past (Cohen 1970), it has only been within the last twenty years that serious consideration has been given to these educational problems. Wong-Fillmore (1984) discusses one of the reasons for the earlier lack of concern and the subsequent changes that resulted in educational failure becoming a major problem:

"This situation was not recognized as a problem in the past perhaps because many people did not finish school. In the expanding American economy of the time there were ample job opportunities for education. Thus drop-outs were not regarded as a problem because they never became an economic burden on the society. The situation has changed radically over the past twenty years, however. In an economy that has become increasingly technological, there are few jobs available for individuals who have less than a full education."

The economic and technological, as well as great socio-political changes which occurred in the U.S., led to the educational war on poverty of the 1960's. The attempt to alleviate the educational difficulties of the poor and of ethnic/linguistic minorities generated a myriad of hypotheses on why these students fail. One of the main hypotheses developed during this time was the 'difference' or 'mismatch' hypothesis. Put very simply, this hypothesis claims that educational institutions, by not taking into account the differences in learning styles, language/dialect, value systems etc. of poor and ethnic/linguistic minority students are responsible for the academic failure of these students.

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA), which was an obvious application of the mismatch hypothesis, was part of the war on poverty campaign. The passage of the BEA in 1968 marks the first time federal funds were allotted for the development and evaluation of effective models for bilingual education (Wong-Fillmore, 1984). Politzer (1981) expresses an important aspect of the BEA:

"... in its original formulation at least, [the BEA] did not imply that linguistic mismatch was the only source of educational difficulty of some ethnic minorities: use of the home language of the minority children was to be accompanied by acknowledgment of their home culture, a bridging of the home culture/school differences and a resulting increase in self-concept".

Although the BEA made federal funds available to local educational agencies, the programs for which these funds were allotted were not federally required but rather voluntary experimental-type programs. The Lau decision in 1974, however, changed the situation drastically as Wong-Fillmore (1984) explains:

"The Lau case was based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits agencies that receive federal funds from excluding anyone from participation in service provided by those funds on the basis of race, color or national origin...In its ruling on the Lau case the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the practice of instructing students in a language they did not speak or understand constituted a denial of access to the instructional services it deemed the students had a right to expect."

After the Lau case and a subsequent decision by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) a bilingual approach to education, given certain circumstances became mandatory. The OCR guidelines, now known as the 'Lau Remedies', clearly state that bilingual instruction be provided for non-English speaking students, subject matter is to be taught in their native language "until they learn enough English to get by in school without such help, and they state that ESL programs cannot be offered as substitutes for bilingual instruction" (Wong-Fillmore, 1984).

The Courts had established that school districts were not to discriminate against NEP/LEP students. However, strict guidelines for implementing bilingual education programs were not offered, thus many states and localities hastily complied with the mandate without developing proper programs or teacher training. The tendency was to reduce all of the problems of immigrant NEP/LEP students to language. Politzer (1981) discusses the results of the Lau decision on bilingual education and their "implementation as envisaged by the OCR":

"Legitimate concerns mentioned in the original BEA... are rarely mentioned. Under the impact of legislative mandates and legal interpretation, the emphasis has instead been placed on the discussion of relatively mechanical linguistic criteria relating to mandatory 'entrance' to or 'exit' from bilingual education programs."

Present day bilingual programs are a direct result of the situation described by Politzer, i.e. the main emphasis of the programs is to develop the English of NEP/LEP students to the level of 'proficiency' required to 'exit' children out of bilingual programs as quickly as possible. The overwhelming majority of bilingual programs in existence use the above early transitional approach. This is the case, regardless of the fact that for many NEP/LEP Hispanic students this type of program does not effectively develop their English skills or maintain their academic progress. The continued predominance of unsuccessful bilingual programs is partially due to prevalent and persistent myths, misconceptions and attitudes that result in a resistance to incorporating factors crucial to the success of bilingual programs. Some of these

myths, misconceptions and attitudes are discussed in the following section, which is divided into three parts: 1) myths and misconceptions surrounding second language (L2) acquisition 2) myths and misconceptions concerning bilingualism and 3) attitudes toward and misconceptions of minority language/cultural maintenance.

### *Myths, Misconceptions and Attitudes*

#### 1) Myths and misconceptions surrounding L2 acquisition.

a. Young children learn languages more 'easily' than adults or older children. This misconception seems to be based on the tendency to falsely compare children's simultaneous acquisition of two languages in the home (or other optimal situations) to classroom learning; the fact that adults are easily impressed by the early utterances children make in an L2, without realizing that these are generally formulaic, unanalyzed segments of speech; children's acquisition of L2 phonology as compared to adults'; not realizing that the language expected from children is usually more simplistic cognitively and semantically than the language expected from adults. This misconception leads one to believe that a child needs very little time to develop second language skills. It is often the case, however, that children need much more time than expected to develop the L2 skills necessary for academic success.

b. All children learn an L2 quickly. The above reasons also apply to the existence of this myth. While some children may acquire aspects of an L2 quickly, others may take much longer than their peers to develop skills in an L2. This misconception on the part of teachers can be particularly damaging, if he/she judges the academic ability of children by comparing rates of L2 acquisition.

c. An L2 (English) cannot be learned while maintaining another language. However, since many minority languages are maintained in the communities and homes of NEP/LEP students, this myth functions as a stated 'cause', i.e., scapegoat for the failure of bilingual programs to facilitate English acquisition. This myth is contradicted by research (Cummins, 1982) and practical experience (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukamaa, 1979) indicating that maintenance and development of the L1 of NEP/LEP students not only reduces the affective difficulties faced by immigrant students but also facilitates L1 acquisition.

d. Putting children into an all-English classroom facilitates their acquisition of English. This may be true if the teacher is extremely talented at teaching NEP/LEP students or if the students are particularly good at learning languages. History has shown that this statement is not true for all children and is probably not true for the majority of NEP/LEP students. Young immigrant students often suffer a loss of self-confidence or a loss of self-respect when faced with the task of learning English in a classroom full of native English speakers.

#### 2) Myths and misconceptions surrounding bilingualism.

a. Learning two languages causes cognitive confusion. The educational difficulties faced by NEP/LEP immigrant students have often been blamed on their 'bilingualism', i.e. two languages 'in a person's brain' makes it difficult to think clearly. This notion was supported by the results of early (pre-1962) research on the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development (see Darcy, 1963 for review of literature). The results of later research (Peal and Lambert, 1962; Anisfeld, 1964; Ianco-Worall, 1972; Ben-Zeev, 1972) reveal that bilingualism results in cognitive benefits. The differing results have been accounted for by noting that the L1 of the subjects in the early studies was being replaced by a more dominant and prestigious L2 (as is the case in the U.S.), while the subjects in the later studies were 'balanced' bilinguals who had not suffered any language loss (Cummins, 1981).

b. Widespread bilingualism results in a powerless and divided society. The 'prosperity' and 'strength' of the U.S. is attributed, by some, to this country's 'informal monolingual/monocultural policy', while bilingualism and/or language use, rather than the poor treatment received by minority language groups, are often cited as the cause of all the problems that exist in countries where more than one language is used by large groups of citizens.

3) Attitudes toward and misconceptions of minority language/cultural awareness/maintenance in the U.S.

a. Awareness of minority groups culture, i.e. socialization practices, on the part of educators is not necessary. This is the attitude of people who falsely believe that all children learn and behave in basically the same manner. Others feel that inculcating this type of awareness in the classroom would slow down the 'crucial' process of 'Americanization' and lead to 'disruptive' cultural pluralism. The importance of awareness of cultural/socialization differences on the part of classroom teachers has been well documented by Heath (1982), Philips (1972) and Valdes (1986). These researchers have shown that due to the lack of cultural/socialization differences teachers have made false assumptions about students' academic capabilities, language skills and literacy development.

b. Maintaining minority languages/cultures, i.e. cultural pluralism, will result in divided 'loyalties' (Glazer, 1980 cited in Wong-Fillmore, 1984). Interestingly, this strongly held belief is based on the very questionable assumption that 'loyalty' to the U.S. requires a complete rejection by immigrants of the language and culture of their mother countries. Clearly, many immigrants have become 'loyal' American citizens, while maintaining their first language and much of the culture of their original country.

c. Minority groups wish to pose a conscious threat to the 'American way of life' when they attempt to maintain their language/culture. This is the belief of ethnocentric people who view 'the American way of life' as superior and other cultures as inferior or strange. These people cannot comprehend the actual reasons for wishing to maintain a particular culture/language, since they are unable to see the value or beauty of other cultures.

### *Conclusion*

This short paper, which offered a historical background and a brief discussion, attempted to shed light on a few of the myths, misconceptions and attitudes concerning L2 acquisition, bilingualism and cultural pluralism that continue to pervade in the U.S. Despite research results and present day conditions which contradict these and other such beliefs, they continue to influence both parents and educators and function as deterrents to the development of successful bilingual programs. Much more public education, dissemination of information, research and application of research results to classrooms is necessary before myths are dispelled; misconceptions are corrected; and attitudes are changed. The falsehoods and irrational beliefs supporting the great resistance to change must be eliminated before successful bilingual programs can be allowed to flourish in the United States.

## NOTES

1. Bilingual proponents have suggested that the criteria for judging success or failure of bilingual programs may not be adequate or fair (Wong-Fillmore, 1986. Personal communication). Cummins (1983) explains that the question usually asked about bilingual education in the U.S.- 'Is bilingual education effective?' assumes that bilingual education can be considered one phenomenon and that we have a clear definition of what 'effectiveness' implies. The question is not amenable to answers because neither of these conditions is met...because of the enormous range of bilingual programs and the lack of theoretical consensus about how long a child requires bilingual support to develop effective academic skills in English.
2. The term 'bilingual' is used to refer to many differing types of programs, including those programs that rarely use the students' native language.
3. Another current issue that is considered of utmost importance in bilingual classrooms is the quantity and quality of English input available to NEP/LEP students (Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Although relevant, this issue is beyond the scope of this paper.
4. Notable exceptions are 1) the late transitional programs, which avoid the problems resulting from premature mainstreaming of NEP/LEP students into all-English classrooms 2) the classroom experience of the few NEP/LEP students who attend the immersion programs that use the minority language as the medium of instruction to develop bilingualism for native English speakers.
5. Macias (1976, cited in Wong-Fillmore, 1984) found that 83.9% of the Head Start parents in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood wanted bilingual education for their children. The indication was, however, that they wanted their children to learn English but not at the expense of their home culture and language.
6. These changes also reflect the attitudes toward Spanish speakers and speakers of other languages, i.e. Chinese and Basque, who were represented in great numbers in California during the Gold Rush.



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'TEACHING CHINESE STUDENTS TO READ AND WRITE ABOUT WESTERN LITERATURE:  
A STUDY OF TWO SOPHOMORE WRITING CLASSES IN NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY'\*

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*INTRODUCTION*

During the summer holidays of 1984, I spent some time consolidating and organizing an agglomeration of ideas (related to the teaching of literature) gathered over the past several years, and came up with a curriculum which I surmised would help our students read and write about literature more effectively.

The curriculum was then implemented in two sophomore writing classes in National Taiwan University which I started teaching in the fall term of 1984. The following study is the result of the semester's efforts.

*Purpose of Study:*

The purpose of this paper is threefold: first, to describe the 'Reading and Writing about Literature' module of a composition course taught at National Taiwan University during the first semester of the 1984-85 academic year. The description includes the various aspects of the module--its objectives, contents, class format, assignments, the teaching units, as well as an evaluation of the module itself. Second, it reports on the difficulties these students encountered during their study of Western literature. Third, based on the observations recorded and the areas of difficulties identified, the study attempts to make suggestions on how the teaching of literature and writing in the university and elsewhere in Taiwan can be made even more interesting and effective.

*Methodology:*

To attain the purposes, two major educational research methods were employed: 1) ethnography including both participant observation and structured interviews, and 2) content analysis of students' written works.

The ethnographic method is chosen because it allows for in-depth and long-term study of a small group of subjects. The task of the ethnographer is to enter the setting under study, to make contacts with the subjects, and then to describe what he sees. He also seeks to discover certain patterns of behaviour that characterize the people there.

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\* This essay is excerpted from a longer paper of the same title, to be published by Shu-lin Publication Co., Taipei, Taiwan later this year.

My task here is to observe how 22 Chinese students responded to Western literature through the study of four American short stories. I also seek to discover sources of difficulty that may hinder them from a fuller understanding and appreciation of American short fiction specifically, and by inference, Western literature at large. Data are to be collected through observation of classroom behaviour--largely discussions and oral presentations--and structured interviews conducted in individual conferences. In these sessions I had ample opportunities to discuss with students the difficulties they may have encountered in both their reading of and writing about literary texts.

Students' response to literature can be observed through their oral presentations in class as well as their written work. Their essays, therefore, also serve as important data for the study. The essays were collected and content analysed by a special scheme devised for this study; the scheme is explained in a latter part of this paper.

#### *The Setting:*

Two sophomore writing classes at National Taiwan University were chosen for study. The class met once a week for a consecutive two-hour session and a third hour was reserved for individual conferences or tutorials with the instructor.

#### *The Subjects:*

Twenty-two students taking 'Sophomore Composition' in 1984-85 were included in this study. They came from two different sections, section 9 and 10. In this paper, they will be referred to by their initials. They were:

Section 9: R.L., L.L., N.C., S.L., M.Y., P.M., N.Y., B.Y., S.P., D.T., M.L.

Section 10: J.L., L.I., S.K., E.W., K.C., C.M., R.C., K.L., A.L., A.M., E.P.

Among the 22 students, 15 were local students who grew up in Taiwan, and seven were overseas students--six from Hong Kong and one from Malaysia. Out of the 22, 20 were English majors, and two were from the Chinese Department and were doing a minor in English.

#### *DESCRIPTION OF THE 'READING AND WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE' MODULE*

##### *The situation analysed and needs identified:*

Section 9 and 10 consisted of 22 students, 11 in each. The small class size allowed for a variety of learning activities in the classroom--such as lectures, oral presentations, discussions--as well as a great deal of individual attention: not only could I look at their written work carefully, but also closely monitor their individual performance and progress.

When the term began, I had a curriculum already conceptually conceived, designed to cater to students' needs (related to the study of literature) which I had observed over the past several years of teaching. The areas of needs I have identified were:

- 1) Students do not have an adequate mastery of the approaches to literature. In other words, they do not have enough confidence in analysing and interpreting literary works on their own. They tend to rely on opinions of experts such as their professors and literary critics.

2) Students do not read literary works carefully and thoroughly enough, either because they do not see the need and value of doing so, or because course requirements are too taxing to allow them sufficient time to do so.

3) Students need to be challenged and taught to think independently and to express their opinions. They are too used to being 'spoonfed' and to writing 'standard' answers.

4) Students need to learn how to present their views orally in a systematic fashion and to do so in English. They spend far too much time listening, and listening which requires no response.

5) Students need formal and systematic instructions on academic writing, and specifically writing related to literary topics.

These are the five major areas of needs I have identified; but I also wanted to discover what the students perceived their own needs to be, and so I asked the students in the two sections to write, as their first assignment, an essay entitled, 'What are some of the difficulties you have encountered when studying Western literature?' After the essays have been collected, they were analysed. Seven areas of difficulties were noted and categorized, as follows:

1) Language barrier: most of the 22 students noted that as English was not their native tongue, their inadequate mastery of the language was a major hindrance to their understanding and appreciation of Western literature. Some said that they had to spend a great deal of time and energy in trying to understand the literal, let alone the implied meaning of words and sentences in the works they were to study. Having constantly to consult the dictionary when reading literary works can be an exhausting and frustrating experience.

2) Unfamiliarity with the background of Western literature: this is a cultural rather than a linguistic problem. Students said that they were not able to fully comprehend certain literary works because they did not know enough about the cultural and historical backgrounds against which the works were written.

3) Lack of a panoramic view of literature: some students said that they lacked a comprehensive view of the history of Western literature. That they didn't know how an isolated literary work is related to the larger picture of literary history apparently gave rise to some kind of insecurity.

4) Failure to appreciate: students reported that even though they may have understood the meaning of every single word in a piece of literary work, say, a short story, and understood the plot, analysed the characters, discovered the symbols..., yet all these could very well be just a part of a mechanical process. It was no more than a cut-and-dry academic exercise, and not true appreciation. A student expressed this sense of frustration in a succinct way: "What troubles me most when studying Western literature is that I can't see the point. These literary works are indeed valuable, but I don't understand for what can they be called masterpieces."

5) Unfamiliarity with methods of literary study: some students pointed out that they found enormous difference between the way one studies Chinese literature and the way one approaches Western literature. A great deal of adjustments had to be made and it was not easy. Others said while it was truly an enjoyable and fascinating experience to see how their teachers 'opened up' the world of a literary work in their lectures, they were at a loss when required to approach a piece of work on their own. They didn't have the 'keys' that could 'open' the door of the work. Still others remarked that although they might recognize a number of literary terms, the terms remained no more than definitions. Students did not know how these terms could be applied to the analysis of literary works.

6) Lack of sensitivity to literary works: this area of difficulty is perhaps best explained by quoting the students themselves. One student wrote in his essay, "...most of the time, we read and analysed some literary works, but seldom are we impressed by them..." Another student remarked, "I can't 'feel' Western literature. If I read Chinese literature, I would be easily moved and then comprehend, and there would be an echo in my mind. But I am not able to do so when studying Western literature." A third student reported, "I realise that I am in lack of imagination and life experience. These lacks affect my ability to 'feel' about literature."

7) Lack of time: the 'Foreign Language and Literature' major at National Taiwan University is considered a prestigious and highly demanding major. It is also regarded as 'difficult' for two main reasons: first, because it requires a large number of units for graduation; and second, because the work load is extremely heavy, especially when a great portion of readings that has to be done is in 'foreign' languages (that is, English--mainly--and other European languages). It is not unnatural then, for students to point out that they did not have enough time to read.

### *Objectives:*

Based on these five areas of need and seven areas of difficulty, objectives for the teaching module were set. Not all of the needs, of course, could be met because of time and other constraints.

Objective 1: To provide students with methods of study by which they can approach a literary work on their own.

Basis for objective: Area of need 1, Area of difficulty 4

Objective attained in the following learning activities:

a) the study of 'critical approaches', b) the discussion of each of the four stories in a systematic way.

Objective 2: To teach students to read a literary piece with great care and thoroughness.

Basis for objective: Area of need 2, Areas of difficulty 1, 2, 7

Attained in: detailed coverage of each story by a short lecture, oral presentations, class discussions, and written assignments.

Objective 3: To challenge students to think independently and to express their opinions.

Basis for objective: Area of need 3

Attained in: a) oral presentations, b) class discussions, and c) written assignments that encourage expression of original thoughts rather than regurgitation of what has been heard in class.

Objective 4: To teach students to give oral presentations on specific subjects and to participate in discussions.

Basis for objective: Area of need 4

Attained in: a) oral presentations and b) class discussions.

Objective 5: To teach students to write about literature.

Basis for objective: Area of need 5

Attained in: a) short lectures on how to write about literature, b) writing assignments, and c) individual conferences.

*Contents:*

Discussion of:

A) Four approaches to literature: (from Guerin et al., The Handbook of Critical Approaches).

1) The formalistic, 2) The psychological, 3) The moral-philosophical, and 4) The historical-biographical.

B) Four short stories:

- 1) Katherine Anne Porter, 'Flowering Judas'
- 2) Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'Young Goodman Brown' or 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux'
- 3) James Powers, 'Look How the Fish Live'
- 4) William Faulkner, 'A Rose for Emily'

These four stories were chosen for two reasons: first, for their variety--they are very different from each other in terms of content and style, and because they allow ample opportunities for discussions on various aspects of short fiction. Second, because they can appropriately exemplify the application of the four critical approaches mentioned above.

The syllabus was designed in such a way that the discussion of a critical approach precedes a short story--that is, the formalistic before 'Flowering Judas', the psychological before 'Young Goodman Brown' and 'My Kinsman Major Molineux', the moral-philosophical before 'Look How the Fish Live', and the historical-biographical before 'A Rose for Emily'. The purpose of this arrangement was to reinforce students' understanding and mastery of an approach by applying it to the study of a literary text.

'Flowering Judas', for example, is an intricate story which demands careful and meticulous examination of every single detail before the whole picture can be seen. It resembles the construction of a jig-saw puzzle. The formalistic approach is particularly useful here--in helping the students to complete the 'jig-saw puzzle' and to see the story as a whole.

'Young Goodman Brown' is an extremely 'rich' story which lends itself to a great many ways of interpretation. On one level, it can be seen as Brown's psychological journey into adulthood. It is a favourite piece of the Freudian critics. The story was used, therefore, to help students understand how psychology could be applied to the study of a story, and to show them the usefulness as well as the limitations of such an approach.

'Look How the Fish Live' offers a lot of insight but is also a rather pessimistic portrayal of man's relationship with his environment, with his fellow human beings, and with God. It could be regarded as the fictionalized form of a philosophical text. I have therefore chosen it to illustrate the philosophical-moral approach.

'A Rose for Emily' is set against the background of the post Civil War era in 19th century America. Faulkner describes the changes of a community over several decades in a small town in the southern part of the U.S. Knowledge of the historical background is therefore essential in one's understanding of the story--hence the study of this piece of fiction was preceded by a discussion of the historical-biographical approach.

C) The MLA Handbook: I decided to introduce the handbook to my students at this rather early stage of their academic career because I wanted them to become aware of the importance of style in writing, the rules of typing, etc. as soon as possible.

The Handbook was, of course, not used as a 'textbook'. I spent only one class session explaining the design of the book and how it was to be used. Students were then encouraged to use it at their own discretion. They were to adhere to the rules as laid out in the Handbook in their papers. Correct observation of these rules were closely monitored.



### *Class Format:*

1) Short lectures: The discussion of each of the short stories were preceded by a short introductory lecture in which background information was provided--for example, the life and works of the writer, and the historical/social/cultural/philosophical/religious background of the story. For instance, an understanding of the Mexican Revolution would help the students to understand Porter's 'Flowering Judas'; on the other hand, a story like 'Look How the Fish Live' calls not so much for knowledge of its historical background but the Catholic theology that underlies all of Powers' works.

2) Oral presentations: each student was responsible for one oral presentation either on a literary topic or a 'critical approach'.

a) Literary presentations: students gave presentations on specific topics (assigned). The purpose of these presentations were threefold: 1) to enable the presenter to study one aspect of the story in detail, 2) to enable him to present his findings orally--such practices are important yet desperately lacking in our university, and 3) to generate discussions on the story.

b) 'Critical approaches' presentations: the student responsible for reporting on a certain approach was to read the relevant chapter in The Handbook and to give a summary of its main points in class. After the presentation, I stepped in to elaborate on points not sufficiently explicated, to make clarifications of views that were vaguely expressed, and then answer questions that were raised.

c) Class discussions: I discovered early in the semester that students found it difficult to lead discussions so I did all of them myself. Discussion of each story followed an outline, and when we came to a point where there was a presentation, time was handed over to the presenter. Discussions continued after the presentation was over.

### *Requirements:*

1) Two oral presentations.

2) Five essays: five assignments were given in this module and each of it focused on one aspect of a literary work--for example, students were asked to write about the characterization of Laura and Braggioni in 'Flowering Judas', a dominant symbol in 'Young Goodman Brown', the conflicts in 'Look How the Fish Live', a major theme in 'A Rose for Emily', and so on.

Assignments were announced two weeks before the due date so that students would have enough time to come up with a carefully written piece of work which is of good quality.

### *Individual Conferences or Tutorials:*

Before re-writing, students who had serious problems with their essays were asked to come in for individual conferences. The primary function of these conferences, which lasted 20-30 minutes, served the purpose of allowing individual students to go through their essays with me, so that I could point out grammatical errors made in their writing, help them reconstruct sentences or paragraphs, and rephrase ideas that were not clearly expressed.

These conferences also served a subsidiary but very important function: they provided me with invaluable opportunities to 'chat' with my students so as to discover first hand the difficulties they were facing when reading the critical approaches and the short stories, and also the problems they ran into in their writing process.

## THE TEACHING UNITS

### *General Teaching Procedures:*

Discussion of the each of the five stories followed the same teaching procedures.

#### *I. Pre-discussion activities:*

Before we discussed a story in class, I asked the students to read it through at least once. As they read the story, they had to do the following:

1) Write down their initial impressions of the story--whether they liked it or not, whether they found it exciting, intriguing, interesting, fascinating, or dull, boring, confusing, etc.

2) Mark down various facts about the story, such as the setting (where, when), the characters (who), the plot (where), point the view (first person, third person, omniscient...), the tone of the writer (is he objective, critical, sympathetic, sarcastic?), key words (words that appear repeatedly), major symbols (if any).

3) Note down anything that they didn't understand.

I also met with the students doing the presentations in advance to ensure that they understood what they were supposed to do and to clarify anything that puzzled them.

#### *II. Class discussions:*

A discussion outline was handed out and the discussion followed the outline.

##### A) Introductory mini-lecture:

1) The writer: his life and works

2) Background of the story (if background information is needed to facilitate understanding of the story)

B) Initial reactions: I went round the room and asked each student to give me his first impressions of the story. Since there were no right or absolute answers, students would feel free to voice their opinions. If their opinions (no matter how hilarious!), were carefully listened to and appreciated, they would feel more relaxed and would have more confidence in participating in discussions later.

C) General comprehension: To ensure that students have got the facts right, I began the discussion by throwing out general observation questions, such as when, and where did the story take place, who were involved, what happened...

D) Detailed analysis: The story was then discussed systematically according to these headings: a) Characterization, b) Plot, c) Point of view, d) Writer's tone (authorial voice), e) Themes, f) Literary devices, and g) Others, according to the special features of the story. When the discussion proceeded to the point where there was a presentation, time was handed over to the presenter for his oral report. The presenter was also to entertain questions from his classmates afterwards.

#### *III. Assignments:*

After our discussion of the story, students were asked to write an essay on a certain aspect of the story.

## ANALYSIS OF ESSAYS

Twenty-two essays, written as final assignments for the module, were used for analysis. They were analysed in two ways: by evaluation and by description.

### I. Evaluation of Essays:

Essays were evaluated in terms of 1) accuracy (50%), 2) content (25%), 3) organization (25%).

#### A) Evaluating accuracy:

Essays were corrected by using a set of marking symbols and a grade was then assigned according to a marking scheme (an analytical scale).

The marking symbols: errors in student essays were underlined and a symbol was written on top of the error, e.g., 'Sp.' for a spelling mistake, 'Ag.' for agreement, etc. Students were then asked to make the appropriate corrections themselves. Mistakes that students could not correct on their own would be explained by the teacher during individual conferences.

The marking scheme:

- High: a carefully written piece of work; few or no mistakes
- Middle: occasional mistakes; made out of carelessness, or typos
- Low: fairly careless, many awkward expressions, ungrammatical sentence structures

#### B) Evaluating content:

Content was evaluated by means of the following scale:

- High: many insightful observations and original ideas, points are well supported by specific evidences and references to the text
- Middle: some good points, but largely ideas that have been brought up in class; these ideas, however, are clearly presented and well supported
- Low: a great deal of paraphrasing of the text or regurgitation of second-hand insights; no support for points brought up; mistinterpretation of the text

#### C) Evaluating organization:

Organization was evaluated by means of another scale of similar nature:

- High: the essay flows smoothly from one paragraph to the next; the presentation of ideas is logical and systematic; the essay is made up of balanced paragraphs, with good use of transitions, topic sentences,...
- Middle: clear and systematic presentation of ideas, but is fairly flat and uninteresting; mechanical use of transitional phrases; the essay gives the impression that it is well-organized but rather boring
- Low: the presentation is unsystematic, even illogical; poor use of transitional or topic sentences, lopsided paragraphs; no introductions or conclusions

The analytical scale looks like this:

	High		Middle		Low
Accuracy:	50	40	30	20	10
Content:	25	20	15	10	5
Organization:	25	20	15	10	5
Total:					

## II. Description of essays:

A careful study of the essays revealed that the following were the most common 'negative' features that characterized student essays:

- 1) Moralizing (abbreviated as 'M'): based on the assumption that all literature is, to different extents, didactic, that good writers always aim at teaching their readers something about life, it is important, therefore, to be able to draw moral lessons from the literary works
- 2) Paraphrasing (abbreviated as 'P'): re-telling parts of the story in simpler English without making a significant point; it is not unusual that students use a great deal of paraphrasing to support a very minor point
- 3) Over-generalization (abbreviated as 'OG'): taking a point out of the story and blows it out of proportions, making sweeping statements without qualifications
- 4) Misinterpretation: (abbreviated as 'MI'): misinterpretation of the original meaning in the text due either to linguistic difficulty (ignorance of how a word/words is/are used in a certain context) or cultural misunderstanding (lack of knowledge or erroneous understanding of customs, traditions, allusions) or imposition of students' own cultural biases
- 5) Personal judgement (abbreviated as 'PJ'): imposing personal judgements on the characters in the stories; judging the characters by students' own sense of values, moral standards, etc.

The essays were described in this way: each piece of essay was first divided into units (one unit=one sentence, regardless of length). Each unit was then described according the categories mentioned above. If a certain unit did not fit any of the categories, no indication was made. A description sheet looks something like this:

Essay X:

Unit:	Categorical description
1	P
2	/
3	MI
4	P
5	p
6	p
7	/
8	PJ
9	PJ
10	M

Summary of description:

M: 1  
P: 4  
OG: 0  
MI: 1  
PJ: 2  
Not Marked: 2

## SUMMARY OF INSIGHT GAINED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Insight into students' response to four American short stories were gathered through observations of classroom behaviour, structured interviews conducted in individual conferences, and analyses of students' writing. Descriptions of such insight are organized according to the following domains:

### *I. The workload:*

Many students found the workload onerous, but most agreed that the time and effort spent on preparing for the presentations, the class discussions, and doing the assignments worth-while and actually rewarding.

### *II. The teaching materials:*

A) Selection of stories: generally speaking, students found 'Young Goodman Brown'/'My Kinsman, Major Molineux' and 'A Rose for Emily' manageable but 'Flowering Judas' and 'Look How the Fish Live' comparatively difficult. Why the difference?

Language of the text (no matter how archaic) did not seem to pose too much difficulty for the students. The major hurdles that students found unsurmountable were complicated plots (e.g., a story that is not straight-forward narrative but involves the use of flashbacks, stream of consciousness, etc. 'Flowering Judas' is a case in point); and contents of a philosophical nature. 'Look How the Fish Live', for example, proved to be immensely difficult for the students, especially the weaker ones. Some said that they simply gave up as they couldn't grasp the meaning of the story even after reading it two or three times. I don't blame them: the story does not have an intriguing plot, the tempo is slow, its nature meditative--it is really more a detailed record of a man's theological reflections than a piece of fiction.

Looking back now, I feel that my decision to use long and difficult stories was not necessarily justified. Although this might force students to plough through difficult works they might otherwise skim through in a lecture course (my original reason for choosing these stories), it actually could bring about frustration, discouragement, and worst of all, silence in class. It seems to me then, that shorter narratives that have sufficient depth can be used in place of these lengthy ones. If the stories were more within the student's own grasp, they would be less prone to seek outside help, such as resorting to literary criticism, and would feel more secure to participate in discussions.

B) The use of teaching aids: audio-visual aids proved to be very useful in helping students to enter into the 'worlds' of the stories. These teaching aids helped to bridge the cultural and time gaps that exist between the stories and the students.

When teaching 'Flowering Judas', for example, I brought in maps of Mexico and Mexico City, and identified places mentioned in the story in the map with them. This procedure helped the students to 'get into' the story. The story, as a result, became more alive and less remote to them.

Greater implications: audio-visual aids, such a tapes, videos, films, etc. should be employed to a greater extent and on a broader scale.

### *III. The teaching format:*

#### A) The 'mini-lectures':

Students found the 'mini-lectures' very useful as they felt more confident when they had learned something about the author, and the background of the story.

B) The 'initial reaction sessions:

It is my conviction that personal responses are important and 'subjective' reactions to a story are valuable; I therefore insisted on an 'initial reaction' session before we launched into detailed analysis of the literary piece. I thought that since there were no right or absolute answers, students would feel free to voice their opinions, and that if their opinions were carefully listened to and appreciated, they would feel more relaxed and would have more confidence in participating in discussions later.

But my hopes proved to be unrealistic. Except for a few particularly bright and outspoken students (always the same lot), most students kept quiet during these sessions. I could think of two reasons that might account for this phenomenon: 1) students felt insecure about responding to a question that did not have an absolute or correct answer but simply demanded a personal opinion; and 2) students were afraid of being laughed at for giving a totally irrelevant answer (due to misinterpretation of the story)--which is not unlikely.

Despite my failure to get them to share their personal opinions, I still feel that such training is important and should therefore be enforced, despite the difficulty involved. I believe that more patience and persistence on the part of the teachers will eventually lead to success: students will gradually come out of this massive sense of passivity manufactured by years of Chinese education.

C) The 'general comprehension' session:

The responses here were in general very good, especially with the hard-working ones--these students were very careful readers and noticed the smallest details. As there were absolute answers to comprehension questions, the classes were usually most alive during this time.

D) Detailed analysis:

1) Presentations: most, if not all, of the presentations were carefully prepared. Their effects were excellent. I think students benefited greatly from this training.

2) Structured discussions:

a) Interpretation of the stories: as this part of the discussion involved critical interpretation of the meaning of the story, it proved to be difficult for the students, and silence abounded.

An example will help clarify the picture: after our discussion of 'Flowering Judas', (our first story), some students came and informed me that they felt insecure about interpreting the story without first consulting 'criticisms' of any sort. They felt uncomfortable about expressing an opinion if it was not backed up by an authority (a critic). I complied with their request and handed out a piece of commentary on the story. I did the same for the next few units.

At first I was reluctant to pass out these commentaries as I feared that students might rely heavily on them and would not think for themselves. But my worries proved to be unnecessary as the commentaries actually brought about some positive effects; they served at least three purposes: 1) to clarify the story for students so that they could have a firmer grasp of its meaning; 2) as 'leads' which helped students to formulate opinions on the story; and 3) as 'bases' on which students could build their arguments and to come up with possible interpretations of the story.

b) Medium of discussion: at first I insisted that discussions be conducted in English. Apparently, the students were inhibited by the requirement, for most of them kept quiet most of the time. My constant assurance that they could use some Chinese didn't seem to release the pressure. Later on, I dropped the requirement altogether and allowed them to use Chinese. The situation was instantly reformed. Discussions became lively and many more students were willing to speak up.

Although I enjoyed and appreciated the lively discussions, I don't think it was a good sign that our students should be so hesitant to speak in English. To help them to gain confidence in using English when engaged in intellectual discussions is a goal that we should strive at.

#### *IV. Assignments:*

The nature of the assignments requires that students read the stories carefully again (after class discussions). Without doing so, it is not possible to set pen to paper. The avowed purpose, I believe, had, to a great extent, been achieved.

Because the assignments were highly demanding, some students found it hard to keep up with the workload. There were three kinds of difficulty: 1) The lack of time: some students found writing (in English) to be a most tedious and laborious task; they could not work fast enough to keep pace with the ever-coming assignments. 2) The lack of insight: some students said they felt frustrated because they couldn't 'see' anything beyond the surface meaning in the stories, and therefore had nothing (original ideas) to write about. 3) The lack of vocabulary: some students were not able to fully express themselves because of the lack of vocabulary. What could be done to help them overcome these difficulties?

One solution I found was simply to give them more time. I would give an assignment way ahead of time and asked them to follow the writing procedure I taught them early in the semester. I realized, of course that not all the students followed my instructions as adherence to this procedure requires a great deal of planning ahead and self-discipline. But those who did came back and told me that they found it very helpful and turned in their assignments knowing that it was well done, and they felt good!

The conclusion I arrived at then, was this: it is more profitable to assign fewer pieces of work but to set a high requirement for each piece (e.g., careful reading of the text, thorough thinking, several re-writes, neat typing, etc.) than to require a great deal of work if it was hastily and sloppily done.

#### *V. Essay-writing:*

After careful analyses of 22 essays, the following conclusions have been reached:

- 1) In terms of language: Although most students demonstrated some progress through the semester, the quality of writing remained mediocre. There is still plenty of room for improvement.
- 2) In terms of content: Generally speaking, there are three kinds of content: the first is characterized by a great deal of paraphrasing; the second by an excessive amount of over-generalization; and the third contains practical applications for lives (as a result of lessons drawn from the stories) and moral endings.

How can the situation be remedied? I can think of at least two solutions: 1) a great deal more of guidance (for each assignment) should be provided--in terms of content, organization, and style of writing; and 2) more exposure to good critical essays to acquaint students with what good criticism constitutes and how it should be written.

CONCLUSION:

*A Final Word*

The set-up of the composition class (its size, nature, flexibility, class format, teaching materials,...) offers an ideal training ground for the development of several important skills--1) the ability to present one's ideas in an organized fashion, systematically and clearly; 2) the ability to participate in intellectual discussions--to communicate an idea, to present an argument, to support or oppose others' contentions etc.?.; 3) the ability to study a piece of literary work in an active fashion, i.e., through discussions and corporate efforts in discovering the meaning of the literary work rather than passive acceptance of ideas presented by an authority; and of course, the ultimate purpose of the course, 4) the ability to communicate one's ideas in writing in a clear and organized fashion.

The composition class, besides serving its primary function as a writing workshop, can also play a subsidiary role in the English department curriculum: it can ideally and easily be used as complementary and supplementary teaching sessions to the compulsory lecture courses, somewhat equivalent to the 'discussion sections' that can be found in most colleges and universities in the United States, for instance. This arrangement can be particularly valuable for the sophomores and juniors.

In short, such a composition class--thus is my conclusion and deepest conviction--has enormous potentials, and should be utilized to an even greater extent to help elevate the standard of the teaching and learning of English and literature at university level.



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APPLYING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES TO THE TEACHING OF  
MANDARIN-CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE : A CASE STUDY

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I am a teacher in China, with over twenty years' of experience in the teaching of English. In 1984, I spent a year at the University of California, Berkeley, conducting research in the acquisition of second languages. I was interested in discovering possible answers to the following questions: What is the relationship between language acquisition theories and teaching methodologies? Is there a key to successful language teaching? How should adults be taught a second language?

To carry out my research, I taught conversational Chinese--both Mandarin and Cantonese--to five American adults in the Inlingual School of Languages in San Francisco. The one-to-one teaching format there afforded me the opportunity to closely observe each student's learning process. With the acquisition theories in mind, I used a combination of teaching methods, rather than limiting myself to the audio-lingual techniques most often used in that school.

One of my students, a Mr Thomas, studied with me for eight months. I allowed his own strategies for learning to dictate classroom practice and to determine the syllabus. Instead of imposing my preconceived idea of what is 'best' on him, I adjusted my teaching methods along the way so as to match his built-in patterns of learning.

This paper reports the observations during these eight months of my teaching. It describes my student's learning process, my role as a teacher, and how he related to me in his role that contributed significantly to his ability to pick up the language fairly quickly and easily.

*I. Careful matching of the student's learning characteristics:*

Past research has shown that although most people may have the same innate language processing mechanisms, personality and individual characteristics may cause the actual learning processes to be different. It has been said that adult second language learners do share two common ways which help them to internalize a new language: first is the acquisition process which usually refers to the sub-conscious acquisition of a new language like the first language was acquired. This process entails learning strategies such as imitation and memorization of words, phrases, and general rules. The second is a conscious learning process: the learner's attention is focused on the form and rules of the new language.

To facilitate learning then, the first thing the teacher needs to do is to make full use of these two processes by analysing the learner's characteristics. The teacher should find out, for example, if the learner likes imitation, if he minds memorizing things -- if yes, how, by rote memory or by understanding? He needs to have a first-hand understanding of his student's disposition: is he an introvert or an extrovert? Is he impulsive or controlled? These personality traits the teachers will have to discover through close observation of his student.

Mr Thomas -- the student being described here -- is a 59-year - old American businessman. Besides English, he also speaks German, French, and Russian, and is now learning Mandarin with me. He is intelligent, has a positive self-image, and is proud that he is proficient in languages.

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\* A number of editorial changes have been made by Max L. Hui-Bon-Hoa for which the editors accept full responsibility.



Like every language learner, he too has his own learning style. After two or three lessons, I discovered the following characteristics in him:

1. He had a high aptitude for the new language because of an excellent short-term memory. He was able to memorize words and phrases quickly and easily, even those which were similar in sound or have the same meaning. For instance:

New Words	Words Learned
中間	鐘、中國人
家庭婦女	家、國家、女人、女兒
東	冬天、古董商店、懂

2. He was able to actively generalize rules that allowed him to monitor his speaking of the new language. For example, when teaching him the numbers 1-10, I explained that the numbers in Chinese follow the decimal system and therefore that 'eleven' could be read as 'ten plus one'. It took him very little time to figure out how to read a long number such as 1,456,596,814. In the same way, he could pick up two-word phrases like '百貨商店' (department store) and '茶葉店' (tea leaves store) in no time.

3. He was not particularly creative. He did not mind tedious, monotonous repetition exercises, but did not like 'making up' 'nonsense', even for practice. He has a natural resistance to this type of activity probably because it is a taboo in American culture for adult males to 'play' like children do.

With these characteristics in mind, I tried every possible way to meet his needs and accelerate his learning process.

## II. *Setting up a 'natural-like setting':*

A learner acquires a second/foreign language most easily if he is taught in a natural-like setting. What is a natural-like setting? It is a relaxed atmosphere where communication that takes place is in context with the needs and the cultural orientation or background of the learner.

This is the kind of setting the Inlingual School of Languages attempts to set up for its students. The school only hires native speakers of the target language as teachers, with instructions prohibiting using the learner's native language on any occasion. The thinking is that the learner could then pick up the target language as children do, by reiteration and repetition. Furthermore, there are no textbooks for beginning learners except for the 'Oral Introduction Manual' for all language courses along with a set of slides. These slides contain some basic vocabulary and provide some situations to elicit speech.

The absence of a prescribed textbook allowed me the freedom to search for the most suitable method to teach my student. Mr Thomas, as mentioned before, is highly motivated, shows an excellent aptitude for foreign languages, but does not have a creative style for learning. He was particularly concerned about not appearing foolish or a slow learner -- so I did not emphasize the importance of tones on Mandarin -- something

difficult for him to master - as many teachers would. On one occasion, for example, I told him that although '包子' (baozi, steamed stuffed buns) may be mispronounced as '報紙' (baozhi - newspaper), yet, given the context within which these words are used, their meanings would not be misinterpreted. My not emphasizing the differences in tones eliminated a lot of frustration on his part which otherwise would have been incurred -- and thus preserving his interest and confidence in his ability to learn Chinese.

To maintain the relaxed atmosphere in our lessons, I consciously tried -- and did successfully -- to establish a peer-like relationship with him. This friendly relationship kept him highly motivated and enabled me to guide him along step by step.

### *III. Eliciting communication needs:*

It has been observed that second language learners pick up socially useful phrases almost from the first day. These newly acquired phrases allow them to get around a foreign country and participate in social activities.

Bearing this in mind, I began the first lessons with Mr Thomas by teaching him basic communicative conversations about one's family, etc. The following dialogue will serve as an example:

Are you Mr Thomas?

你是湯馬士先生嗎？

Yes,

(Instead of 'Yes, I'm Mr Thomas.')

是。

Where do you come from?

你是哪個國家的人？

America.

美國。

Do you have any children?

有孩子嗎？

Yes, a son and a daughter.

有，兒子和女兒。

(Note that in the Chinese version of the answer, no measure word is used at this time)

What's your occupation?

你的職業是甚麼？

Businessman.

商人。

At this point of the conversation, a very useful expression '你呢？' ('How about yourself?' or 'Tell me something about yourself?') was taught, so that Mr Thomas wouldn't be made to feel that he was being questioned, but was actually having a real conversation.

Eliciting communication needs also comes from teaching culture along with the language at the very beginning. For example, the Chinese seldom begin a conversation with this form of greetings, 'How are you?' 'Fine, thank you, and you?' Neither do they talk about the weather, as most westerners would. Instead, they greet people simply with 'Ni Hao' (Hello!), and then ask about their name, age, occupation, and family, etc.

A fundamental way of enabling the learner to want to and be able to communicate in the target language is to provide him with endless meaningful input like the ones above. Lily Wong-Fillmore (1976) has defined four kinds of intakes as meaningful:

1. Language as it is spoken
2. The language understood by the learner
3. The language spoken to the learner
4. The language adjusted for the learner

To facilitate learning then, a lot of the dialogues and sentences found in text-books have to be edited into meaningful input. The following is an example of how this kind of editing is done:

<u>Found in Many textbook</u>	<u>Edited as meaningful input</u>
1. 同志，我想買可口可樂。	1. 請問，有可口可樂嗎？
Comrade, I want to buy a coke.	Excuse me, do you have coke?
2. 你要買多少瓶？	2. 有，要多少瓶？
How may bottles do you want to buy?	Yes, how many (do you want)?
3. 我想買一瓶，多少錢一瓶？	3. 一（瓶），多少錢？
I want to buy one bottle. How much does one bottle cost?	One. How much (is it)?
4. 五毛錢一瓶。	4. 五毛。
Each bottle costs 50 cents.	Fifty cents.
5. 郵局甚麼時間營業？	5. 郵局甚麼時候開門？
What are the service hours for the post office?	When is the post office open?
6. 你能告訴我，你要不要橘子汁？	6. 橘子汁好嗎？
Can you tell me if you want to have orange juice?	How about orange juice?
7. 我對歌劇很感興趣。	7. 我喜歡歌劇。
I'm interested in operas.	I like operas.

#### IV. *Adjusting teaching methods to the learning process (or the learner's needs):*

Joan Rubin (1975) has pointed out that good language learning depends on at least three variables: aptitude, motivation and opportunity; and that among the three factors, motivation appears to be the most vital. It is true that different aptitudes bring on different results of learning; however, a highly motivated learner is likely to do more practice on his own and be more actively involved in the learning process.

Accordingly, to keep a learner motivated is of utmost importance. One of the most effective means of achieving this purpose is to use a variety of methods -- as opposed to only one or two as the student may soon feel tired or bored.

In teaching Mr Thomas, I adopted a combination of different methods, all based on the communicative approach. The following is a brief description of each of them:

i) Role-play, free talk, and learning in real-life situations -- such as going shopping in Chinatown.

ii) The audio-lingual method -- which is good for the acquisition of basic vocabulary, common expressions, and basic sentence structures. The method relies basically on two learning strategies: mimicry and memorization.

iii) Translation and contrastive analysis -- these methods are especially useful in helping the learner to acquire general grammatical rules of the target language. For example, many English speakers have difficulties with placing Chinese adverbial phrases and attributes in the right place in a sentence:

Correct (in Chinese)	Wrong (in Chinese)
1. 我 <u>明天上午</u> 來看你。 <p>I tomorrow morning will come to see you.</p>	1. 我來看你 <u>明天上午</u> 。 <p>I will come to see you tomorrow morning.</p>
2. 他是 <u>I B M 公司</u> 的經理。 <p>He is the IBM company manager.</p>	2. 他是經理的 <u>I B M 公司</u> 。 <p>He is the manager of IBM company.</p>

Apparently, interference comes from the negative transfer of the learner's first language. Drawing attention to this with explanation makes it easier for the learner to use the rules for monitoring his speech.

iv) Total physical response -- this method is helpful in improving explicit listening comprehension and in learning tiresome phrases of location and direction such as these:

Put this book	under	the table
	on top of	
	on the left of	
	in front of	

v) Methods to elicit continual or free speech--

a) Cue cards: After Mr Thomas was able to communicate in Chinese with simple sentences, he seemed to be tired of this kind of practice. How could I continue to motivate him? At that time, we were to study the chapters on weekend activities and the weather. Besides using pictures, I worked out the following cue card:

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Beijing	Cold <u>often</u> rains	<u>Sometimes</u> very hot	cool and sunny	snows often windy
San Francisco	warm and sunny	cool and sunny	cool sometimes rains	not very cold, often rains, <u>but</u> <u>never</u> snows

I remember how excited he was when he found himself being able to talk continuously for three minutes in Chinese according to the cue card.

b) Simple discourse patterns like this: Three 'No's before a 'Yes' in a series of Yes-no questions. Here are two example of this kind of pattern.

\* Is the female secretary sick?  
No, it is the male secretary who is sick.

Is he new?  
No, he has worked here for five years.

Has he been sick for long?  
No, he still typed and did paperwork here yesterday.

Is anyone taking over his job?  
Yes, Miss Gardner is.

\* Is you father free tomorrow morning?  
No, he's going shopping.

Is he busy in the afternoon too?  
No, he will be free.

Could you tell him then I'll go over to his place to see him tomorrow afternoon?  
No, let him pick you up.

That's nice. Could you have him pick me up at 3:00 p.m.?  
Yes, sure.

vi) Consulting method--when asked to give a short 5 - 10 min. 'speech' in class, Mr Thomas liked to jot down what he wanted to say in pinyin first. When doing so, he would consult me about words that he didn't know.

#### *V. Conclusion and result:*

An appropriate application of the communicative approach with other methods can bring about a fruitful and beneficial teaching and learning experience. But it requires inventiveness and resourcefulness on the part of the teacher who must be continually alert for opportunities to vary the presentation of materials in order to bring his students into interesting and intriguing situations where they would feel a spontaneous desire to express themselves.

This paper describes how an attempt to apply language acquisition theories was made. The endeavour, as it turned out, proved to be quite successful. In the first 60 hours of classes, Mr Thomas learned about 800 Chinese words. He covered almost all everyday topics.

As I left the United States for home, he joined another class to continue his studies in Chinese. He has written me and said that he now finds it much easier to learn writing and reading because he has such a solid foundation of spoken Chinese.

What more can a teacher ask for?

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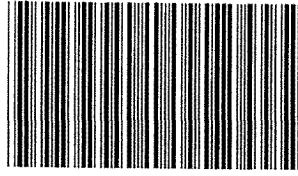
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