





## CONTENTS

Editorial policy .....	ii
Style Sheet .....	iii
Contributors .....	vi

Articles

Authorial Intentions and Discourse Interpretation .....	Desmond Allison	1
Teacher Training in China and the Role of Teaching Practice .....	Bruce James Morrison	16
Relative Clauses, Relative Pronouns and Hong Kong English .....	Mark Newbrook	25
Communicative Dynamism in Expository Academic English: Some Strategies in Teaching the Pragmatics of Writing .....	Nigel J. Bruce	42
Cultural Considerations in the Selection of ESL Reading Texts .....	William Crewe and Keith S.T. Tong	54
Pedagogical and Para-Pedagogical Levels of Interaction in the Classroom: A Social Interactional Approach to the Analysis of the Code-Switching Behaviour of a Bilingual Teacher in an English Language Lesson .....	Angel M.Y. Lin	69
Classroom Interaction Research and the Foreign Language Classroom .....	Margaret Falvey	88
Review of <u>Dialects in Contact</u> , Peter Trudgill, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986 .....	Mark Newbrook	106
Contents of <u>Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching</u> , Numbers 1 - 10.....		111
Subscription form		

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Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching publishes work in a number of areas, including: general linguistics, language teaching methodology, evaluation of teaching materials, language curriculum development, language testing, educational technology, language and language teaching surveys, language planning, bilingual education. Articles on Chinese and Chinese language teaching may be published in Chinese.

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## AUTHORIAL INTENTIONS AND DISCOURSE INTERPRETATION

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The question [for translators] is: how far should the interpretation go so that the target reader will read what was intended by the author and nothing more?  
(Chau, 1986: 71)

...all too often it is assumed that the analysis of linguistic data (particularly that of texts) would represent what the producer of that piece of language has in mind and/or what the receiver of the text comprehends qua linguistic message.  
(Lee, 1986: 6)

The idea of authorial 'attitude' or 'point of view' is quite well established in literary studies but has not been as well documented in the literature on ESP.  
(Samson, 1986: 84)

### Introduction

In this paper, I propose to discuss the nature of the 'object' or objects of text study and of comprehension. I first argue for a number of propositions that appear to be worth stating or restating, in the light of much that is currently written on text and discourse analysis. I shall be particularly concerned with authorial viewpoint, including 'intentions', and with 'evidence' for intentions as features of discourse<sup>1</sup>. Later in the paper, I report selectively on a study of the signalling of authorial viewpoint in four articles on English language teaching, in order to illustrate problems that can arise for text analysis and for discourse comprehension (and hence for translation).

### Comprehension studies and prescriptivism

My first and perhaps initially most controversial claim is that accounts of 'comprehension' in applied linguistic studies are, typically and appropriately, prescriptive in nature. (For fuller argumentation, see Allison, 1986: 34-40). This is not, of course, to suggest that particular prescriptions are necessarily correct, but it is to argue that accounts of what Alderson and Urquhart (1984: 47) have termed "valid interpretations" of textual meanings should not disguise their essentially prescriptive status.

The idea that accounts of comprehension are prescriptive may pose difficulties for researchers, but it will hardly surprise language teachers. Teachers, however, may at times be too ready to decide upon the possible 'right answers' to particular questions about text meaning. Alderson and Urquhart (1984: 45-47) remind us that we are in danger of overlooking interpretations that are unexpected (for us) but reasonable.

Their point is correct and important. Nonetheless, if it is still held possible for some interpretations to be incorrect or unreasonable (so that the expression "valid interpretations" is not a tautology), then an element of prescription remains implicit in comprehension studies.

How, though, might one defend analytic or pedagogic judgements that take some interpretation of a text to be 'invalid'? Typically, one might demonstrate 'inconsistencies' within the particular interpretation, or one might suggest its incompatibility with textual 'evidence'. The theoretical basis for such evaluation, however, is not obvious. 'Inconsistencies' might after all be a feature of a text, rather than a defect in an interpretation. 'Unity' and 'coherence' are literary conventions, for text production and comprehension, that may be culture-specific; furthermore, they may not always be fully realised in texts within a particular tradition. 'Evidence from the text' also remains subject to interpretation (e.g. as to whether some statement should be taken literally or otherwise), in judgements that will take account of knowledge of speakers or writers, of discourse conventions and of the world. The question of criteria for validating interpretations of text meaning thus remains a problem.

Critical readers might retort that the problem is one of my own choosing. If one were to retain the conventionally 'descriptive' perspectives of linguistic science when studying texts, one could seek to account for what is 'there', as the objective 'target' of comprehension. Questions of validity of interpretations could then simply be set aside or left to others. However, even if we omit debate about the role of applied linguistics in relation to 'problems' in discourse interpretation, we must still ask precisely what is to be 'described'. Answers usually disguise, but do not eliminate, the role of prescriptivism in comprehension studies.

Let us consider three possibilities, assuming for the moment that each of these is distinct from the others, and that each might be revealed according to some motivated and consistent analytical procedure:

1 - the information structure of the text, as realised through observable signalling.

2 - the author's intentions as realised in the text. (It may be possible, as Rumelhart (1980:48) suggests, for readers to 'understand' a text, i.e. to assign to it a coherent interpretation, yet to misunderstand the author).

3 - interpretation of text made by competent listeners or readers (as identified from performance on other, standard comprehension measures).

Particular listeners' or readers' models of text meaning, if describable, might then in principle be compared with an analyst's account of text structure or of authorial intentions, or with representations of meaning constructed by competent language users. Such descriptive comparisons might incidentally offer a basis for evaluative judgements by others (such as language teachers).

The first two possibilities will concern us further below. We need to decide whether accounts are truly descriptive of observable data or are also interpretative.

Descriptive studies of the third type can clearly be useful correctives to the limited perspectives of a single analyst or a procedure for analysis. However, there is obviously no judgement-free procedure for identifying a population of competent comprehenders of texts<sup>2</sup>. In this case, therefore, the problem of validation is merely shifted to the standard measures chosen.

#### The 'object of study' and the 'intentional fallacy'

In this paper, I adopt the position that textual evidence is important, but that it is not conclusive, in assigning interpretations of meaning. This view carries implications, which we shall explore, for the 'object of study' in text and discourse analysis. In relation to our problem, we need to establish what is to be described, and how such descriptions can be carried out. The complementary dangers are that one allows text "to vanish away behind mental processes" (de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981: 35), or that one focusses too narrowly on overt data or "words on the page"<sup>3</sup>, without relating data to a representation of text meaning.

Some researchers, including Lee (1986), emphasise Widdowson's distinction between "text", which they take as an appropriate object of linguistic study, and "discourse", which evokes wider questions of authorial intent and of interpretation by text receivers. Attempts may then be made to establish the "information structure" of particular texts, or text types, by describing the signalling devices that occur. (For critical consideration of uses of the word "structure" in text and discourse studies, see Cheung, 1986). Such studies are sometimes claimed to distinguish what is 'there' in texts from the broader processes involved in discourse production and interpretation.

The importance of specifically linguistic perspectives on "text" is not here in dispute. However, the 'objectivity' of the presumed 'object' of study remains open to question.

The strongest claim one can envisage is that algorithmic procedures could be developed to discover the information structure of texts (see Lee's paper). The search for maximal rigour and consistency in procedures is an admirable one. However, I believe the quest for "an algorithm for the analysis of written English text" (or other text) to be misconceived, and I would suggest that the 'algorithm' metaphor be abandoned as unsuitable. Briefly, this is because any procedure for text analysis, if comprehensive in scope, will actually include provision for interpretation of linguistic data as 'signals' of discourse relations. For example, Petöfi (1973: 224-5) incorporates interpretative 'communication strategies' in his attempt at a prototype algorithmic model for text description. Unless such strategies were to assign interpretations randomly (or pseudo-randomly with reference to a table of probabilities, however this might be ascertained), which would seem uninformative in particular cases, then their inclusion in a model constitutes recognition of the need for interpretative choices to be exercised.

Such choices are strictly incompatible with the notion of an 'objective', algorithmic procedure. The extent to which observable linguistic features prove to function as signals that organise the (propositional or attitudinal) information in a text must depend upon an independent (and interpretative) account of what that information is. If the "information structure" of a text cannot fully be revealed or constructed through non-interpretative working procedures, the problem will remain of the status of an analyst's representation of text meaning<sup>4</sup>. (We shall return to questions of 'signals' and 'relations' in the next section of the paper).

An alternative approach to differentiating between what is 'there' in a text (or discourse) and what may be 'added' by some interpreter (listener, reader or translator) is to concentrate upon the intention of text producers. Rather than attempting to distinguish some 'objective' information structure from "author's intention", some researchers have emphasised the relations between the two. Thus, Meyer and Freedle (1984: 136) refer to "the discourse structure of a passage, representing the author's schema for organizing the prose".

The importance of remaining faithful to an author's intention may well be a pedagogically useful idea. (It is also evoked by Chau (1986), in regard to the role of the translator). However, it is vital to recognise that this is only a rhetorical device for insisting on the need for valid interpretation of a text. It simply renames what is 'there', as being the proper object of analysis or of comprehension (and of translation where relevant), but it does not afford any independent criterion by which to assess interpretations.

This is one area in which text and discourse studies can belatedly learn from approaches to literature (cf. Samson's remarks, cited above). An idea that is well established in literary studies is that of the "intentional fallacy" (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1954). The point is that evidence of an author's intention comes either from a text itself (and thus forms part of one's interpretation of discourse meaning), or it comes from other pronouncements by the author. Whether such other pronouncements, which may stem from a variety of motives, are legitimate data for literary criticism remains debatable (and need not concern us) but, as Wimsatt and Beardsley show, authorial statements about texts are clearly not beyond contention. To equate one's analysis of discourse structure with "the author's schema for organising the prose", in any instance, would be either to make a spurious appeal to 'authority' or simply to express confidence that one's interpretation of text meaning was correct.

One apparent problem with this argument is that 'interpretation' presupposes 'choice', whereas choice might seem to be eliminated, in the case of non-fictional texts, by the presence of highly explicit signals of an author's position (or that of the joint authors). In academic writing at least, texts quite often include "announcements" (Cheung, 1986: 40, discussing Fillmore) of authorial intentions, or indications of an author's own judgements and beliefs. Even in such cases, nonetheless, there remains a need for interpretation of these 'signals', as will be exemplified later in this paper. Let us next examine the notion of 'signalling' a little more closely.

## Signals and relations

The approach to text description associated with the work of E.O. Winter and others, particularly Michael Hoey, is evoked, apparently with approval, by several contributors to the ninth issue of this collection of working papers, most notably by Lee (1986: 3-5). Lee distinguishes this approach sharply from "the approach labelled as 'text linguistics' [that emphasises] the logical relationships among textual elements rather than the surface signals of text structure as such." I remain somewhat puzzled by Lee's distinction between the approaches, and I would like, briefly and selectively, to recall two points that Hoey makes about linguistic signals and relations in texts:

(i) 'clause relations', or relations in texts, are not amenable to direct analysis. They are acts of interpretation by text receivers in the light of preceding text (Hoey, 1983: 18-19).

(ii) a relation is not a label for a set of signals. Rather, the correspondences between signals in surface text and underlying relations are typical, but are not necessary. Relations "can be identified only by examining the content of the clauses and their context" (Hoey, 1983: 22), and not simply by indicating the signals that are present.

For my purposes, an important implication is that, pace Lee (1986: 5), extratextual and even extralinguistic knowledge will have always to be available for the interpretation of meanings. Such dimensions do not only come into play in the absence of surface signalling of relations. This is because the text receiver, or the analyst, must decide in any instance whether some typical correspondence between a signal and a relation actually holds. Absence, as well as presence, of any pragmatic contra-indication for some 'default' interpretation of a signal can be recognised only if knowledge of both discourse and the world is constantly being consulted. (Some relevant considerations are described and exemplified by Grice, 1975).

This general argument applies specifically to statements of authorial intention. Where they occur, such statements are obviously important discourse features that will influence possible meanings. However, they remain subject to interpretation: pace Samson (1986: 82, discussing Tadros), "readers may anticipate what the writer will do" when there are signals in the text, as well as when there are not. What Tadros terms overt 'prediction' by writers has at times to be interpreted with caution, as (I predict) I shall exemplify later in this paper.

Hoey rightly warns that it is not an adequate description of a passage "simply to note how its clauses are related" (1983: 22). Equally, an itemisation of signals used will only constitute one part of an adequate descriptive procedure. What is crucial for an adequate account is to display the relationship between the signals and valid interpretation(s) of text meaning. It is not obvious that any demarcation between "text" and "discourse" studies here will be of more than limited convenience (cf. also Samson, 1986: 87).

## Vagueness and modality

Without going into detail, I would like also to draw attention to work by Stubbs (1986) that suggests how 'vagueness' can be an important feature of communication. Indeterminacy or 'fuzziness' in an account of text meaning need not constitute a deficiency in descriptive statements resulting from some weakness in the analytical approach. (This is not, obviously, to deny that such unnecessarily 'fuzzy' statements may occur, as suggested by Lee (1986: 4)).

Stubbs's comments on the often deliberate use of vagueness, with reference to what claims are being advanced and by whom, and on the various linguistic markers of modality that permit such indeterminacy to prevail, pose further problems for any notion of what is 'there' in texts. Although Stubbs himself does not draw any such conclusion, one may doubt whether the building of comprehensive (non-algorithmic) models of the information structure of texts is a realistic enterprise. (Compare the work of Bolinger with regard to models of syntax). Certainly, any adequate model would have not only to handle variety in legitimate interpretations, but also to allow for indeterminacy of text meanings.

## Announcements of viewpoint: authorial comment in texts

So far, I have tried to establish the following points:

- that an account of text meaning constitutes an act of interpretation of the textual 'evidence', rather than a revelation of some objectively verifiable 'information structure';

- that one needs descriptions both of the relations in a text and of the signalling devices used. The signalling devices will be observable qua text elements, but not qua signalling devices, since their function depends on how they are to be interpreted;

- that the problem of criteria for evaluating different interpretations of text meaning cannot be resolved by positing some 'object' for description<sup>5</sup>.

Whether it is feasible to offer a comprehensive account of text relations is another important question, but not one that I propose to pursue here. (Consider, inter alia, work by Hoey, 1983, and by Crombie, 1985). Instead, I would like now to present some instances of 'authorial viewpoint' and its signalling, identified during a study of four professional articles. My purpose is to illustrate the point that explicit authorial 'announcements' and judgements in non-fictional writing will still need to be interpreted by analysis and other readers.

Selection of texts. Texts for the study were chosen in order to avoid research bias (except to the extent that choice was restricted to articles on English language teaching), and also to combine text description with preparation of material for advanced reading comprehension work on in-service courses at the Institute of Language in Education. My colleague Peggy Ng chose four articles for these purposes, prior to any discussion of my research interests and consequent descriptive focus.

- The four articles (henceforth referred to as 'Article 1', etc.) were:
1. 'Group work: guidelines for success' (Paine, 1983).
  2. 'The "decision pyramid" and teacher training for ELT' (Brumfit and Rossner, 1982).
  3. 'Teaching reading skills as strategies' (Duffy and Roehler, 1987).
  4. 'Integrating lesson planning and class management' (MacLennan, 1987).

Focus of descriptive study. Limitations of time for the study dictated a somewhat narrow exploratory focus. My interests lay in two main 'relational' areas: indications of authorial intention in an article, and indications of authorial stance regarding views (statements, attitudes, ideas) of others, (Only the first of these two areas will be considered in detail here).

I concentrated on two kinds of linguistic feature: first-person reference (pronouns or possessive adjectives), and references in the text to other named authors. For each of these features, complete lists were compiled, with interpretative glosses. In addition, the study took note of other ways in which authors referred to themselves or their intentions (e.g. "On the basis of the author's experience...this article suggests...", in Article 4). Records were also made of attributions of views (including knowledge or lack of knowledge) to unnamed and perhaps unspecified individuals or groups (e.g. "There are three basic procedures...that I find are often not understood...", in Article 1).

A fuller investigation would have examined more texts, as well as considering a wider range of signals and relations. Despite its limitations, the focus of the present study proved quite revealing, particularly in the area of first-person signalling, which was often a feature of statements indicating authorial intentions. Some interesting cases arise for discussion, in part because choice of pro-forms often serves also in the mediation of author-reader relations (cf. Brown and Gilman, 1960).

Initial attempts to extend the study to all instances of evaluative comment by authors were soon abandoned, for reasons of scope, but they sufficed to indicate the considerable quantity, variety and range of evaluative signalling in the articles. The narrower focus on attributions of views to named persons (not reported in detail here) already illustrated a range of purposes for citation. These include lending authority to some suggestion or argument (cf. Stubbs, 1986:3); providing references in lieu of fuller development of a point; providing a 'target' (or 'Hypothetical') viewpoint against which to contrast one's own position in some respect. (For the 'Hypothetical-Real' contrast relation, cf. Hoey, 1983: 128; 175; Allison, 1986, chapter five).

In the remainder of this paper, I shall present an overview of the four articles in respect of their first-person signalling, and with reference to announcements of intention. Selected instances will be examined in more detail, in the light of the concerns of the paper.

Findings: first-person signalling. The occurrence and certain uses of first-person signalling in each of the four articles will be summarised as follows:

Article: estimated length in words; number of authors.

- cases: the number of instances (tokens) of first-person forms. (In parentheses, the number of instances per thousand words of text is given, to the nearest whole number).

- forms: a breakdown of the first-person forms found (types and tokens). Types include subject and object plural pronouns, subject singular pronoun, plural reflexive pronoun (one token), and possessive adjectives (but no instances of possessive pronouns).

- intention: (interpretative data). Number of cases interpreted as integral parts of an announcement of authorial intention, e.g. "We then suggest that (...)". In parentheses, there follows the number of other cases taken as signalling text organisation (i.e. not included in the "intention" figure). Most of these were summative statements.

- plurals: (total number of cases, followed by) interpretative data. Number of cases interpreted as exclusive plural, inclusive plural (of varying scope), and doubtful cases if any.

#### First-person forms in four articles

Article 1. Estimated length 2400 words. One author.

cases: 15. (6 per 1000 words).

forms: 2 "we" (one editorial, in abstract), 11 "I", 2 "my".

intention: 4. (1).

plurals: (2 cases). Exclusive - 1 (editorial); inclusive - 1.

Article 2. Estimated length 2520 words. Two authors.

cases: 40. (16 per thousand words).

forms: 30 "we"; 6 "us"; 4 "our".

intention: 8. (3).

plurals: (40 cases). Exclusive - 13; inclusive - 20; doubtful - 7.

Article 3. Estimated length 2140 words. Two authors.

cases: 14. (7 per 1000 words).

forms: 9 "we"; 3 "us"; 2 "I" (imagined speaker).

intention: 1. (0).

plurals: (12 cases). Exclusive - 0; inclusive - 11; doubtful - 1.

Article 4. Estimate length 2250 words. One author.

cases: 42. (19 per thousand words).

forms: 23 "we"; 3 "us"; 10 "our"; 1 "ourselves"; 4 "I", 1 "my" (imagined speaker, as is one token of "I").

intention: 0. (4). (But some cases embedded in announcements of intention, e.g. "This article suggests that (we should...)").

plurals: (37 cases). All inclusive.

Discussion. The four articles exhibit considerable variety in the frequency of occurrence of first-person signals, both overall and for particular forms, as well as in the uses to which statements containing these signals are put.



Some differences between articles appear trivial (e.g. Article 1, with one author, makes use mainly of singular forms, while Article 2, with two authors, uses only plural forms). Others, however, are less predictable. For example, Article 4, with a single author, mainly uses plural forms for first-person reference. Article 3, with two authors, has a strong predominance of 'inclusive' uses of plural forms (as does Article 4), whereas Article 2 also makes 'exclusive' use of plural forms at several points. This difference partly reflects greater use, in Article 2, of plural forms during signalling of authorial intentions and text organisation. (Examples are: "In this article, we take an analytical look at..."; "We then suggest that..."; "...we argue for...", "...we wish in the present article to focus...on").

In Article 4, by contrast, intentions are signalled impersonally ("...this article suggests why and how...", "This article suggests that...", "It argues that..." and several other instances), while plural forms are widely used inclusively elsewhere. Article 3 exhibits very little overt statement of intentions (none at a macro-level), but clearly signals organisational patterns, such as problem-solution, from which authorial purposes may be inferred.

Such observations, if pursued, provide insights into differences of style, and notably into the mediation of author-reader relations. For ("my" or "our") present purposes, however, it seems of greater interest to examine one or two interpretative problems that will exemplify the need for ongoing pragmatic monitoring of discourse, including instances of overt signalling by authors.

- Overt and covert intentions. Professional writing in English language teaching will often be concerned with value judgements as well as (or in lieu of) facts about language learning and teaching. Communicative intent of a 'suasive' kind may not always be signalled directly, especially where an author is also concerned to establish rapport with certain kinds of readers.

In Article 1, the opening sentence is as follows:

My intention here is not to try and persuade teachers that group work is a good thing.

The author then disclaims any wish to go into underlying theory "because that has all been done before". He continues:

Instead, I am more concerned to outline a few simple classroom procedures and offer some advice that, I hope, will help inexperienced teachers (and those who train them) to make group work more successful.

(Paine, 1983: 28)

However, a reasonable interpretation of the article would be that the author seeks to persuade teachers, not only by argument but also by practical guidance, that group work can be "a good thing". Persuasive or exhortatory argument is used at some points (example below). Effective persuasion of teachers may well best be achieved through giving practical pointers that show understanding of real teaching problems and circumstances. To announce "My intention is to try and persuade teachers that group work is a good thing" appears highly likely to invite consumer resistance; to announce the opposite is possibly to convey messages of solidarity and reassurance to practically-minded teachers. Such messages may be genuine; nonetheless, their likely effect will be to lower resistance (and thereby make persuasion easier).

To exemplify the occurrence, in Article 1, of what may reasonably be taken as attempts to persuade the reader, here is the author's reply (Paine, 1983:28) to one "common objection", that "You can't do it with a class of forty":

"Surely, the larger the class, the more essential it is to use group work for ensuring maximum pupil-pupil interaction? It is difficult at first, but the careful preparation outlined below will make it more practicable".

I would contend that this reply, especially in its first sentence, constitutes an attempt to persuade teachers that group work is desirable (or "a good thing", though without the possible irony of this phrase).

If this interpretation is reasonable, then it follows that the opening statement of intention (or of what the writer's intention is not), in Article 1, should not be taken entirely at face value. If readers can legitimately make such judgements, then I would also argue that any decision to accept a signal at its face value is eventually ratified only where similar monitoring of actual content has failed to reveal any mismatch. As we saw earlier, readers are likely continually to consult their own knowledge of a topic, and of discourse conventions, when interpreting linguistic signals in texts, and not only when required to make inferences in order to fill gaps in surface text.

- Indeterminacy. One feature of the analysis was that plural forms were characterised as 'exclusive' or 'inclusive'. This distinction would be required for translation into a language that distinguished these meanings formally.

Interesting cases of indeterminacy arose in this respect. Firstly, some plural forms might be taken as both exclusive and inclusive. Secondly, the scope of apparently inclusive forms can vary considerably, in terms of the assumed group membership; in such cases, readers' interpretations of forms as 'inclusive' or not may depend on readers' perceptions of their own membership of relevant groups.

Two examples from Article 2 will illustrate the first kind of indeterminacy. The statement "We shall return to this point later" appears to serve both as an announcement of authorial intention and as a comment that includes the reader (who will also "return to this point later" in reading the article). A single author would of course have to choose between these meanings ("I shall return" or "We shall return"). The indeterminacy in this case in Article 2 is not a problem for discourse comprehension, but it would have to be resolved by translators into certain languages. (A similar case arose in Article 3).

The second instance is more interesting. When the authors write "We thus have a pyramid which looks like Fig. 1" (and then present a diagram showing their hierarchy of decision-making for language teaching), they render possible an inclusive reading of "we". This can be contrasted with the clearly exclusive reading for possible alternatives, such as "We thus propose/present the following pyramid". The authors' choice of words may serve to 'invite the reader in' to share their reasoning and its outcome. Such an invitation, which depends on a possible reading of "We" as inclusive, could also imply that the outcome is demonstrable and independent of the authors' own views and values. Critical readers will therefore exercise particular caution before accepting the premises and steps of the argument, and the conclusion offered. (For reactions on one such reader to the article we are considering, compare Bolitho, 1987).

Some plural forms in Article 2, that are clearly not exclusive to the authors in their reference, also raise questions of scope. Examples are: "... we should welcome the views of outsiders..."; "But we cannot allow decisions... to be predominantly those of outsiders, because..."; "only by imposing some...order...can we give meaningful direction to our training of language teachers."

In such cases, the scope of "we" and other first-person plural forms often appears to be "members of the language teaching profession". In some instances, a better gloss might be "language teacher trainers". On the other hand, a broader interpretation, such as "society", is sometimes also tenable (precisely, one may argue, to the extent that views of "outsiders" to the profession are taken up as input to and part of the decision-making process that the authors are discussing). Thus, some indeterminacy as well as variation in the scope of first-person plural forms allows the authors' general argument to be developed, without any need for precise agreement to be established over just how far different groups ought to be responsible for particular choices affecting the language teaching profession. Assumptions of shared group membership between authors and readers, made explicit through the use of pro-forms in contexts that predicate 'inclusive' readings, again allow the authors to convey value judgements while simultaneously signalling solidarity with their readers.

Effective reading, therefore, requires careful evaluative response to ostensible signals of authorial intention or viewpoint, and to what authors may present as shared knowledge or common ground. Interpretation of discourse meanings involves much more than filling the reasoning gaps that authors have left in otherwise explicit surface texts.

#### Concluding discussion

The study of four articles, selectively reported in the latter part of this paper, has been essentially exploratory. A fuller and more revealing analysis would have included systematic accounts of all announcements of intention, however signalled, together with an attempt to establish the criteria by which such announcements were identified and distinguished from other organisational features.

Wider questions would still remain, however, about the status and value of such studies of signals and relations in texts. The main problem concerns the 'piecemeal' or ad hoc nature of such studies, their lack of a wider framework and rationale. Why, for instance, should the above small study have focussed upon first-person pro-forms and on statements of intention? More generally, is there any means of determining what signals and relations ought to be discussed, and of establishing degrees of importance for such features of form and of meaning in discourses?

The issues raised here are difficult and challenging. I would wish to acknowledge the dangers of piecemeal studies (which are forcefully indicated by Stubbs, 1987), while still maintaining that such studies are necessary and worthwhile in the absence of agreed comprehensive approaches to text meanings.

What might such comprehensive approaches be like? Earlier in this paper, I undertook not to pursue this question here. As I have subsequently shown, however, that authorial comments cannot always be taken at face value, I hope to be forgiven a few closing remarks on this major issue.

Halliday (1985: xvii) has argued that discourse analysis must be based on "a theory of wordings - that is, a grammar". For Halliday, a text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one, so he maintains that an appropriate grammar should be functional and semantic in orientation. A functional semantics, on the other hand, is not yet a feasible undertaking: "At the present state of knowledge...semantic studies remain partial and specific" (1985:xx).

It is obviously sensible for linguistic studies to concentrate efforts on those areas of description that lend themselves more readily to systematisation. One associated danger, of course, is that important problem areas, such as the nature of comprehension, may be approached only from rather unrevealing perspectives within applied linguistic studies. What Halliday (1985) terms "cohesion around the clause", including lexical cohesion, is peripheral to his focus on grammar, but would appear to be crucial as an interface between a "discourse grammar" and semantic and pragmatic development in texts. Yet the development in particular of "lexical cohesion" in discourse studies remains disappointing, with descriptions often being confined to a listing of cohesive ties (see the text description presented by Halliday, 1985: 314). There is, then, plainly a need for exploratory forays into studies of both forms and meanings ("cohesion" and "coherence") in discourses, in anticipation of more ambitious and demanding attempts to develop comprehensive and principled approaches.

It should by now be apparent that approaches to discourse meanings, whether piecemeal or comprehensive in conception, will still entail interpretation and cannot be algorithmic (cf. Halliday 1985: xvi ff). The main thrust of the present paper has been to challenge accounts of comprehension that assume the existence of an "object" of study (in terms of an underlying structure or network of meanings or authorial intentions) that is describable through largely impersonal procedures of analysis to surface features of text, with minimal recourse to "interpretation" being allowed only in cases where inferences are called for to fill gaps in the overt signalling. I have tried to show, with argument and some exemplification, that this is a misleading and oversimplified picture of the ways in which linguistic elements in texts operate - or are interpreted - as signals of relations in discourse. A possible though hazardous implication of my argument is that there could be more common ground than is often allowed between 'discourse analysis' and 'literary criticism' in approaches to the study of textual meanings.

## NOTES

1. My initial motivation to address these issues here followed my reading of the ninth issue of "Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching" (1986), particularly the papers by Lee, Crewe, Cheung, Chau and Samson. I have not sought to review any of these contributions, as my interests are too selective for this. I should also make it clear that I do not imply any homogeneity of viewpoints among the various authors.
2. It is clear that text comprehension involves more than knowledge of the language system. From a pedagogical viewpoint, one would certainly wish to allow that it is possible for native speakers of a language to 'misunderstand' texts in that language. One cannot, therefore, avoid or resolve the issue of evaluative criteria for text interpretation by undertaking to describe interpretative models for some homogeneous community of language users.
3. For spoken language, any attempt to isolate data from interpretation appears doomed from the outset, except at a purely phonetic level of description. For written language, conventions of spacing may serve as (somewhat arbitrary) criteria for establishing what the "words" (one the page) of a text are.
4. Objective description of certain features of text signalling can, of course, provide a basis for useful insights (see, e.g., Crewe, 1986). However, the nature and value of the insights will still depend on interpretation of meanings, and on judgements of such parameters as 'complexity' or 'difficulty'.
5. The problem of evaluative criteria for interpretation is ultimately a philosophical question, concerning the status of 'knowledge' in 'disciplines'. The area has been extensively explored by R.S. Peters among others.

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## TEACHER TRAINING IN CHINA AND THE ROLE OF TEACHING PRACTICE

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### Introduction

Since the early nineteen-seventies, the field of TEFL has become steadily more professional: from its early days as providing a way that students might travel around the world earning their keep, to the development of a field that is now seen to be worthy of study at universities both in Britain and overseas. The growth of the field has been mirrored in the proliferation of books, journals, conferences and courses - all devoted to the furtherment of what is now a very valuable industry, not only to the book publishers and school owners, but also the British economy. Certain pedagogic and administrative standards have been set up in attempts to control the quality of both teaching (Royal Society of Arts Diploma, for example) and examinations (British Council ELTS, and TOEFL tests). More and more research is being done into issues at the centre of EFL. EFL teachers have easier access to current pedagogical trends through the various journals and are encouraged (obliged if they should want to make EFL their career) to supplement their experience with professional qualifications. It is through improvements in the training of teachers, as much as the development of new teaching approaches, that a raising of the standard of EFL teaching has been attempted (and partially achieved). It is now no longer generally possible for anyone to teach EFL in a reputable school in the West unless they have a recognized EFL qualification. The field of teacher training has grown in importance as a result of the numerous new approaches, methods and techniques which have been developed, which are then reflected in the design of new materials, syllabuses, courses and therefore in classroom teaching. The effective training of teachers is seen as crucial for the development of a successful EFL programme, as it is in other educational fields.

### Background to the Advanced Teacher Training Course at Tsing Hua University

EFL teaching in China has generally been of a very traditional nature with the emphasis on grammar-translation and rote-learning. It is, however, recognized by many teachers that the results attained by students who have been learning English for very many years are far from satisfactory (particularly with regard to speaking and listening skills). Against this background the Advanced Teacher Training Courses (ATTC) were set up in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou jointly by the British Council and the Chinese State Education Committee with the aim of improving the performance of EFL teaching in tertiary institutions. The idea was for those teachers who participated on the courses to go back to their institutions and pass on any useful experience to their colleagues, and so disseminate what new ideas they felt were relevant to that particular teaching situation.



## The Advanced Teacher Training Course

Each year approximately thirty teachers from tertiary institutions come to Tsing Hua from various parts of Northern China, particularly from Inner Mongolia.

They have at least two years teaching experience, are aged between twenty-two and thirty-five, and come from a variety of social and educational backgrounds. They also tend to come with a variety of differing expectations and aims concerning the ATTC: some want to find ways to improve their teaching, some want the diploma to aid their chances of promotion or increase the possibility of their being able to study abroad, some want a chance to improve their English, while others are sent by their unit.

Our aim is for the participants to return to their institutions at the end of the course having:

- widened their horizons with regard to the myriad of different approaches, methods and techniques that are available to the EFL teacher, without propounding any particular one;
- improved their proficiency in English through EFL classes, as well as prolonged exposure to native-speaker language;
- been introduced to some aspects of British culture, and so hopefully helped to take EFL out of its vacuum;
- been introduced to some of the basic ideas current in Applied Linguistics (a facet of the course that is seen as crucial by the Chinese for teacher development), and having been able to set these in the context of EFL in China;
- been given an opportunity to try out some new ideas in micro-teaching and teaching practice, and thus then being more able to judge their relevance to their own particular teaching situation;
- gained greater overall confidence in their abilities as EFL teachers.

The course is taught by two foreign "experts" recruited by the British Council, and a number of Chinese counterparts. The counterparts, who are chosen primarily for their experience and proficiency in English, sit in on many of the lectures and seminars - perhaps giving papers, or otherwise contributing - and then go to Britain to do an MA in Applied Linguistics or TEFL before returning to the ATTC to eventually take over from the foreign experts.

### What is "teacher training"?

#### (A) The View from the West

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said ....., 'it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less'.

Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

Herein lies our greatest potential obstacle - what the West perceives as teacher training is often at variance with the view of teacher training taken by many educational institutes in China. In the West, teacher training is seen as necessary both pre-service for novice teachers, and for experienced teachers in the form of further in-service training (often referred to as teacher education - reflecting its on-going nature in contrast to initial teacher training). This process of teacher education is seen as essential to the development of the individual as a teacher, as well as to the programme as a whole.

The Aims of Teacher Training: The primary aim of a teacher training course (I use the term from hereon to refer to both initial and in-service courses) in the West is therefore to develop and improve the teaching skills of the course participants<sup>1</sup> (although individual participants may perceive the course differently - for example, in terms of personal career advancement). This can be seen within the following framework:

The primary aim of a teacher training course is to develop the participants' -

- a) awareness of - students
  - language
  - materials
  
- b) ability in - classroom management & lesson planning
  - presenting & practising new language
  - practising and integrating the use of the 4 skills

The place of any pedagogical or linguistic theory covered on the course is primarily to underlie and inform practice. Any theoretical element of a course should, therefore, be that which the course designer feels the participants should be aware of to enable them to understand (and therefore more effectively put into practice) various teaching methods and techniques within the framework of one (or more) pedagogical approach(es). It is therefore not seen to be necessary, for example, that teachers of EFL should have an extensive knowledge of the field of Applied Linguistics - although it would obviously be advantageous for them to be aware of certain relevant issues, such as those factors that affect learning or basic features of the English phonological system.

Course Components: the components of a teacher training course will obviously vary according to the needs of the participants, but a course may well include the following components:

- some elements of teaching methodology, but only those directly applicable to the participants' teaching situation
- classroom management, lesson planning, course design etc.
- language analysis: grammar, phonology
- materials: use, evaluation, adaptation and writing
- testing and assessment
- teaching practice

Of course, the one that has been increasingly seen as vital (eg. RSA 1982, Gower & Walters 1983) is the practical, teaching practice component. Teaching practice is taken to mean any form of observed teaching including:

- peer teaching
- micro-teaching (teaching for a short period of time, normally focusing on one particular aspect of a lesson or teaching technique)
- teaching a class specially recruited for the course
- teaching their own (or another teacher's) regular class

all of which have their own advantages and disadvantages (RSA 1982:21-23).

Teaching practice is seen as essential for the following reasons:

1. to provide back-up and input for theory sessions - including giving participants an opportunity to evaluate new ideas and options, and experiment with different approaches/techniques;
2. to help participants to develop self-confidence in the use of different teaching techniques, self-reliance and self-evaluation of their teaching skills;
3. to enable participants to learn from each other in the improvement of their teaching skills;
4. as a way of relating to the individual, the elements of a course that is necessarily designed with the "typical" entrant in mind;
5. to bring the various elements of the course together in the context of a lesson in a 'real' teaching context.

#### (B) The View from China

It would seem that many institutions in China hold a rather different view of what constitutes teacher training. Maley (1982) suggested that:

Most Chinese host institutions take this [teacher training] to mean language improvement for their teachers. (Maley 1982:2)

This view has to some extent, in some places, been modified to accept the notion of a "training" element but ideas of what should actually constitute a teacher training course still seem (from my own limited experience and from discussion with others involved in teacher training in China) to differ fairly sharply from those generally held in the West.

As mentioned above, a sizeable element of language improvement is seen as essential - a notion that one may agree with, given that the participants are non-native speakers with little (or no) exposure to native-speakers and native-speaker teaching materials, and given that the teachers should be providing as good models of the target language as possible. This should not, however, be seen in terms of the oft-implied axiom - "knowing" more English = teaching English better.

Although the situation is changing, most novice teachers still leave university as language graduates and immediately begin teaching with little or no initial pre-service teacher training; and may never actually do any in-service training. For those who do enter courses

designed as teacher training courses and (more importantly) those who are involved in the setting-up and running of such courses, the aim often seems to be seen only in terms of promotion and advancement. This seems to be due in part to the present teaching situation and the limited number of such courses available; but also to the nature of some of courses which, instead of being short practical teacher training courses (such as the RSA four-week certificate course), would offer a grounding in the basic elements that constitute modern teaching of ESL, are offered at universities as quasi-MA type courses of one year (or more) in length with emphasis tending more towards Applied Linguistics than the practicalities to be met in the Chinese classroom.

Due presumably to the influence of traditional views of the nature of learning, the learning of theory tends to be seen as the goal of these courses with the lecturer providing a "font of knowledge" upon which the participants depend - in direct contrast to the emphasis in the West on self-reliance and the individual development of the participants' own particular styles suitable to their own circumstances and personalities. This attitude can place very great restrictions on the development of the individual as a teacher since

a teacher can only teach what he is - he teaches himself  
(Brumfit 1982:52)

and therefore the subject matter is meaningful only in relation to the particular individual, not generally applicable to all teachers in all teaching situations.

Symptomatic of this attitude is the lack of importance attached to teaching practice - where some of the views and notions put forward by the lecturers can be examined, tried out, and then either accepted or rejected by the individual participants.

The overall situation can perhaps best be summarised in Diagram 1 overleaf:

T/T in CHINA

T/T in the West

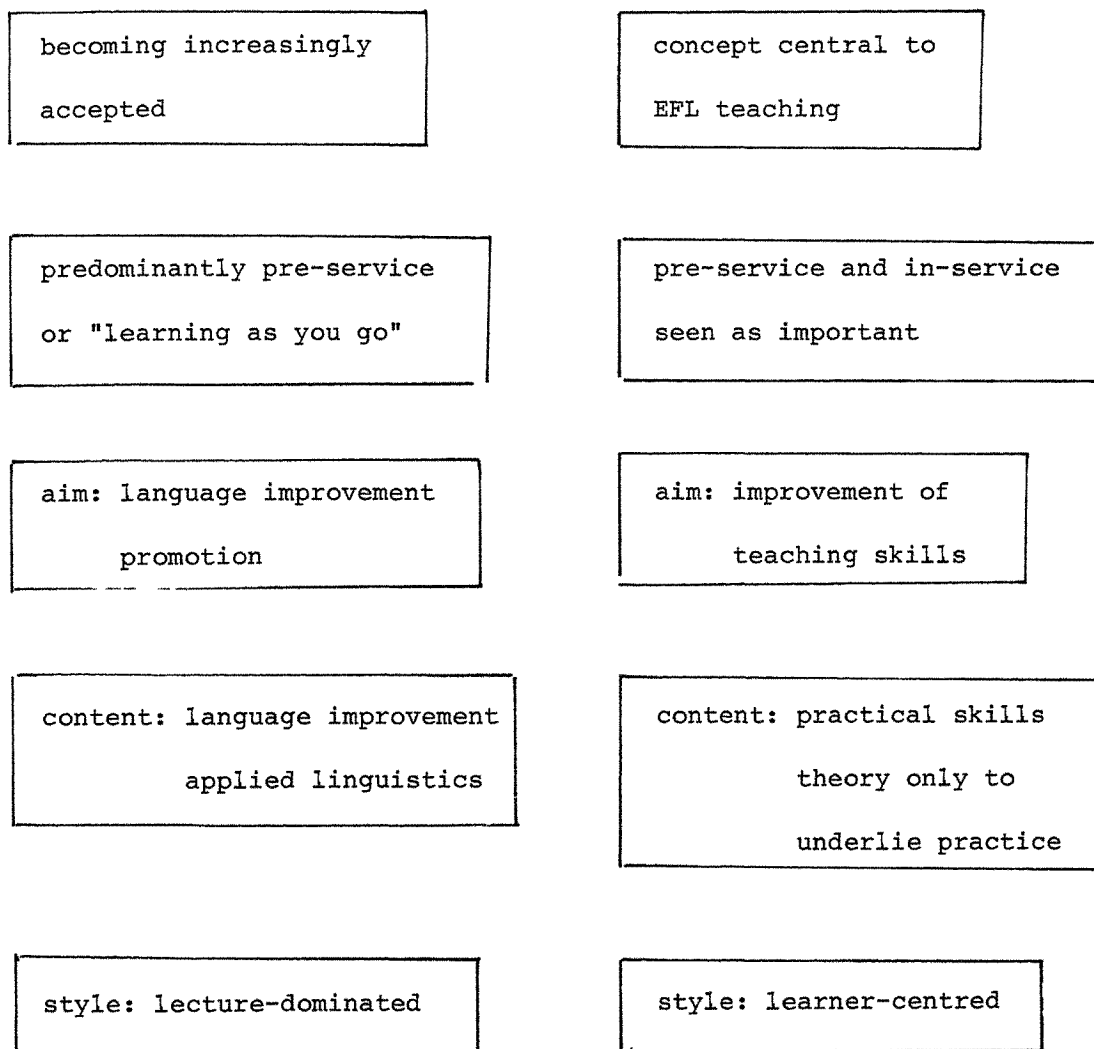


Diagram 1. Teacher Training in China and the West

The application of Western EFL methodology, the need for flexibility, and the importance of teaching practice

The resistance to the teaching practice element of a course would seem to reflect one of two attitudes (both widely-held by foreign and Chinese EFL teachers) that form two extremes of the pedagogical spectrum as regards the applicability of modern Western teaching methodology to the teaching of EFL in China. The first is that anything in the form of Western EFL methodological thinking is the "correct" way to teach English; the second is the reverse - that "China is different", and so, although it may be a good idea, it will not work here.

Both of these are too narrow, particularly in their monolithic view of China which ignores the different teaching situations that exist in the different regions and provinces - an approach that works well in one place will not necessarily do so in another, for a variety of possible reasons (for example, large numbers of students per class or lack of basic hardware such as cassette players). On the one hand, there is need for flexibility, a willingness to examine new ideas, discuss them and experiment; on the other, the examination of such ideas should be a critical one that does not merely accept something because it is "in vogue" - it may well not be suitable for the particular teaching situation the course is designed for.

At Tsing Hua University teaching practice, together with 'micro-teaching' where course participants practise basic teaching skills with a class of peers and then discuss any points arising from the lesson, is seen as a central element of the course. Unfortunately, because of administrative difficulties it lasts only two weeks and allows each participant to teach only three hours in total (normally to the same class of approximately forty undergraduate non-English majors). Initial trepidation from the participants, the usual class teachers, the administration and the teacher-trainers, has given way to a general feeling of qualified satisfaction despite the feeling that we should be aiming towards the minimum ten hours as suggested by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA 1980:11).

Experience at Tsing Hua University points to the importance of some type of teaching practice at all stages of a teacher training course as a way to critically examine the applicability of approaches and techniques developed in the West to the Chinese situations. For example, at the beginning of our course when the topic of pairwork was introduced, I was advised by a number of teachers (both Chinese and foreign) that it was "unsuited to China". However, after peer and class teaching practice it became evident that, far from being unsuited, it can actually provide a partial answer to such problems as the large number of students (up to 127!) some of our participants have in their classes, or reticent students who are reluctant to contribute in front of the whole class.

Despite the widely varying teaching situations throughout China, which therefore necessitate a flexible approach to the design of teacher training programmes, the one component that would seem to be invaluable is teaching practice in one form or other. It should be perhaps run in conjunction with an "English for Teaching Purposes" (Blundell 1977) element, dealing with the English used by the teacher in the classroom - which is an aspect of teaching English that worries a great many non-native speaker teachers.

On many courses there has been some initial resistance to both the notion of teaching methodology, and also to the introduction of an element of practical application (particularly by experienced teachers) - this, however, is to be expected since many of the ideas fly in the face of long-established teaching practices. Despite this, it is our experience that once this initial resistance has been overcome (which requires sensitivity to the worries of teachers who see teaching practice as an intrusion into the teacher's private domain), there is wide acceptance of the value of the practical component of the course.

#### A conclusion

What everyone involved in teacher training in China has learnt, is that while foreign experts bearing the gift of new EFL methodology from the West are not the whole answer to the widening of the horizons of EFL teaching in China, modern EFL teaching approaches and techniques can be of value if applied judiciously within the existing teaching contexts.

What I would question is the value of teacher training courses that focus on the theoretical rather than the practical (if their aim is the improvement of the teaching of EFL). A teacher training course which does not offer the participants a chance to try out ideas while they are fresh in their minds without the pressure of everyday teaching, or provide an opportunity to evaluate (jointly with peers/lecturer) new and "traditional" techniques to see how they can complement each other, would seem to be little more than a language improvement or Applied Linguistics course - with little value for the practising teacher of EFL.

There is perhaps one sensitive question that we should be asking ourselves: are these teacher training courses to be used primarily to improve the standard of EFL teaching in China, to provide an opportunity for individual advancement (not that this is necessarily a bad thing per se), or even as a form of present-day EFL colonialism with foreign experts as the pioneers, to be followed by the army of publishers and other business interests that see China as a vast market of untapped potential?

My own feeling is that what is needed are teacher training courses tailored to local conditions and requirements, but clearly aimed at the improvement of EFL teaching throughout particular institutes. This would hopefully have more of an impact than the creation of an "elite" who tend to keep their newly acquired knowledge to themselves rather than disseminate it to their peers. The emphasis of such courses should be clearly practical, introducing techniques that can be tried out by the participants in teaching practice or micro-teaching slots so that they can evaluate them in terms of their own particular teaching situation.

#### NOTE

1. As reflected in the contents of recent books on language teaching such as Harmer J. (1983) or Mathews A., Spratt M., & Dangerfield L. (eds.) (1985).

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### Introduction

The relative clause is one of the most familiar types of subordinate clause. Most languages where modifiers within noun phrases follow the head have relative clauses, and even languages like Chinese and Japanese, where modifiers precede the head, have constructions which are comparable in some ways. For instance, Japanese has forms such as hon o okutta hito, 'the man to whom I (etc) sent the book', or, more literally, '[book + object postposition + (I, etc) sent] + man'. We discuss here the more important features of the standard English relative clause and the errors most commonly made by Hong Kong students in using the construction.

### Relative Clauses

In English, relative clauses contrast somewhat with most other types of subordinate clause, in that they do not function in nominal roles such as subject or object, nor, with rare exceptions (so-called sentential relative clauses), as adverbials. They are, rather, almost always found as post-modifiers in noun phrases.

The head of the noun phrase containing the relative clause is described as the antecedent; thus, in 1) below, girl is the antecedent and who was expelled from the school is the relative clause itself. The key item who is the relative pronoun. This is co-referential with (refers to the same thing as) the clause's antecedent. Normally, the pronoun appears in initial position in the relative clause (it is fronted).

- 1) This is the girl who was expelled from the school.

Relative pronouns are, of course, typically nominal (though note where, when, whereby, etc) They may appear in any nominal syntactic function within their clause (subject, object, complement or prepositional complementive within a prepositional phrase in adverbial function, etc; see later). The special possessive form whose is usually a determiner. The function of a relative pronoun is totally independent of the function, in the superordinate clause, of the entire noun phrase of which the antecedent is head. In 1) the noun phrase as a whole (head on girl) is the subject complement of the main clause (following the verb is), but the relative pronoun is subject of its own clause. The frequent failure of the two adjacent noun phrase heads (here, girl, and who) to 'match' in respect of syntactic function often disconcerts beginners in syntactic analysis.

Another common problem in analysis involves the tendency to identify the antecedent as part of the relative clause (often as its subject). Thus girl in 1) may be identified as the subject of the relative clause. This is quite wrong; the relative clause begins after the antecedent and its subject must be found within it. A so-called reduced relative clause (see below) is always subjectless; here there is even more temptation to identify the antecedent as the (missing) clause subject.

A further interesting feature of English relative clauses is that all normal relative clauses are finite. Most other types of subordinate clause have both finite and non-finite sub-types. Non-finite clauses derived from relative clauses may be described as 'reduced relative clauses'; but these do not include relative pronouns and in general have little surface structure resemblance to genuine relative clauses (more generally, indeed, non-finite subordinate clauses do not resemble their finite counterparts very closely). For instance, 2) below may be derived from 1), and the non-finite clause expelled from the school may thus be described as a 'reduced relative clause'.

2) This is the girl expelled from the school.

In teaching, the only real justification for treating these non-finite structures as associated with relative clauses relates to the common Hong Kong tendency to produce non-standard structures such as 3); this error can most easily be explained if one assumes that 2) is derived from 1) by a legitimate process, and that 3) is likewise derived from 1), but by an unacceptable variant on this process (see below).

3) \*This is the girl who expelled from the school.

#### Restrictive v. Non-restrictive

English, along with many other languages, distinguishes two kinds of relative clause. Clauses of the first kind are described as restrictive. In these cases the clause itself includes the information focus. Furthermore, and more crucially, the clause typically delimits or defines the precise reference of the antecedent. The antecedent is, in fact, taken to be insufficiently defined without the relative clause, which is included for this reason (hence the alternative name 'defining'). Clauses of the second kind are described as non-restrictive (or 'non-defining'); here the focus falls on the antecedent nominal itself, and it is assumed that listeners or readers can already identify the person or thing referred to by this nominal. The clause itself serves merely to provide some additional information about this entity. The classic cases of non-restrictive relative clauses follow proper names, which are automatically assumed, in normal circumstances, to be adequately defined already. However, it is also perfectly possible for non-restrictive relative clauses to follow definite descriptions (the girl, who...) or indefinite expressions (a girl, who... (= 'a certain girl, who...')).

The two semantic characteristics just mentioned, focus and degree of definedness/identifiability, usually, but perhaps not quite always, yield the same result as far as clause-type is concerned - the semantic aspects of the distinction will therefore be treated as one phenomenon in what follows.

In standard English the restrictive/non-restrictive distinction is maintained formally in two quite separate ways - one phonological and the other grammatical. The former, the more consistent way, involves the use of pauses before non-restrictive relative clauses, and, if there is any more material to follow, after them also; and, more importantly, the initiation of new tone-groups on their opening syllables and on the opening syllables of any following material. These features are absent

in the case of restrictive relative clauses. In writing, the discontinuities appear as commas, again absent where the clause is restrictive in function. This phonological contrast is also maintained in the cases of other kinds of post-modifier, and as far as clear-cut cases are concerned it occurs with a very high degree of regularity indeed in standard native-speaker usage. Almost all exceptions are marginal either semantically or in respect of other aspects of their form, or in both ways.

To illustrate:

- 4) My sister, whose name is Ann, lives in London.
- 5) The girl whose name is Ann lives in London.

In terms of both focus and identifiability-of-antecedent, the clause in 4), where there are commas, pauses, etc, is non-restrictive; in 5) it lacks these features, and is restrictive. 'My sister' is identified without the relative clause in 4), but in 5) the clause is needed to identify which girl is in question.

The second, grammatical way of maintaining the distinction, is less consistent, and is of more interest to us here. We must distinguish here between the two types of relative marker used in English - noting that it is also possible, in some constructions, to dispense with a relative marker altogether ('zero relative').

#### 'That' and the 'Wh-' Relatives

The two types of relative marker in (standard) English are: the 'genuine' relative pronouns, known as the wh-relatives (who, whom, which, whose, etc); and the relative 'complementiser' that, which resembles a pronoun in some ways but not in others. The wh-relatives represent a more recent development than that, and possess the clear advantage of being marked for animacy (who(m) refers to human beings (and perhaps occasionally to pets, etc), which to animals or inanimate things); and to some extent for case/function (who is basically a 'nominative'/subject form, though it has other roles too (see below), whose is 'possessive', and whom is 'oblique' (other roles)).

In non-restrictive relative clauses, only the wh-relatives appear; in restrictive clauses, these may still appear, but so too may the complementiser that, though not in all syntactic roles. In a still more limited range of syntactic roles, and again only in restrictive clauses, there may be no relative item (zero relative occurs). With only marginal exceptions (see Newbrook MS) that (and zero) do not appear at all in standard English non-restrictive relative clauses.

- 6) The man who(m) I saw has just arrived. (whom more formal)
- 7) The man that I saw has just arrived.
- 8) The man, who(m) I had already greeted, sat down.
- 9) \*The man, that I had already greeted, sat down.

6) and 7) are of course restrictive, 8) and 9) non-restrictive. Naturally, 9) would also be non-standard if no relative item were present; 7) would be standard in these circumstances (see below).

It must be noted that in many native-speaker dialects (including the present writer's informal speech) this constraint does not hold; that appears freely in non-restrictive clauses, as in 9) here. This usage is quite widespread geographically and is found in the speech of highly educated individuals.

This sort of distinction is not routinely signalled in languages like Chinese, Japanese and Malay - acquiring it is therefore somewhat difficult for learners of English with first-language backgrounds of this nature. They have to learn not only the somewhat complex formal patterning which English displays, but in addition the semantic/pragmatic significance of the distinction itself. Not surprisingly, errors are frequent (see below).

#### Other features of the English relative clause

Other features of the distributions of the relative items include the following:

- a) that and zero cannot be marked for genitive case.  
10) \*This is the man that's book I borrowed.  
11) \*This is the man -'s book I borrowed.
- b) Zero cannot appear as the subject of the relative clause; this is because all relative clauses are finite and must have an overt subject.  
12) \*The man arrived yesterday wants to see you.  
13) \*This is the man arrived yesterday.  
14) \*This is the book arrived yesterday.

Sentences like these, especially the latter two, do of course occur in non-standard native-speaker varieties. Indeed, forms such as 13) and 14) were apparently at one time deemed standard, and Quirk et. al. (1971:954, 959) record this usage after existential subjects such as it and there. The usage is also common in Hong Kong (see below). In contemporary English, however, it appears to be at best marginal in respect of standardness, even with existential subjects; and definitely non-standard in cases such as 12).

- c) If the relative is a prepositional completive, two patterns occur. The preposition may itself be fronted, along with the relative pronoun, and thus may be the first word in the relative clause; or it may be stranded at the end of the clause, separated from its completive (the relative pronoun) by the rest of the clause. The patterning of some relative items is affected by the decision to front or strand the preposition.
- d) that and zero cannot appear after a fronted preposition as prepositional completive, though they can, of course, appear as prepositional completive if the preposition is stranded.

- 15) \*This is the man to that I wrote.
- 16) \*This is the man to I wrote.
- 17) This is the man that I wrote to.
- 18) This is the man I wrote to.
- e) These restrictions do not apply to wh-relatives, which may appear in any syntactic role, and may also appear, in general, as prepositional completives with the preposition in either position. Note that that, although not a wh-relative, is not subject to restriction b).
- 19) This is the man whose book I borrowed. (compare a))
- 20) This is the man that arrived yesterday. (compare b))
- 21) This is the man who arrived yesterday. (compare b))
- 22) This is the book that arrived yesterday. (compare b))
- 23) This is the book which arrived yesterday. (compare b))
- 24) This is the man to whom I wrote.
- 25) This is the man whom I wrote to. (compare d))
- 26) This is the man who I wrote to. (compare d); see f) and g) below)
- 27) This is the book to which I referred.
- 28) This is the book which I referred to. (compare d))
- f) By a special exception, who (like that and zero) does not appear after fronted prepositions.
- 29) \*This is the man to who I wrote.
- g) whom, of course, is only used as object or prepositional completeive - never as subject or complement. Nowadays, use of whom is marked as rather formal where who is possible; where who is not possible (see f)) the whole construction is marked as formal. who appears in all four nominal functions (but see f)); in the two functions in which whom is also possible, who (or that, if possible) is marked as relatively informal.
- 30) This is the man whom I met. (formal)
- 31) This is the man to whom I wrote. (etc) (formal)
- 32) \*This is the man whom saw it.
- 33) This is the man who I met. (informal)
- 34) This is the man who I wrote to. (informal)

35) This is the man who saw it.

This creates problems only where the relevant clause is deeply embedded.

36) This is the man whom I think you saw.

37) \*This is the man whom I think has the file.

38) This is the man who I think has the file.

In 37), whom is unacceptable because the relative pronoun is the subject of the relevant clause (who... has the file); I think is parenthetical or superordinate. In 36) whom is standard (object of you saw...).

The sentence-types defined here as non-standard are for the most part extremely rare amongst native speakers, even in non-standard dialects. The main exceptions are sentences such as 9); cases like 13) and 14); and rare cases such as 37), where even highly educated native speakers sometimes seem to have problems selecting the appropriate form.

It should be noted that what, often wrongly analysed by students as a relative pronoun, is never a relative pronoun in standard English.

39) \*This is the book what I bought.

#### Common Relative Clause errors in Hong Kong

Having described the important features of standard English relative clauses, we turn here to a survey of the most common errors made by Hong Kong students in using the construction.

##### a) Omission of subject relative

This is the most common error made by Hong Kong students in using the relative clause. The rule requiring that no relative pronoun which is subject of its own clause can be omitted (see 5:b) is unfamiliar to some students, or is ignored by them. Perhaps the source of this error is over-extension of the more generally applicable rule permitting use of a zero relative in other syntactic functions (such as object).

As noted above, this usage occurs in native-speaker usage, in some areas to a high educational level. For instance, it is a feature of the present writer's informal speech. However, it is not (apparently) considered standard nowadays in any English-speaking community, and therefore can be considered an error when it occurs in Hong Kong usage.

As might be expected, the most favoured environment for this error is that in which the noun phrase containing the clause is subject complement after the verb BE, or, better still, extraposed subject after existential there or it and the verb BE. This is also the case in those non-standard native speaker dialects where the usage occurs - in most other environments, the usage would often create difficulties in understanding the sentences in question. Compare 40), a classic Hong Kong case, with 13) and 14) above.

- 40) \*There were two writers discussed this. (existential there)

A case where the noun phrase is subject complement rather than extraposed subject is provided by 41):

- 41) \*They were the students wrote this.

One might anticipate that this error would be eliminated relatively easily once the notion of a relative clause had been made clear to students. However, it is in fact a rather persistent error even in the usage of languages students at tertiary level. It may be that the error is so common locally that most students would almost automatically produce it on first writing the sentences; and would then fail to notice it in proof-reading, perhaps because the clause as written does not resemble a relative clause (or because, as in the case of the error reported under b) below, they simply do not appreciate that the origin of a relative or 'reduced relative' clause is a full relative clause with a relative pronoun). On the other hand, some students have clearly never been taught the rule that a subject relative, unlike other relatives, can never be omitted.

- b) Omission of an auxiliary verb BE after a subject relative pronoun

This is also a very common error. It relates to the process by which a 'reduced relative' clause is derived from a full relative clause, as exemplified in 1) and 2) above. The error arises in cases where, as in 1) and 2), the relative pronoun is the subject of its clause, and where the verb of the clause, which most often immediately follows this pronoun, contains at least one auxiliary BE in addition to the main verb; this auxiliary BE may be either 'progressive' BE as in 42), or passive BE as in 43); if both occur, the former precedes as in 44):

- 42) This is the committee which is dealing with this case.

- 43) This is the committee which is entrusted with such cases.

- 44) This is the committee which is being entrusted with this case.

If any such clause is to be 'reduced' to a non-finite clause, after the manner of 1) and 2), it is obvious that the following items must be deleted: a) the relative pronoun itself; b) the finite element of the verb phrase (i.e., the first verb form in the verb phrase, the first or only auxiliary). These two processes of deletion together render the clause non-finite. They may, in fact, be seen as a unitary process of deletion ('whiz-deletion'). It is not possible to delete only one of these two items; either both must remain, in which cases we have a full relative clause, or both must be deleted, to produce reduced relative clauses as in 45), 46) and 47):

- 45) This is the committee dealing with this case.

- 46) This is the committee entrusted with such cases.

- 47) This is the committee being entrusted with this case.

If only the relative pronoun is deleted, we have error a) above, since the verb phrase will remain finite and the relative clause will then lack a subject (this would be rare here). The alternative error, which is relevant here, consists in deleting only the first or only auxiliary. This yields a structure like 3), a blend of a full and a 'reduced' relative clause, with a relative pronoun and a non-finite verb:

- 48) \*This is the committee which dealing with this case.
- 49) \*This is the committee which entrusted with such cases.
- 50) \*This is the committee which being entrusted with this case.

Once again, it seems that some students fail to recognise that clauses such as 45)-47) (and maybe even cases like 48)-50)) derive from full relative clauses such as 42)-44). They therefore have little or no chance of spotting these errors in proof-reading. The error certainly persists to a high educational level, and remains common after frequent explicit correction.

The error may sometimes arise where the auxiliary is not BE but perfective HAVE; this, however, is apparently rare.

We should note here that although the main effect of this error involves relative clauses the motivation behind it may well have little or nothing to do with the construction as such. It has been suggested that what is involved may be simply the omission of certain auxiliaries, and especially of finite auxiliaries, in the construction of verb phrases, owing to confusion about how English verbs are constructed; and that this can apply regardless of the wider syntactic environment. This may be in part true; but two arguments suggest that at the very least the relative clause provides a particularly 'favourable' environment for this error. Firstly, many students who seldom or never omit auxiliaries in simpler constructions frequently omit them in relative clauses; students who would never write \*they dealing with this matter produce sentences like 48)-50). The pattern discussed here may thus constitute a separate error; or perhaps the relative clause is an implicationally preferred environment for the more general error. Secondly, the phenomenon can also arise even where the verb is not an auxiliary at all but rather a main-verb BE, as in \*the envelope which large enough/which on the door (this is rarer but does occur). Thus, if the ultimate problem does not involve the relative clause construction itself, it must relate to clause structure generally, including the use of finite verbs, rather than solely to problems with the internal structure of complex verb phrases. Whatever the origin of this error, it is clear enough that its effects in respect of relative clause usage are serious.

c) Confusion between restrictive and non-restrictive relatives

This error involves failure to grasp the formal distinctions between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. As noted, Cantonese, the first language of almost all Hong Kong students, does not systematically encode the semantic distinction in any way, and



many students may not appreciate that this distinction is important, and, indeed, normally obligatory in English. Students often fail to understand why the distinction is presented as salient in descriptions of English; the English which they have learned locally makes no contrast at all here, the matter being decided on an ad hoc basis and determined from context or cotext. One factor which seriously inhibits the learning of this distinction is the difficulty which most Hong Kong students have with English intonation and rhythm. In many cases, students use minimal or misleading intonation contours and/or syllable-timing, under the influence of Cantonese, or as a result of being taught English by Chinese speakers and not obtaining enough exposure to native English speech. These speech habits obscure the phonological distinctions between the two kinds of clause almost completely; this also affects other types of modifier where the distinction is relevant. As a result of all this, the grammatical distinctions (the pronoun selection constraints), rather than re-inforcing the phonological distinctions, are: a) perceived as confusing; b) mistakenly attributed to other constraints or principles; or c) missed (the variation is perceived as haphazard). In the absence of systematic phonological differentiation, the use of commas (a general problem area in Hong Kong student writing) is not understood, and students' own use of commas in this sort of construction is frequently either erratic or systematically non-standard (in various ways). This is (perhaps unfortunately) also the case with many native speakers, and it is thus difficult to locate good models of standard usage (though this might appear not to be so necessary in any case if the (erstwhile) standard pattern is increasingly being disregarded in this way).

These problems are common to Hong Kong and several other Asian cities where English is current. They are salient in Singapore, and the usage which results is discussed at length in Newbrook et al. 1987. Interestingly, the first two errors discussed above (a) and (b)) do not seem to occur much in Singapore.

The most common error which results from these problems in Hong Kong is the use of that in what is obviously intended as a non-restrictive relative clause, as in 51):

- 51) \*Chomsky's book, that started the revolution, appeared in 1957.

Clearly the relative clause is intended here to be non-restrictive; it does not identify the work in question, but merely gives extra information about a work which is already identified. The punctuation is also that typical of a non-restrictive relative clause (commas are present). However, non-standard that has been used in place of which. There is no corresponding error involving use of the wh-relatives, since relatives of either kind may occur in restrictive relative clauses (see above).

A second type of error involves the use of commas around a clause which is clearly restrictive in meaning. 52) is an example:

- 52) \*The book, that gives this definition, appeared in 1980.

The relative clause here is clearly intended as restrictive; here, the clause does identify the work in question, which would be left

unspecified without it. Furthermore, that is present. However, commas are included, suggesting a non-restrictive interpretation. A more insidious form of the same error involves the use of commas with a wh-relative, despite (intended) restrictive meaning. In such a case, the sentence itself may be wholly standard (depending on the type of antecedent used), but a native speaker will interpret it with the wrong meaning (non-restrictive).

- 53) (\*)The work, which started the revolution, appeared in 1957.

The writer intends that the relative clause be perceived as identifying the work in question; the impression actually given is that this work is already identified, and that the clause encodes only additional information. The reader will thus be misled. If, on the other hand, the context/cotext does not permit the latter interpretation, the reader may well be confused.

A third type of error involves the reverse of this second type - failure to use commas with an obviously non-restrictive relative clause.

- 54) \*Hong Kong which is still a British colony is free.

Since the antecedent is a proper name, the clause is clearly non-restrictive in meaning. The absence of commas renders the sentence grossly non-standard and potentially confusing. An even grosser error occurs if that is used here:

- 55) \*Hong Kong that is still a British colony is free.

This last, extreme sub-type of error is relatively rare.

A fourth type of error involves the use of only one comma rather than two. This may be compounded with an error of the second type, or may arise in a case where two commas would have been appropriate. The commas omitted is usually the first one; this is a common Hong Kong pattern:

- 56) \*The people who are concerned about this, are worried.

If the relative clause is intended to have restrictive meaning, the normal standard form will have no comma. At one time forms like 56) were themselves considered standard with this meaning, and they are common in native speaker writing. Indeed, the usage is still deemed standard by many authorities (not all) if the clause is very long; but not in cases like 56). If the clause is intended to have non-restrictive meaning, the standard form will have a comma after the antecedent (people) as well as one after this. The errors with which we have been dealing here sometimes arise because students know that the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses exists, but are not sure of how to formulate sentences so as to encode it; and/or are not sure of just when each type of clause will be semantically appropriate. The result, unfortunately, is both non-standard and potentially ambiguous. A decision must be made between two commas and none (with the possibility of using that in the latter case only).

A rarer error involves the omission of the second comma:

- 57) \*The students, who have finished their work may leave.

This is highly non-standard, and, indeed, reads much more strangely than 56) to native speakers; like 56), it is again also ambiguous, having both restrictive and non-restrictive interpretations.

Students who find it impossible to learn the semantic basis of this distinction, or the details of the formal patterning associated with it, may still minimise their frequency of error - by avoiding the use of relative that altogether. This will not prevent them from making punctuation errors, but it will guarantee that the pronoun they select is acceptable, even when they themselves are not sure of which type of relative clause they mean to use. The wh-relatives occur freely in both types of relative clause.

d) Delayed relative clause

The relative clause normally follows its antecedent very closely indeed - immediately, if possible. Sometimes a short phrasal postmodifier or a non-finite clause intrudes between the antecedent and the clause; but this postmodifier will not normally include a further noun phrase head, particularly in final position. This is because any such second noun phrase head, immediately preceding the relative clause, will be wrongly interpreted as the antecedent to the relative clause. Compare 58) and 59):

- 58) The students here who believe this are worried.  
59) The students assigned to foreign teachers who have problems with this are worried.

In 58) there are no difficulty; the intruding postmodifier is a short adverb phrase, which cannot be interpreted as an antecedent to the relative clause. In 59), however, the intruding postmodifier is the reduced relative clause assigned...teachers, which contains a fresh noun phrase head teachers; the latter will obviously be interpreted as the antecedent of the relative clause who believe this. If this is not intended, the sentence must be heavily re-formulated. Another example of this problem is provided by 60); cases of this particular kind are in fact common in native-speaker writing, but are obviously unclear and, understandably, are not considered good usage.

- 60) The economy of Hong Kong, which is a price-taker, has been affected by this.

If is not clear whether it is Hong Kong's economy or Hong Kong itself which is here being described as a price-taker. Some students believe that the use of the comma after Hong Kong, which signals the non-restrictive nature of the clause, disambiguates the reference of which in favour of the economy; but this is not the case. If this is what is intended, the noun phrase must be re-formulated as the Hong Kong economy or Hong Kong's economy. It is harder to disambiguate in favour of Hong Kong, but 60) will usually be interpreted in this latter way in any case.

In the same way, it is rare for another postmodifier to intrude between antecedent and relative clause if this post-modifier is itself a finite clause (where there is no co-ordination with and, etc.). If this is done, the student must again check that no other noun phrase head intervenes and could possibly be wrongly interpreted as the antecedent. The use of commas is not normally an adequate strategy for eliminating the possibility of such wrong interpretations.

A still more serious error involves the delaying of the relative clause until after the remainder of the sentence; this usually occurs when the noun phrase containing the relative clause is the subject of the sentence (and so occurs early in the sentence). If another noun phrase head (e.g., the head of any object or prepositional complement) occurs in the remainder of the sentence, particularly if it occurs immediately before the relative clause, delaying the relative clause until the end will again cause this second head to be wrongly interpreted as the antecedent of the relative clause. If no such noun phrase head occurs, the sentence will be non-standard and difficult to interpret. 61) exemplifies the former situation and 62) the latter.

- 61) (\*)The new office is in a better area, which is more comfortable.
- 62) \*The new office is now open, which is more comfortable.

In 61) the relative clause must modify area, not office; if the latter is intended the usage will be misunderstood. In 62) there is no suitable noun phrase head and the usage is non-standard and literally nonsensical.

e) Co-ordination of relative clause with postmodifier of another type

This error is perhaps somewhat out of place; it is merely an instance of a more general type of error involving faulty co-ordination of modifiers. It is not normally possible, at least in formal writing, to co-ordinate two postmodifiers of different syntactic types. This constraint excludes the co-ordination of postmodifying phrases or clauses of two or more distinct types, and, more crucially, the co-ordination of phrases and clauses together, postmodifying the same antecedent. It is possible to co-ordinate postmodifiers only if they are of the same syntactic type. Even this is not always possible; the types of meaning and other factors of this kind also help to determine relative standardness. If it is necessary to postmodify a noun phrase head with items of two or more types, co-ordinations may not be used to link these items:

- 63) \*I saw a house there, and which I wanted to buy.
- 64) \*I saw a house built of local stone, and which I wanted to buy.
- 65) \*There was a story that she failed the exam, and which I heard yesterday.

All three sentences can be rendered standard by omitting the co-ordination and:

- 66) I saw a house there, which I wanted to buy.  
(etc).

Note that the presence or absence of commas here does not affect the status of these sentences; without commas, 63)-65) would still be non-standard, and 66) still standard. It must be pointed out that this non-standardism is also fairly common in native-speaker writing, particularly that of people relatively unfamiliar with formal written English.

f) Use of 'shadow' pronouns in relative clauses

The relative pronoun is a noun phrase - a point often missed in analysis by students. It is subject, object, complement or prepositional completive in its own clause. This means that, in each relative clause, one of these various nominal syntactic functions, which would otherwise be fulfilled by a more 'normal' noun phrase, or a personal pronoun etc, is occupied by the relative pronoun - no other noun phrase is required to fulfill that function. This is not always clear to students, particularly where the syntactic function of the relative pronoun is not subject, and where the pronoun, fronted as it is, is thus in an unfamiliarly early position in the clause. Compare 67) and 68):

- 67) This is the book which discusses this.  
68) This is the book which I bought yesterday.

In 67) the relative pronoun which is fairly clearly the subject of its clause; one expects the subject to precede the verb. In 68), however, it is not so obvious that the pronoun is the object of the clause; it is in an unfamiliar position (for an object), preceding the verb.

Students who fail to appreciate this kind of point sometimes introduce (or retain) in the clause a redundant personal pronoun which they intend to function as object, complement or prepositional completive in the relative clause; they do not realise that the function in question has already been fulfilled by the relative pronoun. The resulting usage is perceived as markedly redundant and is highly non-standard:

- 69) \*This is the book which I bought it yesterday.

g) Use of 'which', 'that' or 'where' for 'preposition + which'

This is a fairly common error in Hong Kong student writing. Like the previous error, it may result from the failure of some students to realise that the relative pronoun is a noun phrase, which must have a clear reference and which must be marked for syntactic function; it is not a subordinating conjunction with the rather vague function of introducing a subordinate clause loosely linked

with what precedes. It is especially easy to make this mistake in respect of that, which, as a 'complementiser', is less pronoun-like than the wh-relatives (see above). that is also a homonym of the genuine subordinator that, used to introduce nominal and appositive that-clauses. In fact, some of the errors which may fall under this present heading can alternatively be viewed as involving an excessively wide interpretation of the range of uses of this subordinator that, rather than as non-standard use of the relative complementiser that.

The typical manifestation of this error is the use of which (or that) where the standard form of the construction would require a prepositional phrase consisting of a preposition (fronted or stranded; see above) plus which (etc). In these cases, the relationship between the relative item and the rest of its clause is sufficiently complex, (or of such a nature, more generally) that it must be expressed in this way. Hong Kong students often fail to realise that this complex relationship exists or to appreciate that it must be signalled in English. The strategy adopted is thus one of using a plain relative. Motivation for this may be found in first-language interference; a heavily modifier-head language like Cantonese (or Japanese) typically leaves implicit the exact relationship of the relative-equivalent (or the antecedent itself) with the rest of its clause.

- 70) \*This is the course which the contents you know. (= 'the contents of which', 'about whose contents')
- 71) \*There was a serious accident that several people were hurt. (= 'in which'; or is this an attempt to over-extend the use of appositive that-clauses to nouns such as accident, which are not in fact members of the group of 'content' nouns such as story which can take appositive that-clauses?)
- 72) \*There are many other terms that there is no corresponding term in Chinese. (= 'to/for which')

It may be of some interest here that in Singapore/Malaysia this usage is rare; in these countries the preferred form in such cases, or in cases of simple doubt as to the appropriate form, is whereby, which, although often non-standard in particular cases, does at least stand some chance of being standard (it is appropriate where the complex meaning involved is 'by means of which'). On Singaporean usage, see Newbrook et al. 1987.

Another form of this error involves the use of where for in which where the meaning of in which is abstract rather than concrete (positional). Compare 73)-76) below:

- 73) This is the district in which I live.
- 74) This is the district where I live.
- 75) This is a theory in which transformations are used.
- 76) \*This is a theory where transformations are used.

Forms such as 76) are common in student writing. The Singaporean version would again involve whereby.

These seem to be the most important 'Hong Kong errors' associated with the relative clause and with relative pronouns. It is interesting that, as noted above, by no means all of them are equally common in places like Singapore, where the population is also largely ethnic Chinese (and where Chinese 'dialects' are also current). Some features are shared, of course; on the other hand, certain patterns of relative clause structure which are typical of Singaporean English do not seem to occur in Hong Kong, notably the Singaporean preference for hyper-formal whom (in environments other than that in which only the form whom is standard, q.v.); this latter is quite noticeable and extends to environments where use of whom is in fact hyper-correct and non-standard (in the exonormative English English standard; for the term English English (= 'the English of England'), see, e.g., Trudgill & Hannah, 1982). It may be that this usage - in a Singapore context it is contentious, at the least, to label it an 'error' - is much more common in Singapore than in Hong Kong because such patterns of divergence from exonormative standards are typical of more proficient speakers who produce hyper-formal or hyper-correct forms such as this in the course of trying (with some hope of success) to avoid real or imagined local non-standardisms of a more spontaneous kind. Although most Hong Kong users of English are rather concerned, at least professedly, with 'speaking/writing correctly', there are far more speakers of this kind, who have reached the stage where their usage features more hyper-corrections, etc than spontaneous errors, in Singapore than in Hong Kong (for rather obvious socio-linguistic reasons). Be that as it may, we will not dwell here on this point; for Singaporean phenomena, readers are referred to Newbrook et al. 1987, and for theoretical discussion see Newbrook ed. 1987 more generally.

It may, however, be worth concluding with the point that in both Singapore and Hong Kong many students not only produce various characteristic local features involving relative clauses and pronouns, but also adhere to mistaken beliefs about the standardness of other constructions of this kind. In particular, some usage which is in fact standard is widely believed to be 'incorrect'/non-standard. The best case of this involves the use of that. It is widely believed in both Singapore (see Newbrook et al. 1987) and Hong Kong that the use of that is 'incorrect'/non-standard if the antecedent refers to a human being. Thus 77) is rejected; (students 'correct' it in proof-reading exercises and react negatively to it in subjective judgement tests; many teachers, by their own account, instruct students not to use such forms).

77) This is the girl that I taught last year.

Note that the relative clause is clearly restrictive; there is no question of the rejection of that arising because the clause is perceived as non-restrictive by students or teachers who know about the constraint excluding that in such cases.

It must be noted that use of that is statistically less frequent where the antecedent refers to a human being (Quirk 1968); however, the usage is completely standard in English English. Some speakers of the American and Canadian standard varieties do reject the usage, and it is certainly rarer in North America; but the main relevant standard in Hong Kong is surely that of England, and this is certainly the implicit (and in some respects the explicit) view of the local educational authorities.

Students who are informed that the usage is standard in England usually react, not with the rejoinder that they follow a different (American) standard, but with surprise and in some cases disbelief -their rejection of the form is associated with the belief that it is not standard (English) English. For the (largely similar) reactions of Singaporeans to such 'debriefing', see Newbrook & Henry 1987.

Another fairly common misconception along the same lines involves the belief that the verb tenses in a relative clause and in the superordinate clause which includes the antecedent noun phrase must be identical. This is, of course, part of a much wider pattern of misconstrual of the accurate statement that in English the main narrative tense does not change (without good reason) within a narrative; it is thus rather peripheral to our present interests, but bears mention. Sentences such as 78) may be rejected through this erroneous over-extension of the constraint.

78) These are the boys whom we saw last week.

It should, of course, be clear that there is ample justification for the tense-shift here; but the force of this constraint, over-extended as it often is in the minds of students, is evidently very considerable. One wonders how students who adhere to this view would express the relevant information.

This completes our survey of the patterning found in the standard English relative clause, and of the variant forms found in Hong Kong. We may hope that our survey will be found useful by teachers and students who are interested in the differences between the exonormative standard variety and the usage typical of local student speech and writing. Naturally, our account is far from complete; but we believe that the above are the points of greatest contemporary significance in this area.

The author would like to express thanks to Bill Crewe, Bill McNaughton and Keith Tong for comments on this paper.



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COMMUNICATIVE DYNAMISM IN EXPOSITORY ACADEMIC ENGLISH :  
SOME STRATEGIES IN TEACHING THE PRAGMATICS OF WRITING<sup>1</sup>

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Introduction

There has been a tendency when teaching writing, more than in teaching oral communication, to concentrate on the surface of discourse - on the mechanics of syntactic construction and, more recently, on the cohesive features of text. Even the identification of distinct rhetorical patterns was initially based on frequency counts of lexical and syntactic occurrences. At the same time, however, EL2-medium students are often being taught how to read for the writer's intention, and to identify his or her main and supporting ideas - altogether a higher level of discourse processing. Why is it that there should be such a gulf between teaching expectations in the two areas?

One obvious answer is that it is easier to receive ideas than to produce them - you cannot ask students of writing to run before they can walk! But I suggest that many students of writing are not even being taught properly how to walk; it is as if they were being asked to watch their feet, instead of looking ahead with purpose and a sense of direction, and learning to negotiate slopes and obstacles by either slowing or quickening their stride. This fanciful analogy is intended to imply that by focusing on the mechanics of writing at the expense of its purpose, context and accessibility, we are not:

- a) helping the student keep his overall communicative objectives and the needs of the reader in mind; or
- b) motivating him, by offering him meaningful & communicative writing tasks.

A revision of teaching materials requires a revised teaching approach; such a revision must entail a re-examination of how interlocutors negotiate written discourse before attempting any prescription of principles or practice.

The Negotiation of Discourse

How can we characterise the relationship between writer and reader, our negotiators at the discourse table? Both can be seen to be driven by a 'co-operative imperative', to borrow Widdowson's term (1983: 47). The writer's motive for co-operation can be seen as integrative, as he seeks to follow rhetorical conventions laid down within his particular speech 'community' (social, academic, etc.), while the reader's motive to co-operate can be seen as more instrumental: he has approached the text in search of the information the writer is offering. The relationship could be called transactional - indeed, Brown & Yule (1983) have characterised the kind of discourse we are concerned with, within academic discourse, as 'transactional' or message-oriented discourse, with its primary goal the 'efficient transference of information'.

Written discourse, then, can be just as interactive as spoken discourse, with the writer aware of the reader's need for the discourse to be optimally informative and accessible. It is in his writing that the student needs to display his grasp of the pragmatics of information transaction. Hoey (1983) suggests that the written monologue is a specialised form of dialogue between writer and reader, with the reader developing expectations of the text and hazarding 'guesses' about the coming content and its relationship to what has preceded. It is a persuasive argument that such a questioning strategy underpins the interpretation of discourse, clarifying both the purpose and relevance of the text as a whole, and the organisation of the text at every level. Before exploring the practical applications of this strategy, however, it is necessary to establish first how we conceive of the reader's interpretation, or processing, of discourse.

### The Processing Of Discourse

Few people are still persuaded that discourse is processed by being atomised according to a system of linguistic rules. There is growing acceptance of the psycholinguistic view that discourse is processed, i.e. interpreted and stored, as a pattern of cognitive structures which 'allow for the organisation of information in long-term memory' (Widdowson 1983: 34). Widdowson suggests the term 'schemata' to cover two distinct levels of information: 'frames of reference', for the propositional (semantic) content of discourse, and 'rhetorical routines', for its illocutionary (pragmatic) and procedural aspects.

How, then, does interpretation take place? To interpret incoming information, the reader formulates 'a set of expectations derived from previous experience, which are projected onto instances of actual language behaviour' (Widdowson 1983:35). These expectations can be usefully seen as generating sets of questions of varying degrees of generality and scope (Hoey 1983), falling into two main categories: anticipatory and reflective.

#### A. Anticipatory questions

- posed as the reader projects his expectations.  
Eg. in a text on the digestive system, in response to the statement: "The fats in the ileum are broken down by a substance called bile.", the reader is likely to ask "What about bile?", or "What else should I know about bile?"; he may even ask "Bile? What's that?". The type and precision of the question will be determined by the level of knowledge of the subject and of the rhetorical routine of anatomical & physiological description shared by writer and reader.

#### B. Reflective questions

- posed when the anticipatory question is answered with information that causes the reader difficulty in processing the discourse. If the above sentence were to be followed by "Rome is the capital of Italy.", the reader would be prompted to ask "Why this now?". The sentence is grammatically correct, but the proposition is totally irrelevant to the topic under discussion. This is an extreme example; it may be that the next sentence is quite relevant, but that the reader had not anticipated the information given, and has to pause to accommodate this new information into his schema of the digestive process.

I have, so far, concentrated on the reader; but it should not be over-looked that the writer, too, has to adapt the formulation of his schemata in his attempt to 'transfer' his information to the reader. The writer is aware of the fine line he must tread between being informative and yet leaving the text accessible to the reader, and it is the balance of these two communicative qualities - informativity & accessibility - of which native speakers of a language develop an intuitive command. Our problem with many language students is that, although they employ these communicative strategies intuitively in their own language, they have invariably had ingrained into them a writing strategy equivalent to "Watch your feet!" This preoccupation with what they might stand in (error!), rather than with the purpose, speed and direction (appropriacy) of their activity, can only retard their acquisition of target writing skills.

We turn our attention now to the discourse itself, to identifying the qualities that give a text 'good' information structure, and to suggesting how these can be communicated to the learner.

### Information Structure: Principles & Strategies

We should first establish what we mean by 'information structure'. Good information structure will reflect the efficient organisation of the propositional content of the discourse and its communication in an informative and accessible manner.

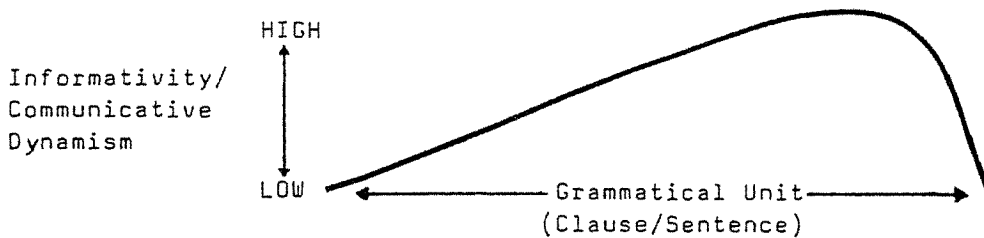
The most important rhetorical (structural) feature of English-language texts is the 'peaking' of informativity towards the end of each grammatical unit, whether clause or complex sentence. This patterning, throwing the new and important information to the end of the sentence, gives English discourse a kind of forward momentum - what Firbas (1971) describes as 'communicative dynamism' (henceforth CD). CD can be described as that quality, or aggregate of qualities, in a text which impels a reader through that text, and which 'pushes the communication forward' (Firbas 1971: 136).

A concern for optimal communicative dynamism can be seen as the fundamental principle governing rhetorical structure in an informative text - both at the interactive level and, in the recorded expression of that interaction, at the textual level. On the interactive level, maximising CD requires an effort by the writer to maintain the reader's interest by being brief, clear and relevant, and by judging how much the reader wants and needs to know - to paraphrase Grice's 'Co-operative Principle' (1975). At the textual level, CD is enhanced by the attribution of focal prominence to information within and above the level of the sentence, decided according to a number of criteria (not all of which can be dealt with in this paper):

- a) Givenness & Newness
- b) Logical & Temporal Sequence
- c) Informativity peaking at the end of a grammatical unit
- d) Left-to-right increase of propositional complexity in 'thematic' units (see Fig. 4)
- e) Attenuation of Reference (e.g. Lexical substitution)
- f) Parallellism: Matching syntactic patterns
- g) Ellipsis in cases of thematic redundancy (see Fig. 3)

It is not enough to illustrate these principles for the teacher's benefit; our aim must be to tailor them for assimilation by the learner. We need to explore effective ways of doing this, and as a step in this direction I propose a 'Wave' model, a device designed to give graphic reinforcement to the notions of focal prominence and communicative dynamism (see Fig. 1). The 'Wave' is based on the notion of a Given-New information cycle, where each successive item of new information provides a platform for the next new item; 'this sequence can be conceived as a series of overlapping 'waves' of information, with the crest of the wave marking the peak of focal prominence of information in a clause or sentence; just as a wave spends its force only once, so the newness of a piece of information is exhausted upon utterance'. (Bruce 1984).

Figure 1 : The Wave Model showing CD Distribution in Grammatical Units



We have now identified two different strategies, both analytical and, at the same time, heuristic (in the sense of 'helping to learn or understand'), which are intended to help students:

- a) identify features of communicative dynamism in texts, and also analyse texts - especially their own - for the presence or absence of these qualities; &
- b) apply these principles to their own writing.

When we speak of information structure, it should be clear that the structural realisation of a message cannot be considered separately from that message's rhetorical function or purpose. All the features of CD we have identified exist to make the discourse more accessible to the reader. In teaching these features, we are assuming a basic comprehension of, and ability to manipulate, grammatical structures. We are also assuming that this grammatical knowledge is not greatly helping the student to communicate in writing at the level of discourse - i.e. above the level of the sentence and at the level of the logical and informative transference of a message.

#### Teaching Information Structure

I propose to examine written discourse at three levels - clause, sentence (& 'thematic unit') and paragraph - to illustrate how 'peaking of informativity' can be effected and can enhance CD in information units of varying length and complexity. I shall explore the questioning strategy and 'Wave' device as means of teaching the concept of communicative dynamism and certain rhetorical principles governing information structure.

The concern here is with a specific type of discourse: academic scientific discourse, and our text samples are taken from materials used on 1st-year Pre-Medical English courses at Kuwait University. The 1st-year students are taught mainly descriptive writing, an area of discourse which Hoey (1983) suggests features two basic categories of notional relation: Matching and Logical Sequence. 'Matching' texts typically feature rhetorical functions like definition, comparison & contrast and exemplification, while 'Logical Sequence' texts feature functions like procedure, cause & effect and actions in sequence (non-procedural).

I have selected different rhetorical functions for each level of text, to show the importance of focal prominence to a text's communicative dynamism at different levels of organisation, and to offer practical examples for classroom exploitation:

- A. Clause & Compound Sentence - Experimental Procedure (Logical Sequence.)
- B. Complex Sentence (& 'Thematic Unit') - Definition (Matching)
- C. Paragraph - Classification/Comparison (Matching)

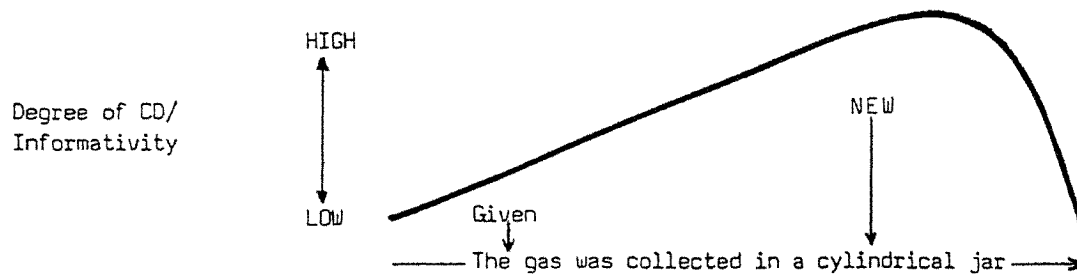
A. Clause & Compound Sentence (in Experimental Procedure)

Sample clause: "The gas was collected in a cylindrical jar."

Even in isolation, this clause can yield a considerable amount of information about its probable context and illocutionary force. A science student will immediately guess the rhetorical routine of experimental reporting, and this will ease our task in getting them to appreciate the relevance and utility of our analytical tools of questions and 'Wave' model.

If we apply our 'Wave' model to this clause, we can see that the informative, and therefore end-prominent, part of the sentence is either 'in a cylindrical jar' or 'was collected in a cylindrical jar' (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 The 'Wave' model applied to a simple sentence



'The gas', the topic of our sentence, is low in informativity - in Firbas' terms, it 'has low CD'. Since it is thematised, we can suppose that it is 'given' information and that it is, in Halliday's (1967) terms: "What is being talked about". What about the import of the rest of the sentence? If we now apply our strategy of turning monologue into dialogue, in search of the implicit question which prompted this utterance, we should end up with either:

- a) "What happened to the gas?"
- or b) "What was the gas collected in?"

In the absence of context or intonation to help disambiguate, we have to apply the 'informativity' test. For question b) to be appropriate, we would previously have had to be told about both the gas and its collection, so the writer would be flouting the co-operative and informativity principles by repeating so much of the discourse.

Having got the students thinking about information structure along these lines, we can give them a task that will require them to apply the principles they have learned. The questioning procedure should allow students to test the discourse principles they have been taught. Below is a detailed account of how this "internal dialogue" might be expected to proceed.

Task for Students: Having analysed the isolated clause given above for its probable context and meaning, the students should be given the first half of the 'procedure' report and asked if the isolated sentence provides an appropriate sequel. This text is as follows:

"(1) 20 grams of large pieces of zinc were measured out and poured into the gas generating bottle, which was then stoppered tightly. (2) Next, dilute hydrochloric acid was poured through the thistle tube until it covered the zinc completely. (3) The acid then began to react with the zinc to produce hydrogen gas."

The students should be asked to identify the three procedural questions that prompted the three sentences. These could be as follows:

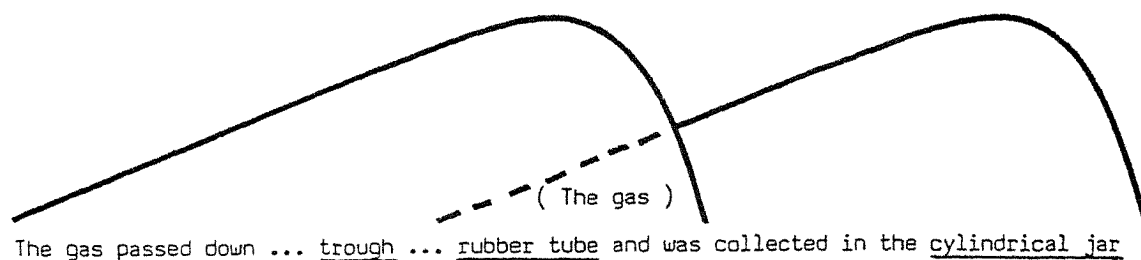
- (1) What happened first? or: What was done first?
- (2) What happened next? or: What was done next?
- (3) What was the result/reaction?

Expectations of what should follow may be vague, as these three sentences complete one discrete micro-function - the description of the production of the gas - and a 'function shift' is now expected, i.e. description of the storage of the gas. The students should be asked what information the last of the three sentences in the text leads them to expect now. Would our initial sentence ("The gas was collected in a cylindrical jar") meet their expectations? This is doubtful. If not from the list or diagram of the apparatus, then from their background rhetorical knowledge (of experimental reports), the students will expect some mention of the passage of the gas from the gas generating bottle into the cylinder. There is also the prior intervention of the experimenter to invert the water-filled cylindrical jar over a shelf in the water-filled trough; this intermediary proposition having been supplied, the students can be asked to complete the paragraph. This should appear roughly as follows:

"The gas passed down into the trough through the rubber tube and was collected in the cylindrical jar."

The last two propositions are combined into a compound sentence, offering us the opportunity to demonstrate the CD properties of parallelism and the function of ellipsis in cases of thematic repetition & consequent redundancy. The 'Wave' model in series illustrates this very clearly - as shown in Fig. 3, we simply 'curtail' the second wave and produce one sentence with two peaks of prominence.

Fig. 3 The 'Wave' model applied in series to a compound sentence



This is a graphic illustration of how informativity is maximised with no loss of accessibility to the reader.

#### B. & C. Complex Sentence, 'Thematic Unit' & Paragraph (Matching pattern)

In examining the information structure of a single clause from a logical sequence type of text, I focused mainly on the distribution of Given and New information, and the tendency for parallelism of structure to feature in instances of thematic recurrence. In my examination of larger stretches of text - the 'thematic unit' and the paragraph - I shall be looking at the 'Matching' text pattern, common in the description of systems in Anatomy and Physiology. The system - types of muscle, in the text used below - is classified into its constituent parts, and these in turn are described in terms of their constituent properties, locations and functions. We are no longer looking for a peak of informativity within a proposition, but rather between propositions. Since Matching propositions tend to be independent of each other and hence equal in value, this raises the question as to whether an order among propositions, from left to right, is established according to context or whether there is a logical order based here on a saliency hierarchy which determines notional sequence in descriptive scientific discourse. We are on speculative ground here, but propose to explore these larger sections of text for patterns of information structure which enhance a text's communicative dynamism.

#### Complex Sentence & Thematic Unit

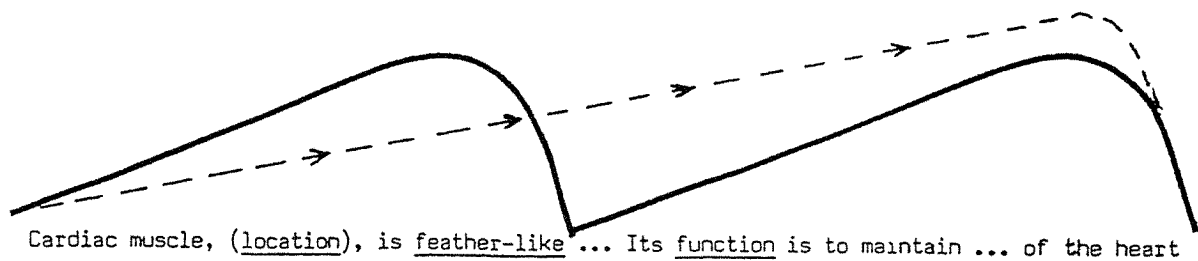
A complex sentence - or perhaps two consecutive sentences - is usually sufficient for the identification of the distinguishing properties of an organism in a classification text, at least in undergraduate textbooks. We can refer to this level of text as a 'thematic unit', where all the information is 'about' the one theme, as in:

"Cardiac muscle, found only in the heart, is feather-like in appearance. Its function is to maintain the pumping action of the heart."

There are three notional 'slots' being 'filled in' in our 'heart muscle' schema: property, location and function. If we apply our 'wave' model to this thematic unit, it would suggest that function is the most important and informative notion identifying 'cardiac muscle' here (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 The 'Wave' model applied in series to a 'Thematic' unit



Is there, then, some conventional logic to this sequence? If we once again turn the monologue into dialogue, we might end up with:

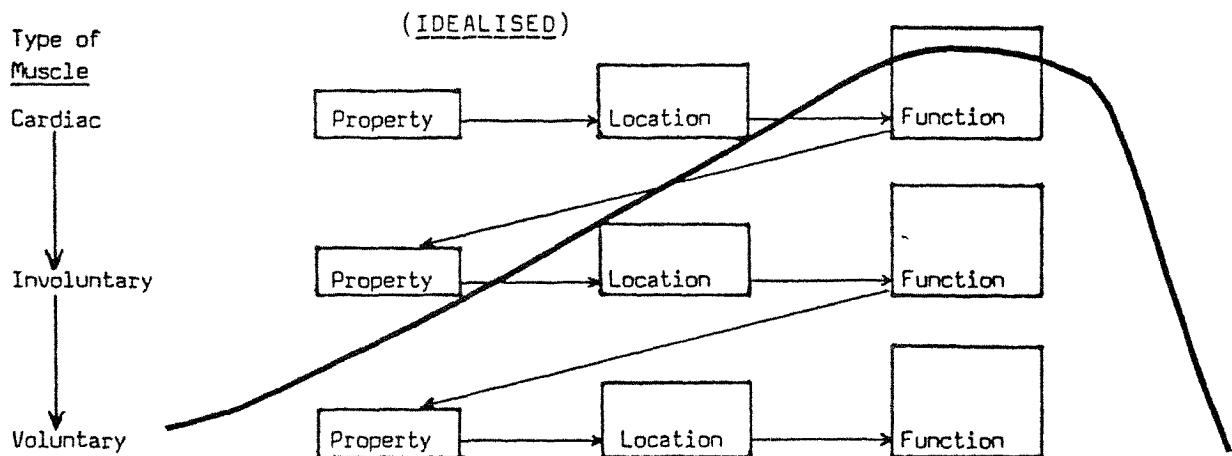
- a) What is it like?
- b) Where is it located/found?
- c) What does it do? or: What is its function?

This sequence tends to suggest that the stative precedes the dynamic or operative, that structure is subordinate to function, and that one proceeds logically from the concrete to the abstract. There is one piece of 'textual' evidence to support this intuition and that is the progressive increase in the length of successive propositions within the thematic unit. This in itself can have two different explanations: either 'function' requires more 'discourse space' than the other notions to achieve the minimum necessary informativity, or it is accorded more space because of its predominant position in the notional hierarchy - irrespective of context. Application of our co-operative and informativity principles would favour the former 'situation-specific' explanation, and a look at the short 'cardiac muscle' text in its wider context (below) will show why.

#### Paragraph

Examining the complete text - the paragraph classifying the three types of muscle in the body - allows us to consider whether or not there is an underlying notional hierarchy in descriptive scientific texts. If there is, this would entitle us to describe the thematic unit above as having 'unmarked' structure. If this is the case, then any deviation from this notional pattern will yield 'marked' information structure. The complete text below yields several examples of such 'marked' structure - i.e. deviation from the 'property-location-function' notional sequence attributed 'unmarked' status. Can we divine any further principle of information structure which would account for this deviation? On the evidence of this text, it would seem that textual proximity is necessary for statements contrasting, or distinguishing between two adjacent entities in a Matching relation (such as classification). To illustrate what we mean, let us project an ideal unmarked pattern for this classification of muscle types, before comparing it to the marked (and real) version.

Fig. 5 Model of parallel pattern of end-focus in information structure in a paragraph



KEY : the height of the box reflects the relative amount of information, roughly estimated by the number of words used to describe each feature.

In the actual text, however, we do not find this ideal parallellism. This text (below) was composed for a 1st-year Pre-Medical course to exemplify the information structure typical of a paragraph of anatomical classification.

Matching Relation Text: Muscle Classification Paragraph

"There are 3 types of muscle in the muscular system: cardiac, involuntary and voluntary. Cardiac muscle, found only in the heart, is feather-like in appearance. Its function is to maintain the pumping action of the heart. Involuntary muscle, also called smooth muscle because of its smooth appearance, is found in the internal organs, such as the oesophagus, stomach and the small and large intestines, i.e. in those places where movements are essential to internal body processes. Involuntary muscles can be defined as those muscles we cannot consciously control. Voluntary muscles, also called striped or striated muscles, are defined as those muscles we can consciously control. These muscles generally control body movement. Voluntary muscles are found in the face, neck, arms and legs. In appearance, voluntary muscles are striped and have a glossy, hard outer covering called a sheath. There is a case in which voluntary muscles act in an involuntary manner - e.g. the eyelids will blink involuntarily if subjected to strong light. Such an action is called a reflex action."

The information in this text was structured mainly by following native-speaker intuition, rather than by any attempt to exemplify a CD model, e.g. of parallellism of notional sequence. One can discern deviation from such a pattern in the notional sequencing in the 'Voluntary muscles' thematic unit. One might also have expected more lexical signals of comparison or contrast (e.g. 'however', 'on the other hand'), but, in fact, much information is signalled by the use of 'notional' signalling: for Property - 'in appearance'; for Location - '.. is found in ...', & for Function, simply 'its function is to ...'.

The main reason for the absence of sentence connectors is that the writer expects the reader to be familiar with the rhetorical routine of anatomical classification and consequently to be able to anticipate certain information in a certain order. More specifically, the reader is 'expected' to anticipate that:

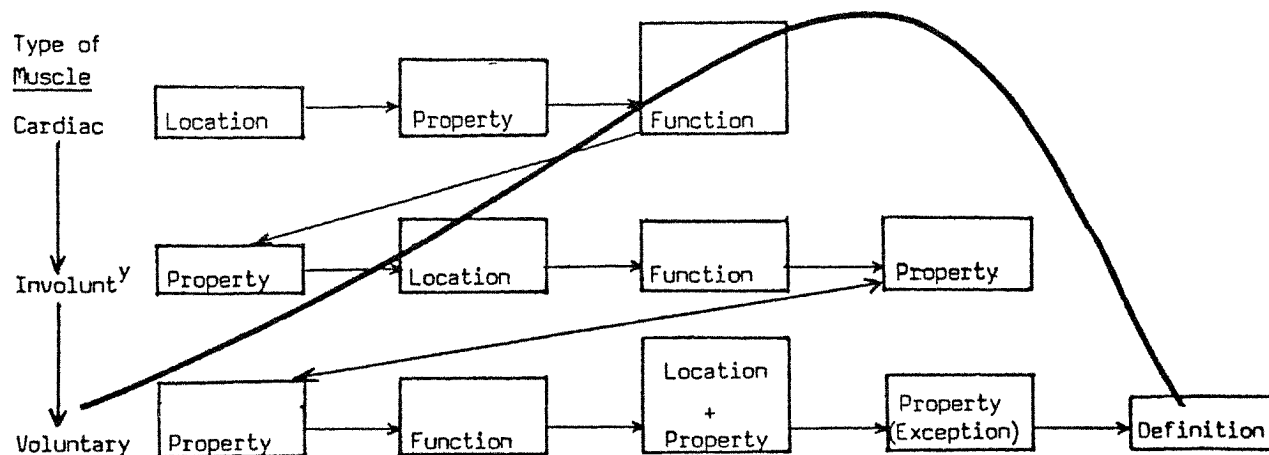
1. Concrete and 'physical' information will precede abstract and functional information, irrespective of its importance for the overall message, except for:
2. Where one particular property manifests the main distinction between two adjacent thematic units (types of muscle), the properties in question are placed as close together in the text as possible. This can mean either that a property which is given end-focus in one thematic unit may be brought forward to the beginning of the next 'matched' thematic unit, or that, as in this text, the same contrast is achieved by holding over information about the property of one muscle (Voluntary) to the end of a thematic unit so that it stands adjacent & in contrast to the matching property of another muscle (Involuntary).

It is a moot point as to whether this adjacency of 'cannot' (1.9) vs. 'can consciously control' (1.11) successfully gets across this key distinction between the two types of muscle, involuntary & voluntary - especially since there are no explicit contrastive signals nor, of course, intonation to rescue the meaning. There is a good argument for the acceptance of underlining as the 'paragraphological' equivalent to phonological stress for the purpose of indicating marked information focus in the written text.

3. More important information will take up more space in the text, and these longer clauses will tend to be given end-focus. The influence of the intonation patterns of spoken English may be significant here; it might be suggested that the longer the clause, the greater the range of pitch and the progressively more pronounced the 'tone contours' (cf. Halliday 1978). The 'Wave' is in a sense an 'informativity contour', sharing the tone contour's point of focal prominence but free of the need to reflect the tonal nuances of mood, modality and key (cf. Halliday 1976: 227)

How then are we to make use of our 'Wave' model to teach our students something about information structure at the level of the paragraph? As suggested above, the model in Fig. 5 can be applied to the 'real' text. The teacher can ask the students to use the model in Fig. 5 to analyse the text for its notional content and sequence, and perhaps to criticise it for any deviation from the more basic principles (points 1 & 3) outlined above. Fig. 6 below shows a suggested break-down of this notional pattern, with the 'wave' superimposed as a guide for the students.

Fig. 6 Model of Fig. 5 applied to Muscle Classification text



### Conclusion

This has been an exploratory essay, attempting to re-examine many of our assumptions about the nature of written discourse and how it is processed and produced. I have suggested that there are qualities or organisational principles in discourse that determine its information structure, and contribute to its communicative dynamism. The aim has essentially been to stimulate thought and offer a different perspective on the teaching of academic written English.

Finally, here is a summary of the main points about communicative dynamism and principles of information structure that I hope the 'Wave' model and the question strategy can help teach our students:

1. New information tends to feature near the end of information units and given information at the beginning; 'what you're talking about' is logically followed by 'what you're saying about it'.
2. Information tends to be ordered from left to right according to its degree of informativity; in descriptive scientific texts, there is a tendency for the structural/concrete to precede the functional/abstract.
3. The degree of informativity of a clause/sentence can determine its position in the left-to-right 'hierarchy' of a sentence or thematic unit.
4. Questions help test the purpose and appropriacy of an utterance by matching what the utterance seems to be answering against what it should be answering in the light of contextual and rhetorical expectation.

### NOTE

1. This is a revised version of a paper published in the Proceedings of the 5th European LSP Symposium, Brussels: ACCA.

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## CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE SELECTION OF ESL READING TEXTS

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The use of English in Hong Kong and China is an economic and political statement of citizens of the world, not a cultural orientation towards Britain or the US.

(Paulston 1987: 70)

### Background

In a previous paper (Crewe and Tong, forthcoming) we examined the cultural features that might affect the comprehension and interpretation of a text. 26 features were established, ranging from the word to patterns of logic and even the subject matter itself. It was suggested that texts which have a high concentration of L2 cultural features (the one-page Newsweek article analysed has 87 potential cultural features) should not be selected by the teacher as the amount of background knowledge required would militate against the comprehension of the text at any level, linguistic, cognitive or informational. Essentially, that paper picked up the story once the text had been selected and its main aim was to identify the features in the text and to suggest the extent to which they might be teachable. The present paper moves back in time to the selection of the text itself based on the teacher's (and students') response to the topic. It will set up a broad classification of text types and discuss the fundamental considerations governing the choice.

### Introduction

In an ESL situation like that in Hong Kong there is an obvious need for students to move as quickly as possible from the constructed texts in their textbooks to the authentic texts of the real world. As 90.5% of Hong Kong secondary school students attend Anglo-Chinese schools (Kwo and Bray 1987:99) where the bulk of the reading material is in English it is imperative, if their education is to have any communicative value at all, for the students to be able to carry out limited research and to supplement the content of their essays and projects by recourse to books, magazines, newspapers, etc. written in English and intended for native or near-native speakers. As there is an abundance of such materials available in Hong Kong - many of them locally produced - there is clearly a considerable advantage in their being able to do this. But this ability to cope with authentic texts does not come automatically, even to a student with a good basic command of the English language, because of the much greater (because uncontrolled) complexity of the language and patterns of thought and argumentation. The teacher's role, therefore, is to introduce such materials progressively from the upper secondary level onwards.

However, not all the materials available are equally suitable for non-native speakers (NNSs) mainly because of the cultural orientation of the texts. Linguistic complexity is usually immediately apparent to the experienced teacher, because he is familiar with the grammatical and lexical attainment of the students, and the texts can be graded on this criterion and introduced progressively. Cultural considerations are more difficult to handle. They are frequently mentioned as a complicating factor in the literature about reading materials but little guidance is given on what to do about them. As stated above, however, this paper will only address the question of the initial selection of the texts in order to reduce the overt cultural load. How to handle the residual covert features has already been discussed elsewhere.

### Types of Texts

We can divide up texts into two broad types (see Fig. 1) depending on their cultural orientation and intended readership: those which are aimed at native speakers and make extensive assumptions about shared interests and background knowledge; and those which are culturally neutral, non-prejudicial to or even inclusive of the non-native reader. One cannot, of course, entirely eliminate the writer's instinctive bias towards his material - he is bound to reflect the values of his own culture - but in the second category there is an allowance for the inclusion of non-native speakers as writers. These would share the cultural assumptions of those non-native readers from the same background and, in general, would tend to use the L2 more explicitly for the transmission of information (because the non-native writer is more inclined to use the L2 functionally and the L1 interpersonally).

The progression of the texts ranges from those which present no problems of cultural decoding (1a. Culture-free and 1b. Hong Kong-based texts) and those with minimal problems (1c. China-based and, to a lesser extent, Japan-based). Next, there are texts which are culturally located in an alien or unfamiliar setting (we include Britain here because, in spite of an educational background of 11 years of learning English, for at least 7 of which English has been used as the medium of instruction, the orientation of Hong Kong students has always been functional, not cultural), but where the cultural features of text are secondary to a more universal main theme (categories 2ai & ii). And finally there are texts whose content-focus is a foreign country, be it Britain or the USA or any other Anglophone or non-Anglophone country (2bi & ii): the conceptual gap is considerable in every case.

Incidentally, it should be noted that we are not dealing with as many cultural orientations as potential countries dealt with in the various texts. As most information in English available to Hong Kong readers is likely to be mainly written by British, American and Australian writers, the range of cultural values embodied in the writing will tend to be limited. But we are facing an 'orientation of interest', which is largely dependent on the subject matter of the text, filtered through an unfamiliar system of values: the comprehension difficulties of Hong Kong students are thus compounded three times - linguistically, thematically and attitudinally - as explained in more detail below.

Applicable to all texts are problems caused by the presence of at least three affective barriers to comprehension. These are:

- 1) The level of linguistic and stylistic complexity of the text. Clearly, whatever the interest of the topic per se, the text may be impenetrable by reason of its difficult lexis or stylistic intricacies.
- 2) The writer's attitudes, values, argumentational tactics, assumptions about the reader's knowledge, etc. As stressed above, these are an indelible part of the writer's personality though they may be less obtrusive with the non-native writer.
- 3) The reader's lack of processing competency or background information, his inability or unwillingness to share the writer's values and assumptions, his instrumentally motivated approach to the L2 itself, etc. Such barriers make the selection of the reading text topic only one factor - though an important one - among several.

The most basic type of text (see Fig. 1, section 1a) would be, as Quirk says, as 'culture-free as calculus, with no literary, aesthetic or emotional aspirations' (1982:19). Presumably, with calculus we could include the language of mathematics, accountancy, biochemistry, perhaps even physics, chemistry, medicine, biology, engineering, and the other sciences. For our purposes, however, this range is too restricted and we would wish to extend our 'culture-free' list of topic areas to embrace any kind of factually-based writing of an academic or semi-academic nature. Such fields as geography, business and economics would be suitable and, to a lesser extent, politics, sociology, history, philosophy, psychology, etc, depending on how discussive the material was. It would also be desirable that the article/chapter/report should not have been published in a source mainly read by native speakers and that it should not focus on one particular country or geographical area.

The problem of how to avoid the authorial bias towards the writer's home culture is difficult to solve in a systematic way and can only be tackled on an ad hoc basis, text by text. The article we have offered as an example of this category, 'People, People, People', is a world survey of overpopulation taken from Time Magazine and although, essentially, it reviews the situation objectively and factually there is no denying that it tends to view escalating populations around the world from the perspective of their desirability to the West (because most of the highly populated countries are in debt to Western banks). This is almost inevitable but there is some justification in considering such a text as 'culture-free' for such a Westernised commercial-and-financial centre as Hong Kong which shares many of the concerns of the West with regard to Third World development. In general, we may say that only careful screening can establish which texts are suitable for inclusion in this category.

In a routine evaluation of reading course materials<sup>1</sup>, University of Hong Kong students gave the article 'People, People, People' only a 41% acceptance rating: some reasons for this, connected largely with the orientation and the topic range, will emerge from the various discussions below. By comparison, a further article in this category, 'The Fractured Family' dealing with divorce in Asia (mainly Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong), received 61% acceptance.



The second text category (1b) is much more obvious: texts physically located in Hong Kong and dealing with matters of concern to local residents would fit here. The only proviso, apart from their need to be intrinsically interesting, is that they should not be overly critical nor written by a foreigner with a culturally loaded perspective and/or alien patterns of argumentation, as this may interfere with the acceptance and the comprehension of the text. The illustrative text for this category is 'How to Keep the Dragons Happy' which, being about fung shui, or geomancy, in regard to the new Bank of China building in Hong Kong, provides a topic area which should be already familiar to Hong Kong students but here it is given a new significance. Although the text may be regarded as over-explicit, being intended for non-Chinese readers of Time Magazine, the main writers and reporters are Chinese (of Hong Kong and overseas origins), which should ensure both accuracy of information and a sympathetic viewpoint.

In the third category (1c) the relatedness of the cultures of China and Japan should not be over-assumed: there are still tremendous gulfs. Since the Chinese Revolution of 1949, China and Hong Kong have trodden different paths and the average Hong Kong student can have little real understanding of everyday life in such a centrally controlled, non-consumer-oriented communist economy in spite of the shared cultural background, physical proximity and the high degree of acceptance. For Japan, the matter is even worse: the similarities are general and superficial (e.g. paternalism, showing respect, giving face, Chinese characters, Buddhism) whereas the real details of Japanese culture and thought (e.g. amae, tea ceremony, samurai, Zen, haiku) are completely unknown to any but students of Japanese language. Thus, although there are clearly more similarities of culture between Hong Kong and China or Japan than, say, the West, the extent of these affinities is perceived by Hong Kong students to be greater than it in fact is. To be successful as reading materials, texts based in China and Japan must stay primarily at the superficial level and deal with topics of a generalisable nature rather than arise directly from the more esoteric aspects of the other culture itself.

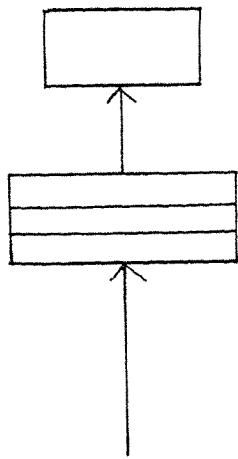
The texts we have offered as examples here are 'Some Stirrings on the Mainland' about adolescent sexuality in China, which is dissimilar from the Hong Kong situation mainly in the degree of the social censure and control (e.g. the severity of the punishments meted out for seduction: long prison sentences); and 'Looking East: the Godzilla Kids' about the spread of Japanese youth culture into East and South-East Asia: these are sufficiently tangible to cause few cultural problems. In the evaluation of the course materials 'Some Stirrings' received similar positive ratings: 'Mini Baby Boom, Maxi Trouble' 82%; 'Persuading China to Value Daughters' 81%; 'A Rash of Little Emperors' (about spoiled only-children in present-day China) 81%. Not all topics, even if set in China, can be presumed to work equally well: for example, 'Credit Cards in China' scored extremely negatively (20%), possibly because the subject matter was remote from the students' concerns. In comparison, 'The Godzilla Kids' scored 62%.

The fourth and fifth categories (2ai & ii) cover texts which are based in the environment of a foreign culture but whose cultural information is not central to an understanding of the main theme - though it contributes a lesser or a greater amount respectively to the full picture. As shown in the diagrammatic representation of the text types (Fig. 2: 2ai & ii), the cultural details may either be tackled directly, in which case full comprehension of the text will be achieved, or ignored, in which case parts of the text will be lost. However, in both cases, even if the cultural references are ignored, the major points in the argument will be largely recognisable, though slightly impaired. As examples we offer, for the lesser type, 'Are Computers Creating a Revolution in Education' which deals with the role of computers in education, a sufficiently generalisable theme in spite of details in the discussion about American companies and American school practices. For the greater type, we have 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution' which is about the impact of the information revolution on the traditional divisions of society: the kind of society envisaged here is more of an old-world society rather than a progressive, adaptable Asian society, though the links are still clear enough. These texts scored only 39% and 41% respectively (see, however, the very low rating for 'Computers' in the final section of this paper).

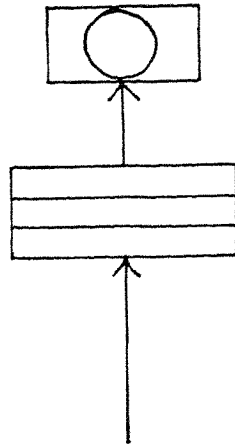
Finally, the sixth and seventh categories (2bi & ii) cover texts which actually focus on some aspect of an unfamiliar culture, whether that of the Anglophone countries or of some other distant, unfamiliar, non-Anglophone country. In spite of their extensive knowledge of the English language it is generally the case that Hong Kong students, because of their practical, instrumentally-motivated approach to language learning, know very little about English culture and thus tend to fare badly with materials written by native speakers for consumption by other native speakers. Their interest level is also likely to depend on the immediate value of the information contained in the text. Thus, in the 2bii category, a text entitled 'A Ms. is as Good as a Male', dealing with methods of address in English, received a 67% acceptance as it was presumably felt to have some practical value, though this may have been mitigated by the fact that there was also some historical information and some comparison with French and German systems for addressing unmarried females. In the 2bi category, a text entitled 'Poland's Image Still Tarnished', used merely as a basis for politically-oriented vocabulary, understandably received only 55% acceptance. A surprise result, however, was obtained for 'Anatomy of a Burmese Beauty Secret' (91% acceptance) and one can only surmise that in this case the 'curiosity value' of the text overrode the practical considerations. This is an aspect of text selection that certainly operates at times but is difficult to predict. It is not a consideration that can be used consistently as a basis for reading course text selection, except perhaps at the primary and lower secondary level. Tertiary students quickly tire of a diet of such pieces and many of the older reading coursebooks fail for precisely this reason - that it is difficult to justify a random, unrelated, non-practical set of reading passages.<sup>2</sup>

Levels of comprehension difficulty as a reflex of topic choice	Affective barriers to comprehension applicable to all texts	Sample texts
1. Texts written by NSS or NNSs for general readership	<p>(a) texts which are completely or relatively culture-free; they deal with areas of academic knowledge and matters of global interest</p> <p>(b) texts dealing with aspects of the cultural environment of the students ( i.e. Hong Kong)</p> <p>(c) texts dealing with related/more comprehensible cultures within the Far Eastern context (e.g. China, Japan)</p>	'People, People, People'
2. Texts written by NNS for NNSs:- (NNS use is incidental)	<p>(a) texts whose theme is not the culture itself but which have significant references to an unfamiliar culture</p> <p>(b) texts whose theme is the unfamiliar culture itself</p>	'How to Keep the Dragons Happy'
<p>(i) the details are subsidiary/peripheral to the main theme</p> <p>(ii) the details are part of/essential to the main theme</p>	<p>2) Problems connected with the writer (esp. NS): attitudes, values, argumentation, assumed knowledge of reader, etc.</p> <p>3) Problems connected with readers (esp. NNS): lack of background information, purely instrumental motivation towards L2, etc.</p>	'Some Stirrings of the Mainland'; 'Looking East: The Godzilla Kids'
<p>(i) texts dealing with aspects of other cultures likely to be of interest to other NNS</p> <p>(ii) texts dealing with the culture of the L2 ( i.e. English in the case of Hong Kong)</p>	MID/HIGH	'Are Computers Creating a Revolution in Education'
MID/HIGH	MID/HIGH	'The Fourth Industrial Revolution'
MID/HIGH	MID/HIGH	'Poland's Image Still Tarnished'
HIGH	HIGH	'A Ms. is as Good as a Male'

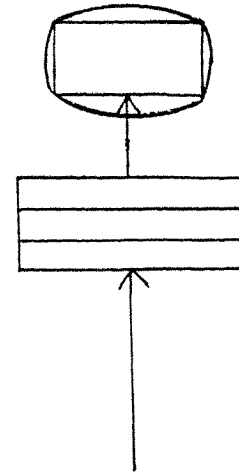
Fig. 2 Diagrammatic Representation of the Text Types



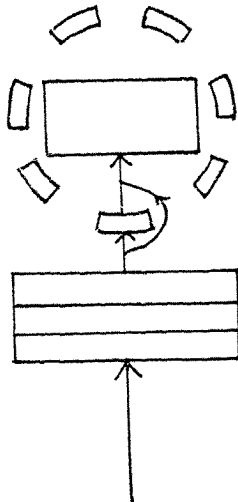
1(a) culture-free (no cultural context barrier)



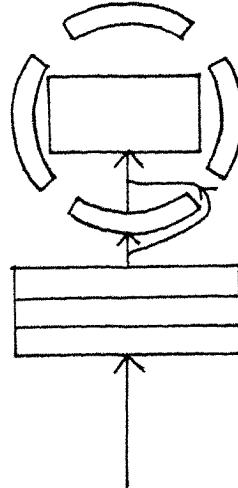
1(b) Hong Kong-based (cultural context as part of content, not a barrier)



1(c) China-based (cultural context as minimal barrier)

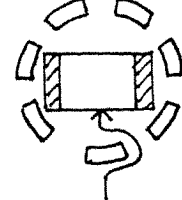


2 (a)(i) alien culture: non-essential details (cultural context as minimal barrier)



2 (a)(ii) alien culture: essential details (cultural context as significant but avoidable barrier)

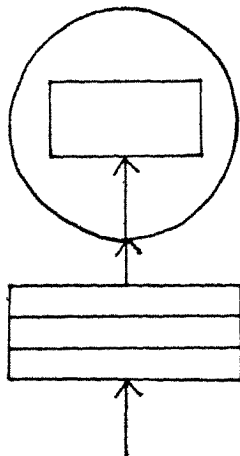
2 (a)(i) and (ii): The cultural details can either be tackled or avoided. In latter case part of the message will be lost, viz



2ai

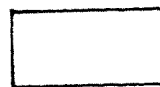


2a(ii)

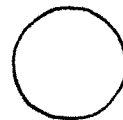


2 (b)(i) and (ii) alien culture: essential context (cultural context as considerable barrier)

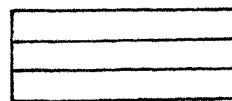
Key:



message of text



sociocultural context



3 affective barriers comprehension:-  
a) linguistic-stylistic  
b) writer-generated  
c) reader-generated

## Minisurvey of Topic Preferences

The importance of motivation in reading, more particularly the reader's level of interest in the content of what he is reading, has come to be regarded more and more seriously by researchers into reading.

(Harrison 1979: 87)

A minisurvey of topic preferences for reading texts was conducted as part of the routine evaluation of a reading course. The group consisted of 37 first-year students at the University of Hong Kong who had undergone a 12-week reading skills course in English, mainly based on short texts (1-2 pages) drawn from such sources as Time, Newsweek, Far East Economic Review and Asia Magazine. After evaluating the actual texts used on the course the students were asked to assess the interest level of a set of 46 randomly selected topics. They were 'randomly selected' in the sense that no attempt was made to be comprehensive but there were a number of guiding principles: they included 1) a large number of countries/geographical areas directly; 2) students' suggestions from previous questionnaires; 3) a preponderance of the social studies/human knowledge type of topics, which are already in use on the course, are generally available and are considered (by reading course planners) as suitable for students coming from a wide range of disciplines; and 4) a number of 'red herrings', i.e. topics intended to appeal but not immediately considered suitable for an academic skills reading course (although, given the right orientation, they would not be automatically excluded). These were 'films', 'sport', 'fashion', 'nature' and 'art'. In the event only 'film' and 'fashion' were rated highly possibly because the raters were mainly urbanised girl students. The students were asked to rate the topics with either one tick for 'interesting' or two ticks for 'very interesting'. This method was used so that the raters could, on reviewing their choices, more easily strengthen an original assessment without the need for a change of symbol. Thus, each topic could receive a maximum of 74 ticks (37 students x 2).

We are primarily concerned here with the assessment of countries and geographical areas so we will ignore the other topics' rankings, interesting as they are. Predictably, Hong Kong scored highest with 74% and China second with 53%. Understandably, too, was Japan's third ranking (42%) as Japan is seen in Hong Kong as a progressive, modernised society which supplies high quality goods and fashions and shares with Hong Kong a substantial part of the Chinese script and traditional Chinese culture. Modern Japanese culture (films, fashions, music, etc.) is also currently enjoying a vogue in Hong Kong. Within the Asian context, surprising are the low ratings of Taiwan (16%) in spite of its being a progressive Chinese society (there may be some political distancing at play here) and, above all, Singapore (11%) as this is another successful, largely Chinese state which is frequently compared with Hong Kong. A likely reason for this is the relative importance of the countries concerned and the degree of individuality and intrinsic interest they possess: although successful in their own right neither

Singapore nor Taiwan have much distinctive character (for the Hong Kong students) and neither is important or influential in world terms - this is in marked contrast to Japan. Korea, understandably, scored only 5% because, in spite of the publicity given to student activism and the Olympic Games, it presents no clear image for identification. It is not entirely clear why 'Asia in general' (19%) was ranked lower than 'Europe in general' (24%) unless Asia as a whole, apart from those countries which are of particular interest (Hong Kong, China, Japan) is seen as a motley collection of unimportant and unfamiliar Third World countries, whereas Europe is composed of more powerful and thus potentially more interesting nations. Moreover, the comparatively low rating of 'Chinese language/thought' (24%) is also difficult to understand unless the phrasing of the topic title implies that it is rather dull and academic - readings on Confucius and Chinese grammar in English!

Of the Western countries USA (32%) rated higher than Britain (23%) possibly because of the associations of the former with youth culture, junk food, modernism, TV violence and world power (a curious mixture but generally popular in Hong Kong - as elsewhere!) and of the latter with conservatism and colonialism. France was rated higher than expected (26%) because of the large number of students taking French voluntary courses, which enjoy a very positive profile. The most surprising European rating, however, was for Russia (24%) and it can only be surmised that this is because of its major power status which has a significant influence on world events.

The results of this minisurvey clearly underscore the cultural bias discussed above, that apart from Hong Kong, China and possibly Japan there is no great interest in other geographical areas or cultures and there is thus no solid justification for the informational background of at least most of the reading materials for Hong Kong students to be located anywhere else. This position has been suggested by Burt and Dulay, who, apropos of language testing, maintain:

In order not to confound linguistic performance with knowledge of the world, the content of a language measurement must not be outside the experience of the students being tested, nor inconsistent with their cultural customs and values.

(quoted in Steffensen and Joag-Dev 1986: 188)

Fig. 3 Minisurvey of Topic Preferences

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>	<u>%</u>
1.	<u>Hong Kong</u>	55	74
2.	Social problems	45	
3.	Human relationships	43	
4.	Films	40	
5.	<u>China</u>	39	53
6.	Popular music	36	
7.	Dating and marriage	34	
8.	<u>Japan</u>	31	42
9.	Fashion	29	
	Homosexuality	29	
	Psychology	29	
12.	AIDS	25	
13.	<u>USA</u>	24	32
14.	Suicide	21	
	Business/economics	21	
	Education	21	
17.	<u>France</u>	19	26
18.	<u>Russia</u>	18	24
	<u>Europe in general</u>	18	
	Drugs	18	
	<u>Chinese language/thought</u>	18	
	Natural and man-made disasters	18	
23.	<u>Britain</u>	17	23
	Communism	17	
25.	<u>Germany</u>	16	22
	Overpopulation	16	
27.	<u>Asia in general</u>	14	19
	War	14	
	<u>English language/linguistics</u>	14	
30.	Abortion	13	
31.	<u>Taiwan</u>	12	16
	Childhood	12	
33.	Housing Problems	11	
34.	<u>Australia</u>	10	14
	Science	10	
	Legal problems	10	
	Sport	10	
38.	Unemployment	9	
39.	<u>Singapore</u>	8	11
	Art	8	
	Nature	8	
42.	Medicine and disease	7	
43.	<u>Africa</u>	6	8
	Computers	6	
	Nuclear power	6	
46.	<u>Korea</u>	4	5

## Conclusion

This paper has tried to demonstrate the extent to which the cultural background of a reading text may contribute to or interfere with successful comprehension of the information. This may be because of factors inherent in the text itself (which arise from the requirement 'that the writer and reader should share certain assumptions about the world and the way it works' (Nuttall 1982:7)) or because of the level of interest brought to the text by the reader. The level of interest is in turn largely dependent on the amount of background information already possessed by the students. As Huckin has said:

We are always aware that knowing something about a subject makes it easier to learn more about that subject: our prior knowledge serves as a framework which makes the new information more meaningful and easier to absorb.

(quoted in Hewings and Henderson (1987: 172))

In the case of the Hong Kong student, where this background knowledge involves the culture and values of another country its scope is limited to a very narrow range of familiar places: mainly those which are Chinese-speaking, or have substantial Chinese communities; major Anglophone countries; Japan; and a few important countries in Europe. However, this range is further reduced by what is perceived as the 'interest value' of the countries involved, the major consideration appearing to be world prominence. Thus, apart from Hong Kong itself as a natural basis of topic interest, the list dwindles to two main choices - China and Japan; one intermediate choice - USA; and perhaps a few indeterminate lesser choices (see Fig. 3 above) whose selection seems random and no guarantee for success in reading topic selection.



## NOTES

1. Routine evaluation of all materials used in the Language Centre courses is carried out at the end of every course/term. Students on these reading courses, who are exclusively first-year students of the Faculty of Arts, are asked to rate the reading passages as to how 'interesting' and how 'useful' they are (sometimes these are combined into one term, 'worthwhile'). We have taken note of the 'interesting' and 'worthwhile' ratings only.
2. One of the authors, Keith Tong, studied a book entitled Intelligent Reading, (by B.W.M. Young and P.D.R. Gardiner) which fits very well into this description. It consists of a collection of essays which are very closely tied to the English culture, e.g. an article by Roland Oliver from the Listener on African Independence, an essay 'English Social History' by G.M. Trevelyan, and an essay 'Man, Morals and Society' by J.C. Flugel. According to the Introduction of the book, it comprises 'passages of argument, both cool and passionate, in which modern writers deal with topics of general importance'. Although the book was originally written for sixth-formers in England, for reasons unknown, it was very widely used in the sixth-form of Hong Kong schools in the seventies. The author has to admit that he did not find the passages in the book very interesting or that they dealt with topics of the greatest importance. By the same token, books such as Practical Faster Reading by Gerald and Vivienne Mosback and Inside Meaning by Michael Swan are not likely to arouse the interest of the local student, if they are used as coursebooks in Hong Kong.

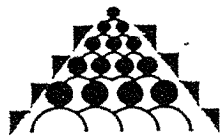
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## COVER STORIES

# People, People, People

*Despite some progress, global population is still growing at an alarming rate*



Diplomats and demographers, economists and family planners, the elite brigades of global social science, will converge on Mexico City next week to tackle a formidable issue: the relentless growth of world population. They will hear some good news. In the ten years since the last United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Population, which was held in Bucharest, the annual growth rate of the world's population has declined from 2% to 1.7%.

Says Science Fiction Writer Isaac Asimov, the author of numerous essays on demography: "Population growth at current rates will create a world without hope, gripped by starvation and desperation. It will be worse than a jungle because we have weapons immensely more destructive and vicious than teeth and claws."

The U.N.'s decision to hold its population conference in Mexico City could hardly be more appropriate. In all its splendor and squalor, the Mexican capital is the archetype of Third World megacities that are climbing to the top of the

Namara points out that the global figures for the past decade have been distorted by the experience of China, where a draconian birth control program that includes financial rewards and penalties to encourage one-child families has reduced the fertility rate by half.

There has been no such improvement in many other areas. In black Africa, some national fertility rates have actually increased in the past decade. The average number of children born to a woman in Kenya is now eight; when that is combined with a declining infant mortality rate, the country's population could bal-

## IDEAS

## How to Keep the Dragons Happy

*The Chinese art of feng shui can ensure a prosperous building*

Once erected, the Bank of China's new tower in Hong Kong will twist 70 stories upward like a megalomaniac Rubik's Cube. Its four triangular shafts will anchor their glassy rhomboids to a square base graced with traditional Chinese motifs. Designed for Peking's state bank by famed U.S. Architect I.M. Pei, the \$128 million building is a Communist bow to Hong Kong's modern, money-chasing

expense of others, the psychic note of aggression was far from the comradeship Peking hoped to project. The building, in short, would anger not only the spirits but the neighbors.

Most Hong Kong enterprises avoid such bad vibrations by contracting with a *feng shui* master while their buildings are still in the planning stage. The ultramodern \$650 million Hong Kong and Shang-

fei of several thousand dollars, a *feng shui* master advised moving a bank officer's door away from a nearby escalator to preserve the delicate yin-yang. Management, mindful of the *feng shui* faith of the Hong Kong Chinese, the bank's main customers, complied. In Singapore, which is 76% Chinese, the newly completed Hyatt Regency was suffering from a lack of business in 1971 when a *feng shui* master advised that the hotel's fountain and façade be remodeled to rid the hotel of unhappy spirits and lure back Chinese guests discouraged by stories of its bad *feng shui*. The occupancy rate is now said to be gratifyingly higher.

## Some Stirrings on the Mainland

*Sex rears its head in China, but ever so cautiously*

After a night of frenzied dancing, Zhen Zhen came to grief when her boyfriend entered the room while she was taking a bath. Yen Li, who yearned to be an actress, lost her virtue when a wily actor insidiously told her that Ingrid Bergman and Sophia Loren devoted their lives—and their bodies—to art. The pivotal event of Li Na's life occurred when her date



breath, headache, dimmed vision, mental decline." *Girls, Be Vigilant!* helpfully lists some of the traditional remedies for illicitly roaming hands, including the cultivation of a "rhythmically arranged life" and good habits such as avoiding tight clothes and not sleeping on your stomach.

In the cities, China's high-ranking officials have access to prostitutes, porn films and a varied sex life. But most of the population finds itself hemmed in sexually. Nearly every relationship is monitored by neighbors and subject to fevered interpretation. Getting away from prying eyes is so difficult that at nightfall parks fill up

## CULTURE

## Looking East: The Godzilla Kids



On Hongkong's beaches, cassette-recorders blare out Japanese pop music. Boutiques in Bangkok display the latest fashions from Tokyo and Osaka. Singaporean adolescents strut down Orchard Road in silky, long-tailed jackets — exactly the thing, they assure incredulous elders, for a Sunday stroll on the Ginza. Koreans pore over classy, glossy magazines from across the water.

Chinese students sent to Japan for intensive study rose from 200 in 1979 to 2,700 now. At Bangkok's Ramkhamhaeng University, undergraduates opting for Japanese numbered 1,173 last year. In South Korea, leading local companies require employees dealing with Japanese suppliers to be proficient in the language. The Korean government has registered around 100 Japanese language institutes but an estimated 4,000 unauthorised ones also teach the language.

"The motivation for learning Japanese is practical," says Go In Gyung, vice president of the Korean Association of Foreign Language Institutes. Knowledge of Japanese can be crucial for success in business in Korea. (Japan is the biggest

English, of course, is still way ahead everywhere. In most countries, it is compulsory at school, while Japanese, if available, is optional. Even so, fully 10% of Indonesians choose Japanese. The language is not offered in Thai secondary schools but is taught at universities, colleges and language institutes. But Asians are increasingly aware that Japanese opens career opportunities — hence its popularity among ambitious young professionals and company employees. The boom has been helped along by cultural grant aid from Tokyo. Singapore, for example, received \$2.7 million between 1980 and 1985. Japanese cultural programs got a boost in Malaysia after Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad urged his countrymen to "look east" in the early 1980s.

**A Ms  
is as  
good**

"Of course," said my friend, clearing his throat nervously, "when the receptionist said that the doctor would see we now, I thought it would be a man."

In our never-ending search for equality in the UK, the niceties of titles and addresses has ensured a levelling.

Apart from a few Lords and Bishops, the majority of the great public are merely Mr Mrs or Miss. In written form of address it was common to write Esquire (Esq) after a man's name such as: John Brown Esq, as opposed to Mr John Brown and in some parts of the States and in the UK such a form of address in writing informal letters continues.

However, its use in common parlance has disappeared, except in a modified form as "squire" in the UK, where it is used in speech as a matey and substandard form as in: "How is it going then, squire?"

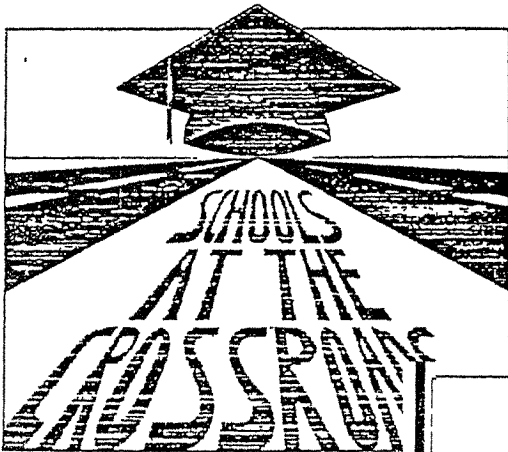
by  
**Tony Goodwin**

peers of the realm could use such a title. Now, with its use as a form of address on letters and its non U use in speech, all male members of the egalitarian community can enjoy the title.

A recent survey of newspapers and magazines by an American University professor suggests that the titles of Mr, Mrs, Miss and Dr are on the way out.

Mr, from the latin 'magister' or master is used for any male, whereas Mrs serves to indicate that the woman (or should I say lady?) is married. Miss indicates that the woman is unmarried.

Unless a woman becomes a doctor, or a professor, Mrs or Miss will tell the world her marital status. Men are more fortun-



## Are computers creating a revolution in education?

2nd in a 5-part series by Michael Scott-Blair

### The fourth industrial revolution

Douglas Hague looks to the importance of economists and politicians considering the

**T**HE cartoon showed a small boy standing at his father's knee saying, "No, we haven't learned the alphabet yet, we are still learning how to program the computer."

It is a simple joke, but it captures much of the hope and despair of the United States' business and education communities, where there is pride that kids can program the computer, but fear that they can't spell it.

"It's no longer a question of whether schools will use computers, but how," says America's National Education Association.

As computers pile up by the thousands in classrooms in the US, there are at least four conflicting theories about their ultimate role in schools. Are they:

— The major force of the future? "Computers are not a fad, they are the key to the next stage of human development," Bettie B. Youngs, a San Diego State University associate professor of educational administration, recently told delegates to a conference on educational technology.

— A simple tool? "Concern over the issue of the computer will ultimately fall somewhere between typing and driver education," says W.M. Laetsch, the University of California at Berkeley's vice-chancellor for undergraduate affairs. "They are here, they will stay and they will take care of themselves just like the calculator did."

**W**HILE C. P. SNOW contrasted the cultures of science and the arts in *The Two Cultures*, one of the points on which he was most criticised was the implication that there were only two cultures. He pointed out in the 1964 revision of *The Two Cultures*, that the only word in the title which was *not* attacked was "the". As he says, the implication was that the title *Two Thousand and Two Cultures* would have been better. Snow insisted that the number of significant cultures really is very small. He was, however, prepared to accept that there would be soon, if there were not already, a third culture—that of the social sciences. Snow himself here included social history, sociology, demography, political science, economics, government (in the American academic sense), psychology, medicine, and social arts such as architecture. Though recognising that it was "a mixed bag", he saw "an inner consistency. All of them are concerned with how human beings are living or have lived."

Like Snow, I still see a clear difference between the way the scientists look at issues and the way that I do. However, I would make a distinction between social sciences such as economics and sociology and *professional* subjects like accountancy and law. Management is a hybrid. It draws heavily on those social sciences that can be



## Poland's image still tarnished

**WARSAW:** Four years after imposing martial law to suppress the Solidarity free trade union, Poland's communist government is edging back towards international respectability but is still wary of domestic opposition.

Western diplomats believe that the performance of the economy, starved of credit and responding slowly to reforms, will be of growing importance to the authorities as they efforts to build further on the political stability restored since the labour crisis.

Relations with the Roman Catholic Church restrained and the Solidarity-based opposition, although isolated and sharply reduced in numbers, is vocal in its protest against police repression.

Communist Party leader General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law on December 13, 1981, to end an increasingly unmanageable challenge to his government's authority by the Soviet bloc's first and independent trade union.

The move was followed by retaliatory Western economic sanctions and a ban on fresh credit which is still in force and is one of the main obstacles to economic revival.

PEDAGOGICAL AND PARA-PEDAGOGICAL LEVELS OF INTERACTION  
IN THE CLASSROOM: A Social Interactional Approach to  
the Analysis of the Code-Switching Behaviour of a  
Bilingual Teacher in an English Language Lesson

Angel M.Y. Lin  
Language Centre  
University of Hong Kong

The Problem

The code-switching behaviour of teachers and/or students in the second or foreign language classroom seems to be an anachronism in the language teaching field in the 80's. When A.P.R. Howatt writes that the monolingual principle of teaching the target language through the target language is the unique contribution of the 20th century to classroom language teaching, he has in fact summarized the views many scholars in this field generally hold (1984:289). Indeed there is a considerable amount of literature supporting the monolingual principle: Willis, 1981; Swain, 1982; Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; etc., etc. In contrast there is only a relatively small body of literature in favour of 'some' use of the native language of the students (with different writers holding different views on the extent to which and the situation in which the mother tongue should be used): Dodson, 1967; Guthrie, 1984; Atkinson, 1987; etc.

Why then is there the need for this study when there seems to be so little theoretical controversy over the issue? The problem is: How do bilingual teachers in Hong Kong secondary schools respond to the monolingual principle in practice?

The extent to which Cantonese is used in English Language lessons in Hong Kong secondary schools

It is reported in a diary study (Ho, 1985) that a teacher-researcher found herself abandoning her original conviction of the monolingual principle after teaching two Form 1 remedial English classes<sup>1</sup> for 4 months. 'Her attitude towards the use of Chinese changed from one of dislike and resistance to liking and accepting it' (Ho & Van Naerssen, 1986:31).

In the survey study conducted by the same researchers among Form 1 remedial English teachers in twenty-eight Hong Kong secondary schools in regard to the amount of English and Chinese used in the English classes, 4.5% of the teachers reported using English only, and 47.8% reported using more English than Chinese. However, a large number (47.7%) also reported using half English and half Chinese or mainly Chinese and some English (Ho & Van Naerssen, 1986:30).

In a study on additional teachers for split-class teaching of English (Ho, J.C. 1985) only 19.4% of the 45 teachers surveyed reported that the medium of instruction they normally used in an ordinary class was all English while 58.1% reported using English

supplemented with Chinese occasionally, 19.4% reported using half English and half Chinese, and 3.2 % opted for the choice of 'mainly in Chinese'. As for the medium of instruction they normally used in a split class (a class with half the number of the students of an ordinary class)<sup>2</sup>, only 17.6% of the teachers reported using all English while 70.6% reported using English supplemented with Chinese occasionally, 11.8% reported using half English and half Chinese, and none of the teachers reported using mainly Chinese. (Ho, J.C., 1985: 45).

Findings in these two studies serve as some indication of the extent to which the native language is used in the English lesson at junior levels in at least some secondary schools in Hong Kong. Although large-scale survey would be needed before we can be certain about what the situation is in most schools, there is however the overwhelming impression that this gap between theory and practice does exist and is probably widespread in Hong Kong secondary schools.

#### Explanations for the use of the native language in the English lesson

One straightforward answer to the question why the native language (L1) is used in the English lesson is concerned with the target language (L2) competence of the teacher and of the students, as well as the perceived L2 competence of the students by the teacher. With this explanation the teacher's code-switching is seen as a result of his/her L2 inadequacy in certain aspects, and/or the L2 inadequacy of the students as perceived by the teacher.

Although this explanation seems to be highly logical and reasonable there has so far been little research evidence. Ho and Van Naerssen (1986) did mention students' weak English as one of the reasons for the use of the native language in the English lesson. However, there has been virtually no other study done on this issue.

Even in Ho & Van Naerssen's study, only several general statements based on a diary study of a teacher were given to explain the use of the native language in the English lesson:

- i. It helps students to understand.
  - ii. It motivates students to learn.
  - iii. It helps maintain discipline.
  - iv. It helps to give individual help to especially weak students.
  - v. It saves time.
  - vi. It helps students enrich their general knowledge.
- (1986:31)

There still remain a number of important questions unexplored, eg.: Is there any relationship between these seemingly disparate reasons? What is the mechanism by which the L1 helps to fulfil these purposes? Is there any analytical framework for the analysis of code-switching in the English language lesson?

## The study

The questions raised in the last section point to the need for a better understanding of what in fact is happening in a lesson, and in this case, the English language lesson in particular. The present study was thus conducted with the aim of describing the English language lesson while attempting to analyse the code-switching behaviour of the bilingual teacher from a social interaction perspective.

## The approach

In regard to classroom language use/classroom interaction analysis, there have been a variety of approaches and methodologies. Researchers with a teacher training purpose in mind have developed several observational systems for the analysis of classroom language in relation to pedagogical practices, the best known of which is the Flanders System of Interaction Analysis (Flanders, 1970). Another well-documented line of research is that of the discourse structure analysis developed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Despite the very different nature of these two approaches, they share the feature of the setting up of some coding systems with which classroom verbal behaviour is classified and coded, and in terms of which classroom interaction and language use are described.

The problem of these approaches is in fact a problem inherent in any coding system: while it is intrinsically difficult to decide upon the relevance of the coding categories to the data in question, it is equally difficult to assign verbal behaviour to the different categories.

Besides this inherent methodological difficulty, these approaches do not seem to be particularly apt for the analysis of code-switching behaviour. With much of the focus placed on frequency counts of the functional categories that switch utterances are assigned to, the underlying interactional sociolinguistic principles are often not fully considered.

This study therefore attempts to approach the English language lesson from a somewhat different perspective, that of 'interactional sociolinguistic' studies (Gumperz, 1982). Under this framework, the classroom lesson can be conceived as a conventionalized occasion on which teacher and students come together and interact with one another, for some particular purpose. In other words, teacher and students can be seen as participants in some form of socially organized interaction, which is sensitive to both sociolinguistic norms of the society at large and the pedagogical interactional norms of this particular occasion.

This approach however does not dictate that any functional terms must not be used. In fact the main difference lies in its analytic goal. Instead of aiming at a frequency count of the different functional categories that verbal behaviour is assigned to, we seek to furnish a more dynamic picture of how participants of a

speech event (eg. an English language lesson) contribute to the negotiation of meaning through making use of various 'communicative resources' (Gumperz, 1982:69). In other words a qualitative rather than a quantitative analysis is aimed at. This approach may not necessarily prove to be a more comprehensive one but at the very minimum it will yield valuable findings that a quantitative approach cannot give.

### The data

The data consist of an audio-recording of an English language lesson of a teacher in a secondary school. Details are given below:

'Integrated English lesson' (40 minutes);  
(based on a text-book)  
Level: Form 3  
Number of students in the class: 38  
School: Anglo-Chinese, co-educational, of  
average academic standard<sup>3</sup>

The teacher is a female Cantonese-English bilingual, with a university degree and a certificate in Education. She had about 4 years of teaching experience at the time of recording.

A pocket-size cassette-tape-recorder was placed on the teacher's table during the lesson. The teacher switched it on at the beginning of the lesson and did not pay it any attention until the end of the lesson. To prevent the teacher becoming too self-conscious about her teaching activity, she was requested to conduct the lesson as usual and was told that the recording was mainly for an analysis of student responses in the classroom. (She was told the original aim afterwards.)

The audiotape of the English lesson provided the researcher with access to the verbal output of the teacher and to a certain extent that of the students. It was found that though the use of tape has some intrinsic limitations (eg. no non-verbal information), it proved to be an adequate data base for the present purpose of analysing the teacher's code-choice behaviour in an English lesson.

### The assumptions

An assumption made in this analysis is that the English language lesson presents an interesting case of social interaction as in it one finds the interplay of the pedagogical norms which are imposed upon the participants by the very nature of the situation and the sociolinguistic norms of the society of which the participants share a common membership. Knowledge of both these norms is part of the tacit interactional competence of both teacher and students.



Parallel to this assumption is the assumption that there is also the interplay of the different role-relationships that may exist between teacher and students. Different role-relationships imply different sets of rights and obligations ('R/O set') (Scotton, 83:117) which are constantly negotiated by the participants during their interaction. This negotiation may be done through various verbal and/or non-verbal means that may bear different social meanings, and an ability to recognize them is part of the unspoken knowledge of both teacher and students.

The availability of the two different linguistic codes, English and Cantonese, in the English language lesson has added to the repertoire of means for the negotiation of different R/O sets, because the choice between alternative codes per se is already a 'communicative resource' (Gumperz, 82:69) which the participants of an interaction have at their disposal. Viewed from this perspective, the code-switching behaviour of teacher and students in the English language lesson may be interpreted as an act of 'R/O set' negotiation.

#### The analysis

(i) The tape began with noises of people packing things, moving tables and chatting in Cantonese (L1). Then the teacher greeted the class with 'Good morning' in English and the students chorally greeted her back in English. After the exchange of greetings, there was a 29-second interval (during which noises of students chatting in Cantonese were heard), and then the teacher started talking to the whole class:

014:

T: Get ready! No more talking! I find that you are becoming noisier and noisier when you get into the classroom!

The noise level dropped considerably. The teacher then started teaching:

017:

T: Turn to page sixty-two and sixty-three.

{39-second interval: noise of students chatting softly in L1}

024: Alright<sup>4</sup>, now, you have learnt from.. most of them.. of this unit but the last one.. aah.. it is much more difficult. Now, for example... now listen, suppose, now yesterday.. now yesterday aah.. for example, aahm... Lähm-Jí Yan, alright, for example you..=  
林芷茵  
(name of a student)

=yesterday for example you did not.. handed\* in your.. dictation

book.. but I ask you.. should she hand in? Yes or no?.. Should.. she hand in?

035:

Ss: No! {more or less in chorus}

T: No? Yesterday I asked her to hand in..understand? She needed to hand in yesterday. Understand? She needed to hand in yesterday but.. did she? ... Did she?

S: No. {the soft voice of a student}

039:

T: No. Alright? Gaa-jē heui móuh aa maa? .. Did she? .. No.=  
假啱佢無咁嘛  
It's false; she hasn't, right?

=Alright? So, I would say.. Lahm-Jí-Yān, léih haih-mh-haih=  
林芷茵 你係唔係  
Isn't it true

=yīng-goi yih-ging gaau-jó laa? Bat-gwo léih móuh gaau-dou=  
應該已經交咗啦 不過你無交到  
that you should have handed in? But you haven't handed in;

=wo, haih-mh-haih gúm ge yi-sí aa? Alright? Léih ying-goi nē=  
嗱你唔係咁嘅意思呀 你應該呢  
isn't that what it means? You should

=jauh gaau-jó gaa laak, gaau-JÓ:: gaa laak, jē haih-mh-haih=  
就交咗喇 交咗喇 嘍 即係唔係  
have handed in, have handed in; doesn't that mean

=léih ying-goi yih-ging gaau-jó gaa? Alright? That means YOU=  
你應該已經交咗喇  
you should have already handed in?

=SHOU::LD, léih ying-goi, YOU SHOU::LD.. HAVE HANDED.. IN.=  
你應該  
You should,

=Alright? Léih YING-GOI yih-ging gaau-jó. YOU SHOULD..=  
你應該已經交咗  
You should have already handed in.

=HAVE HANDED IN.. the dictation book.

{Sound of T writing on the blackboard} (045)

The first instance of the teacher's switch from English to Cantonese is worth noting (039). Right from the start of the lesson, she had been operating well in English. She successfully reduced the noise of the students; she gave instructions as to which page, which

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section she was talking about, and there was no indication that her students could not understand her until they almost unanimously gave her a wrong answer for her question (035 Ss: No!). And it was shortly after this that the teacher's first switch from English to Cantonese occurred (038).

The teacher's increased awareness (after the students' wrong answer) of possible non-comprehension on the part of her students is reflected in a noticeable increase after '035' in the number of comprehension checks (Long, 1980: 82) realized in the linguistic forms of 'understand' and 'alright' spoken with a rising question intonation. The teacher's anxiety over students' possible non-comprehension of what she was saying is also reflected in her repetition as well as accentuation of the key sentence, 'You should have handed in', both in English and in Cantonese ('Léih ying-gōi=  
你 應 該  
 (You should

=yih-ging gāau-jó gaa laak'). (Accentuation is indicated by  
已 經 交 咗 嘍  
 have already handed in.)

capitalization in the transcript.)

It is argued here that in accounting for this first instance of the teacher's code-switch from English to Cantonese, the teacher's increased anxiety over students' non-comprehension (which is reflected in the organization of her speech) is an important factor (see further evidence in (iii) below).

(ii)

045: { Sound of teacher writing on the blackboard }

047:

T: Mh-hóu gwaa-jyuh wān aa háa, yāt gāan lóu lyuhn hóu-dō=  
唔 好 掛 住 玩 呀 吓 一 閘 撈 亂 好 多  
 Don't indulge in playing; in a minute many items will be

=ge yéh yāt-chāih béi léih.. fill in the blank go sih nē=  
嘅 嘢 一 齊 俾 你 嗰 時 呢  
 given all at once to you.. when you fill in the blank,

=yauh mh ji-dou yuhng bin yāt-go āam aa. ...Fān-hoi léih hóu=  
又 唔 知 道 用 邊 一 個 啱 呀 分 開 嘅 好  
 you don't know which is the correct one to use. ... When

=gāan-daān jāa maa, I need to, I.. I must, I ought to, hóu=  
簡 單 咋 嘛 好  
 they are separate they are very simple, very

=gāan-daān fān-hoi, daahn ying-yuhng héi shéuhng léih jauh mh=  
簡 單 分 開 但 應 用 起 上 嚟 就 唔  
 simple when they are separate, but when in use they are not

=hah̄ gum yuhng-yih lo wo, hóu chíh léih-deih kám-yaht mahk=  
係咁容易囉嗰好似你哋喺日默  
so easy; just like your dictation yesterday

=s̄yü gum yeung, béi géi go geui-jí léih-deih, tih̄n faan saai=  
書咁樣俾幾個句子你哋填番晒  
you were given a couple of sentences to fill in those words

=léih-deih mahk-gwo gón dī jih dóu mh sik tih̄n. ... You should=  
你哋默過嗰啲字都唔識填  
you've dictated; even that you failed to do.

=have handed in.. a dictation book, for example... laah hai=  
啱嘍  
O.K. for

=yí geui léih góng nē, lí go síh-sik tauh-sin ngóh béi léih,=  
咗句嘅講呢哩個時式頭先我俾你  
this sentence, this tense pattern that I gave you just now,

=heui yáuh móuh gāu-dou aa? Did she?  
佢有無交到呀  
has she handed in?

053:

S: No. S: No. ... { voices of a few students }

In this instance, the teacher had been writing on the blackboard (and before that she had just repeated the sample sentence, 'You should have handed in') when she started to ask (in Cantonese) the students not to indulge in idle play and explained why they should not do so by reference to the anticipated difficulty of the 'fill in the blank' exercise as well as their poor performance in dictation the day before (047--051).

Now there arises this question: The teacher, who had earlier succeeded in reducing the students' noisy behaviour by using English (014), had, for some reason, chosen to achieve a seemingly similar purpose in the native language that both she and her students share. This occurred despite the fact that this was in obvious violation of the pedagogical linguistic norm of the English language lesson: Use the target language as far as possible to maximize target language exposure, which the teacher herself agreed with, as was expressed by her to the researcher in a private conversation after the recording.

In accounting for this second instance of the teacher's code-switching behaviour, it is helpful to make use of the notion of 'maxim exploitation' in pragmatics (Levinson, 83: 147). As was pointed out by Scotton & Ury, metaphorical switching depends for its effect on a departure from the societal consensus on code allocation (77: 5), and it may well be argued here that the teacher was in fact flouting the pedagogical linguistic maxim of the English language lesson to achieve special emphasis. Her violation of the pedagogical linguistic maxim may have been an attempt at redefining the interaction as appropriate to a different 'social arena' (Scotton & Ury, 77: 6). Since each social arena corresponds to a different set

of norms (ibid), the teacher can be seen as attempting to negotiate a different 'rights-and-obligations set' (R/O set) through negotiating a new definition of the situation by making use of the additional communicative resource of code-switching, which serves the purpose of a 'signalling mechanism' (Gumperz, 82: 97). In short, by code-switching from English to Cantonese the teacher seemed to be signalling to her students a message somewhat like this:

"I am now speaking to you not so much as your English language teacher but as your friend."

By code-switching the teacher can convey a message of solidarity with the students efficiently and implicitly. The code-choice itself already embodies a whole set of social meanings, and the ability to recognize them is a component of the tacit sociolinguistic interactional competence of both the teacher and students in this classroom.

(iii) The teacher then returned to the sample sentence, 'you should have handed in a dictation book', and asked the question, 'heui yáuh móuh gaau-dou aa? Did she?', (052)

佢有無交到呀  
has she handed in?

which she in fact had earlier asked twice in English (038, 038.5) and had herself repeated the answer twice in English (039, 040) and explained the answer twice in Cantonese (039.2, 041). The sequence goes like this:

Question(Eng.)-- Answer(Eng.) --Explanation of Answer (Cant.)  
Question(Eng.)-- Answer(Eng.) --Explanation of Answer (Cant.)  
Question (Cant.& Eng.)

The importance of this question to the teacher and her worry over her students' ability to grasp the point that she was presenting are vividly reflected in this repetitious treatment of the same question and answer.

A few students answered her question in English. (The question had been encoded first in Cantonese, then in English). The teacher repeated the answer in English and then followed it up with a series of elaborations of the meaning of the sample sentence in Cantonese (053-067). This she in fact had done earlier in a similar way (039-045).

053:

S: No. S: No. ... {a few voices}

T: She didn't. Alright? Heui kèih-saht nē jauh móuh jouh=  
佢其實呢就無做  
She in fact has not done it;

=ge, ngóh jūng-yi waah néih ying-goi dim aa? Yáuh jouh-dou;=  
嘅我鍾意話你應該點呀有做到  
I'd like to say you should what? Have done it;

=s6-yih léih gin-dóu yi yāt geui geui-ji nē, léih ying-goi=  
所以 你 見到 咁 一 句 句 子 呢 你 應 該  
therefore, when you see this sentence, you should

=yauh gaau-dou, you should have handed in léih ying-goi yauh=  
有 交 到 你 應 該 有  
have handed in you should have

=gaau-dou nē, jik-haih yi-si waah māt-yéh aa? Léih móuh gaau=  
交 到 呢 即 係 意思 話 乜 嘢 呀 你 無 交  
handed in, that means what? You haven't

=dou. Understand? Ngóh yāt yahp léih, for example, 'you=  
到 我 一 入 嚟  
handed in. As soon as I came in,

=should have.. had your dictation but you haven't'. Alright? 'You  
should have done your.. classwork'.. but you didn't. Understand?

It was observed in (i) above that the organization of the teacher's speech indicated an increasing anxiety on the part of the teacher over her students' ability to fully comprehend what she was saying. In (ii), her repetitious treatment of the same question and answer, together with parallel encoding (both in English and Cantonese) can also be interpreted in a similar way, that is, the teacher was anxious that her students might not understand the point clearly; she therefore sought to ensure thorough comprehension through presenting the message again in Cantonese, which is the students' dominant language.

(iv)

067:

T: Another example... for example yesterday, yesterday again,

alright? When I crossed the road, I saw.. an old.. woman. She aahm  
crossed the road when.. aahm.. mh.. the light is still.. red for  
her, ( ?? ), for the pedestrian. O.K.? But should you cross the  
road, when the.. pedestrian light is still red ? Should you cross  
the road? No. So I would say SHE:: .. SHOU::LD .. NO:::T ..

mh ying-goi aa maa? Alright SHE SHOU::LD NO::T .. HAVE CROSSED=  
唔 應 該 咁 嘛  
should not, right?

=THAT ROAD at that time, understand? Alright? {30 seconds: T drawing  
on blackboard} Alright? ..... O.K.?



S: Mē lèih gaa? S: Mē lèih gaa? {Ss laughter} (084)  
 咩嘍㗎 咩嘍㗎  
 What is it? What is it?

In this case, the code-switch (074) from English to Cantonese came amidst the presentation of a sample sentence:

074:

T: So I would say SHE:: .. SHOU::LD .. NO:::T .. mh ying=  
 唔 應=  
 shouldn't,

=gōi āā maa? Alright SHE SHOU::D NO:::T .. HAVE CROSSED THAT=  
 該 咁 嘛  
 right?

=ROAD at that time, understand? Alright?

The accentuation given to the model sentence indicated the importance the teacher placed on it. However, it was equally important to her that the students could recognize the negative obligation of the situation, which goes with this sentence pattern. Therefore, although the Cantonese insertion looks like a translation of 'She should not', it should be interpreted as a re-assertion of the constraints of the situation, and it was encoded in Cantonese to ensure thorough comprehension.

Another interesting observation in (iv) is concerned with students' code-choice behaviour. While the teacher was drawing on the blackboard an illustration of the example situation (inferred from the teacher's reference to it later in '093': Now look at this old woman....), there was the laughter of students and the voices of some students asking in Cantonese : Mē lèih gaa? Mē lèih gaa? (What is it? What is it?) (084). This serves as some evidence pointing to the fact that in most peer interaction, Cantonese was the code students chose, even though it was an English language lesson that they were participating in. In other words, most of the time the students were trying to redefine the English language lesson as a less formal, less serious, and more playlike situation. (See also evidence in the students' making fun of the teacher's words in (v) below.)

(v)

163--177:

T: Let's do it orally alright? Now do.. let's all together do number two first, and then I will ask one or two or three to do another, alright? Get ready? 'I.. reserved.. a copy of Oliver Twist. You needn't have reserved this copy,=

[Ss: You needn't have reserved this copy....==

=because.. there's a copy.. on the shelf. Understand? =

==[..... there's a copy on the shelf.]

=Alright? Mìhng-mh-mìhng aa? Understand? ... Now let's do it this=  
明 唔 明 呀  
Understand?

=way. Now you work with your partner. Would you...

[S1: Partner

māt-yeh partner aa?]  
乜 嘢 呀  
what

T: Partner, your partner. Do you know 'partner'? Néih go fò-buhn aa! =  
你 個 伙 伴 呀  
your partner

S2: Ngòh go fò-buhn ... {laughing }<sup>5</sup>  
我 個 伙 伴  
my partner

T: Néih go partner aa, néih...  
你 個 呀 你  
Your your...

[S3: ( ?? fò aa! ) ] {Ss laughter}  
火 呀

S4: Haih-mh-haih ló fò jauh gaa? ... {Ss laughter}  
係 唔 係 擺 火 做 嘍  
Is it made of fire?

T: You work with your partner. One (was) .. one would be your friend,  
and one would be you, alright? Get ready? Start! Number three four  
five.. six. (177)

In (v), the code-switch came when the teacher had just demonstrated to the whole class how to do the sentence pattern drill orally and was about to ask her students to engage in pair work. But before that it seemed that she wanted to make sure the students understood how to do the oral drill. This is reflected in a series of comprehension checks immediately following the demonstration:

169:

T: Understand? Alright? Mìhng-mh-mìhng aa? Understand?  
明 唔 明 呀  
Understand?

{The L1 utterance was in lower pitch & volume}

Up to this point in the lesson the teacher's comprehension checks had all been realized in the English forms of 'Understand?', 'Alright?', 'O.K.?', and this is the first time that a comprehension check has been encoded in Cantonese. It came as a repetition of the two immediately preceding English ones, and was followed by a repetition of 'Understand?'.

Why did the teacher code-switch here? It does not seem plausible that she had code-switched because she was afraid that her students could not grasp the meaning of 'understand?', 'alright?', which she had been using all through.

As argued above, an analysis of the organization of this exchange gives us a strong indication that the students' understanding of the oral drill example was perceived by the teacher as vital to the success of the pair-work that followed. It seemed that to her if there was any single student who did not really understand the example, she should not proceed to pair-work. The insertion of the Cantonese comprehension check amidst the three English ones can therefore be interpreted as a reflection of her determination to ensure that everyone understood the example.

However, the Cantonese insertion, which was spoken at a lower pitch and a lower volume, was not simply a repetition: it seemed as if she was saying it not as an authoritative teacher, but as a sympathetic friend, who would not be threatening to the students even when their problems and weaknesses were exposed to her.

However, to maintain her authority as the teacher in the classroom, she could not afford to be interpreted as a friend only. The rapid shift of roles seemed to help to avoid this problem. She could 'code-switch' to neutralize those potentially salient attributes of one variety which may have an unfavourable value, by making use of 'another variety which may have a favourable value' (Scotton, 76: 919).

This argument also applies to her response to the students' playful teasing of her Cantonese explanation of the word 'partner'. She switched back to English to say: 'You work with your partner....' (174), asserting her authority, and redefining the situation as a formal, serious lesson.

(vi) 492--510

{The teacher had just asked a student, Léih-Ji-Mihng, to read out a passage}

李志明

L: There .. are.. a lot of people =

[T: Take up your book!]

L: =whom .. I don't know working in the bank. I .. never =

[T: Léih  
李

Ji-Mihng, ( ?? ) ]

志明  
{Ss laughter}

L: = I don't know who they are. I ( ?? )

[T: Try again! There are.. a

lot of people ... ] {in a more standard intonation}

L: There are ...

[T: There are a lot of people. Try again.]

(500)

L: Yauh si gwo. There are a lot of people I don't know

又試過  
Try again.

[T: Try=

{the student's L1 utterance was in a protesting intonation, and his English was still characterized by a Cantonese rhythm}

=it ONE by ONE!<sup>6</sup> Don't ( ?? ) there-are-laa-laa-laa-laa-wi-

wi-wan-laa-I-don't-know-wor-king-in-the-bank-I've-ne-ver-

{outbursts of laughter of students }

talked-to-them-and-have-no-i-de-a-who-they-are.

I've-ne-ver-been-in-tro-duced-to-them-it's-un-like-ly-that-I'd-e-ven-

re-cog-nize-the-bank-man-a-ger-if-I-saw-him. Don't use this way!

{back to normal accent }

Understand? Try again.

L: There are a .. lot

[T: There are.. a lot of people ]

L: Waa, hóu geih-háau go wo! ( ?? ) (509)

嘩 好技巧 嚟唱

Oh, it demands a great deal of skill!

{outbursts of students' laughter}

T: Try again!

L: there are.. a lot of people... (510)

In this exchange, the teacher had asked the student to read a passage but when she found him reading with a Cantonese rhythm, she interrupted his reading again and again, demanding that he try to imitate the target rhythm and intonation. The student's utterances of 'Yauh si gwo (500) and 'Waa, hóu geih-háau go wo!' (509) were in fact an interesting evidence pointing to his attempt at negotiating for a less formal, less serious and thus less threatening situation, when he was confronted with the teacher's authority and demands. It is worth noting that despite the student's use of Cantonese, the teacher maintained her use of English all through, and maintained her role as the authority figure while making firm demands on the student <sup>7</sup>.

Conclusion: A Model of Pedagogical and Para-pedagogical Levels of Interaction in the Classroom

Interaction between teacher and students in the classroom is of a highly complex nature. That is because the job of a teacher is very different from the job of a teaching-machine, in that the function of a teacher is not solely pedagogical but involves various other tasks like promoting learning motivation, maintaining classroom discipline and fostering a favourable human relationship that is conducive to both teaching and learning in the classroom setting. It is no exaggeration to say that the degree of success of the pedagogical task to a great extent depends upon the degree of success of the other tasks, which we may refer to as 'para-pedagogical'.

It is in response to these diverse, sometimes conflicting tasks (e.g. 'maintaining authority' vs. 'maintaining a friendly relationship') that the teacher finds himself/herself at different moments of the lesson stressing different role-relationships, which are appropriate for the handling of different tasks.

Six excerpts from the lesson have been analysed in a social interactional framework, with the hypothesis that on every occasion of human interaction, there can exist different levels of interaction and code-switching serving as an important communicative means available to the participants of interaction in their negotiation of the different levels.

The following table summarizes the relationship between code-choice, different role-relationships and different levels of interaction negotiated by the teacher in this lesson:

LEVEL OF INTERACTION	ROLE-RELATIONSHIP	CODE-CHOICE
(A) Pedagogical	As an English-speaking teacher	English
(B) Para-Pedagogical	i. As a bilingual helper in the learning task	Cantonese
	ii. As a sympathetic friend/adviser	

It is proposed in this paper that such a model can serve as an interpretive framework for an analysis of code-switching in the English language lesson. The model aims at capturing the dynamics of the teacher's and students' negotiation of different role-relationships and different rights-and-obligations sets.

However this paper cannot and is in fact not intended to make any statement about the question of whether or not Cantonese should be used in an English language lesson. Instead, it aims at presenting a picture of what in fact is happening in an English language lesson.

Based on the analysis in this paper, the following statements can nevertheless be made:

(1) A qualitative approach to the analysis of code-switching in the classroom can yield valuable findings that a quantitative approach cannot give.

(2) The notions of role-shifting/role-negotiation/ 'R/O set'-negotiation and a differentiation between pedagogical and para-pedagogical levels of interaction is useful to an understanding of the teacher's code-switching behaviour in an English language lesson.

(3) Code-switching is employed by the teacher as a communicative resource to signal unspoken social meanings in the English language lesson.

#### NOTES

1. A remedial English class consists of half the number of the students of a normal class. It is intended for students who are weak in English and need more help from the teacher.
2. A split class results from dividing an ordinary class into two smaller classes, with the aim of enhancing learning outcome.
3. The school admits students in band 3 and band 4. (Primary-school graduates are classified into different bands according to their performance in a scholastic test for secondary school placement)
4. Comprehension checks are underlined in this excerpt.
5. The Chinese word for 'partner' has the first syllable pronounced in the same way as the Chinese word for 'fire'.
6. The teacher's utterance 'Try it ONE by ONE' should be interpreted as 'Try to read it slowly, sentence by sentence' and should not be seen as referring to the following negative example of stressing every syllable.
7. Besides the six excerpts analysed in this paper, the other instances of code-switching in the lesson also lend support to the interpretive framework adopted in this analysis. For a full analysis, see Lin (forthcoming).

NOTES ON TRANSCRIPTION:

1. English is transcribed orthographically, while Cantonese is transcribed in the Yale system. The corresponding Chinese characters and a rough English translation are also given.

2. Pauses:

A short pause is indicated by .. and a long one by ...

3. Simultaneous utterances:

The point at which another utterance joins an ongoing one is indicated by: [

4. Contiguous utterances:

Equal signs: (= for the first speaker; == for the second, or interrupting, speaker) are used to connect different parts of a speaker's utterance when those parts constitute a continuous flow of speech that has been carried over to another line, by transcript design, to accommodate an intervening interruption.

5. Contextual information:

Significant contextual information is given in curly brackets: eg. {Student laughter }

6. Accentuation:

Accentuated syllables are marked by capitalization. Lengthening of sounds is marked by colons: eg. SHOU::LD.

7. Transcriptionist doubt:

Unintelligible items or items in doubt are indicated by question marks and parentheses: eg. S: ( ?? fo aa!)

8. Ungrammaticality:

Ungrammatical items are marked by asterisks.

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## CLASSROOM INTERACTION RESEARCH AND THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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It is the writer's observation that research findings in education and applied linguistics are sometimes inappropriately applied in teacher education and curriculum innovation. In this discussion some findings from research into classroom interaction are examined with reference to their potential application in foreign language classrooms.

### Introduction

Research findings in linguistics and education seem to make little impact on day-to-day classroom practice or on the language taught and used in classrooms. Discussions on language in education (Rosen 1969), the role of learner language in the learning process (Britten 1970) and the nature of learning by talking (Barnes 1976) reflect a general recognition that talk, especially pupil talk, is important and somehow central to the process of education itself (Willes 1979). Classroom interaction studies have shown however that, in classrooms, teachers do most of the talking (Bellack et al 1966; Flanders, 1970; Delamont, 1976) with percentages of interaction time devoted to teacher talk ranging from 50% to 82.2% and the average ranging from 68% to 72%. Recent studies indicate little change in this pattern, revealing that teacher talk does little to foster exploratory talk or risk taking. Instead, teacher talk restricts the quality of pupil talk by controlling both the form and content of pupil responses to teacher-initiated questions or requests for verbal behaviour (Long et al. 1984). This type of teacher-behaviour arises to some extent from the socio-linguistic relationship between teachers and pupils and the popular perception of the teachers' classroom role. Sinclair and Brazil identify three aspects of teaching, i.e. the subject matter of lessons, the organisation of lessons and the disciplinary element, in all of which teachers are involved in "telling things to pupils, getting pupils to do things, getting pupils to say things and evaluating the things that pupils do". (1982: 22)

There is no evidence to suggest that teachers of second and foreign languages behave differently. The findings of Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981), based on a total of 5,252 minutes of foreign language teaching time note that teacher involvement with the class as a whole - as opposed to teacher involvement with small groups or individuals or non-involvement - "predominated overwhelmingly" in their data. Innovations such as the 'communicative approach' and the 'natural approach' seem to have made little or no difference. This is not surprising since Krashen's own demonstrations of 'comprehensible input', for example, have all the hall-marks of teacher involvement with the class as a whole. Long and Crookes (1986) cite analysis of lessons by teachers professing belief in 'some sort of communicative language teaching'. Their description of lessons reveal the teachers adopting the

role of dominant participant with a frequency which would render natural conversation impossible. It seems that in spite of innovations foreign language classrooms differ little from traditional classrooms where "the teacher takes the controlling role and conducts a fairly ritual conversation with pupils. The pupils behave largely as one many-headed participant, avoiding cross-conversation and acknowledging the authority of the teacher in their verbal behaviour". (Sinclair and Brazil, 1982: 3)

#### Pupil-talk: Goals and Developments

These findings do not, however, imply the total failure of innovation in this area. Teacher education programmes, especially INSET programmes, reflect an increasing interest in fostering pupil talk and research findings demonstrate a reduction, albeit slight, in teacher talk and a corresponding increase (not to be assumed) in pupil talk. Although inexperienced classroom observers may be shocked by the restrictions on the quality and duration of the latter, it cannot be denied that nowadays many teachers make less use of the lecture format and make more effort to encourage pupil talk.

The resulting pupil talk falls far short, however, of the exploratory pupil talk of the type described by Barnes (1976) in which pupils participating in peer-group discussions are involved in comparing observations and perceptions, offering tentative interpretations, conclusions or theories and rejecting or modifying their findings. The outcome of exploratory pupil talk is not a negotiated compromise. It is instead a group of individual opinions arrived at as a result of considering and evaluating the observations, ideas and conclusions of everyone in the group. This type of outcome can be achieved through a variety of interactional styles, the exception being that if one pupil in the group adopts a 'teacher-style', that of dominant participant, there may be no outcome at all because the discussion itself tends to break down. Successful peer discussion is characterised by mutual co-operation over the style of discourse and by efforts to sustain the discourse (Wardhaugh, 1985) while coming to terms with the general topic.

By contrast most pupil-talk in modern classrooms still tends to involve pupils in a psycho-linguistic guessing game of the sort described by Goodman (1967) with reference to reading skills. In the classroom the pupils are on one team, playing a role similar to that of the reader, while the teacher, the sole member of the second team, plays a role similar to that of the writer. The purpose of the game is to guess which way the teacher wants the discussion to develop. The rules require the pupils to make guesses and observe the teacher's responses which, although not necessarily explicit, give clues similar, in content if not in form, to those used in 'Hunt the Thimble'. This approach inevitably increases pupil-talk; pupils have to use slightly more language in order to identify the teacher's intention than they use in response to closed questions. In this type of discourse, however, pupils know that their views and opinions are not of primary importance since the object of the game is to find out what is in the teacher's mind. The rules of the game also inhibit pupils from speeding up the whole process by asking direct questions such as 'Do you mean x or y?' or 'Do you want to talk about x?'. Sometimes the pupils win the game by making the correct guess.

Even if they do not, it does not really make much difference to the rest of the discourse. It should be noted that the type of interactional behaviour displayed by the teacher during this game would be regarded as unco-operative, patronising or downright anti-social in most environments outside the classroom. Neither would this type of pupil talk facilitate conversation outside the classroom. Teacher-pupil talk of this variety can hardly be described as providing a model appropriate for use by foreign or second language pupils outside the classroom.

Amongst efforts which have been made to improve the quality of pupil-talk, is the micro-teaching component in teacher education programmes which concentrates on techniques designed to reduce teacher talk and encourage more active pupil participation in discussion. Most of these techniques however require the teacher to be in control of the whole class; pupil contributions are to be made only when responses are required and pupils are nominated by the teacher, and advice is given on how to deal with incorrect answers to discussion questions (Perrot 1980). From this it is clear that genuine discussion, involving freedom to initiate, to offer opinions or to change the topic, is not the object of the exercise. For such techniques to work successfully the pupils need only indulge the teacher by playing the type of psycho-linguistic guessing game described above. Students unused to this teaching technique need to go through a minor re-socialisation process by identifying and then conforming to the slight modifications in classroom protocol. Such techniques are nevertheless an invaluable teaching tool. They succeed in producing longer student responses, thus slightly reducing the quantity of teacher talk, and they also encourage teacher-questions set at higher cognitive levels which elicit answers at a higher cognitive level. They still reflect, however, the pupil's attempt to produce the response required by the teacher, i.e. the 'correct' answer as opposed to the pupil's own opinions or reactions, even though the pupil may have slightly more freedom in mode of expression. Although such techniques are unlikely to induce exploratory talk of the type described by Barnes, they do succeed in generating another type of pupil talk.

Barnes (1982) has described this type of classroom talk as 'language as a goal of teaching or learning' i.e. the development of pupils' language in order to facilitate the ability to reflect, criticise and consider alternatives. Barnes identifies two other types of pupil-talk, the first being 'language as a means of learning' which embraces exploratory talk and is distinguished from 'language as a goal of teaching or learning' being "part of the activity of learning" as opposed to the "communication of what has been learnt". (DES 1979) Language as a means of learning is the type of language used by learners to pass through "the stages of misunderstanding, approximation and correction" which are part of the learning process. The third type of classroom talk is the 'language of social control', features of which were mentioned earlier in this article. This aspect of classroom talk has dominated discussion of classroom interaction research findings, partly because many of those involved in education, including teachers, find the suggestion that teachers do in fact exercise this sort of control, difficult to accept. Discussion of the language of social control in classrooms seems to have focussed on two themes: the 'hidden curriculum', and the school socialisation process. Attention to the

latter has been sustained because it is recognised as the factor which influences the occurrence and quality of the two other types of classroom language. The outcome of the work of many curriculum innovators and teacher educators is therefore dependent on this factor. The issue of the hidden curriculum vis-a-vis language has tended to focus on teachers' social values and attitudes towards language and to be associated with the role of the mother tongue both as the medium of instruction and as a subject discipline within the school curriculum. More recently attention has been paid to different types of talk such as differences in the syntax of "unplanned spontaneous talk" and "highly organized written discourse" (Hatch et al. 1986) and the distinction between 'listener-oriented speech' and 'message-oriented speech' (Brown 1982), both of which have relevance for foreign and second language teaching.<sup>1</sup>

### Research into Teacher Language

The way in which language is used to exercise social control in classrooms is also of interest because it reflects teachers' educational values. Findings such as those reported by Perrot (1980) indicate that the verbal behaviour of teachers is influenced by their attitudes towards the nature of the learning process and the roles of teachers, learners and language in that process together with their attitudes towards the purposes or goals of learning i.e. the relative priority which teachers accord to the content of the subject discipline and to the learning process (Falvey 1983). Since the nature of teacher language has been shown to influence the nature and quality of pupil talk, classroom interaction research sometimes focusses on teacher talk. There may be a variety of reasons for this focus, however. One researcher may wish to identify the types of teacher language which develop pupil talk as a goal of teaching/learning, another to identify which types facilitate or encourage exploratory talk while another may be primarily concerned with teacher language as a means of social control. In addition, teacher talk may be viewed as a means of establishing teachers' educational values or the researcher may wish to identify the varieties of teacher talk which occur as a result of teachers' educational values. Researchers' goals, which are not always made explicit in research reports, and their primary interest, e.g. educational or linguistic, should be taken into account by consumers of research, particularly if the findings are considered potentially applicable in classrooms or teacher education programmes. The educational values of researchers also merit consideration. Although adherence to rigorous research methodologies may ensure objectivity of findings, it can have the effect of "oversimplifying" and does not guarantee the applicability of findings in every classroom. Research into methods or techniques which foster an increase in pupil talk, for example, may appear to be of relevance for language teaching. In practice this relevance depends on which type of pupil talk is the research target and whether this type of pupil talk is deemed desirable in classrooms. The research target may have been influenced by the educational values of the researcher and these values may not reflect those of the research consumers or the society in which they function (Sinclair 1987).

## Talk in language classrooms

When the subject discipline of the classroom is itself a language, the roles of language within the classroom become more complex. Since the teaching of the mother tongue as a subject creates a very different environment in terms of classroom interaction, this discussion will now concentrate on issues related to second and foreign language teaching and the term 'language classroom' will be used with reference to such teaching.

In the language classroom the roles of the three types of classroom language identified by Barnes take on different dimensions. The role of language as a goal of teaching and learning becomes an explicit goal, rather than a secondary goal. It also becomes a goal of which pupils are more aware. In addition, language also becomes the subject-matter or content of teaching. The major differences in the roles of language as a goal of learning in the language classroom and in other subject classrooms, however, is that in other subject classrooms, when language is a secondary goal and the mother tongue is the medium of instruction, each pupil makes available a data-bank of linguistic resources from which both the individual pupil and the whole class can draw data. In the language classroom it is usually assumed that only the teacher, or the text, offers this type of resource. This encourages dependence on the teacher's data-bank and a failure to utilise the developing pupil data-banks. This may explain the tendency amongst foreign language teachers to hold transmission rather than interpretaton attitudes towards the teaching/learning process (Young 1981).

The role of language as a means of learning is characterised by teachers in the role of sympathetic listener and occasional interpreter, rather than that of monitor or evaluator, with student linguistic errors being ignored or meriting comment only if the teacher perceives a potential breakdown in communication. Since this type of pupil talk is, however, dependent on teachers' educational values, its occurrence is reduced if the teacher accords high priority to knowledge about the subject matter and low priority to exploratory talk or experiential learning. The introduction of innovations such as the 'communicative approach' might suggest that this role of language will be similar in language classrooms and in other subject classrooms. In language classrooms, however, teachers tend to treat pupil talk as a learning outcome, requiring monitoring and evaluation, rather than a means of learning. Pupil-talk in the target language also tends to be viewed as an end in itself by pupils themselves and this encourages the assumption that teacher intervention in pupil-talk is evaluatory in nature and directed towards the form and accuracy of pupil utterances rather than towards the facilitation of purposeful communication.

The third type of classroom language, language as social control, appears to be the only type of classroom language which does not change its function or character in the language classroom, even when the target language is used exclusively as the medium of instruction in foreign and second language classrooms.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of explanations for this. Firstly, teachers need to exercise control over student verbal behaviour to direct attention towards the subject matter and also to fulfill their legal responsibility for their charges. Secondly, control

over pupils is popularly seen as the hallmark of a competent teacher and the language of social control is the means by which the socialisation process, the process of becoming a 'good' pupil, is initiated and then maintained. Thirdly, success in the development of language as a goal of learning, through teacher training techniques such as the competency or performance-based approaches (Lawton 1987) is dependent on the teacher's right to exercise control over pupil language. The inducement of exploratory talk, by contrast, requires the teacher to temporarily abandon part of this control. This is most easily achieved by physical as well as verbal withdrawal from the discourse, but when physical withdrawal is impossible or undesirable then the teacher's physical and verbal behaviour has to be modified in order to create the suggestion that the socio-linguistic relationship between teacher and pupils is temporarily suspended. When pupils recognise this the teacher tends to be treated as a resource rather than as a monitor-evaluator. The occurrence of this type of classroom interaction is infrequent and is dependent on the teachers' educational values, particularly the extent to which the teacher perceives peer talk amongst pupils as a facilitator of learning. Even when the mother tongue is the target language, the desired outcome, e.g. an essay or a speech in a debate, may be viewed as a performance to be achieved through imitation, practice and teacher correction rather than through pupil observation and evaluation leading to pupil understanding and control over language. In second and foreign language teaching, these views may be reinforced by the belief that pupils have insufficient command of the target language to be able to use it to communicate at all.

Although the roles of the three types of classroom language clearly differ in language classrooms and other subject classrooms, this is often overlooked when findings from classroom interaction research are used as a basis for improving classroom talk in language classrooms. Exploratory talk or language as a means for learning may, for example, be confused with language as a goal for teaching/learning. The temptation to see foreign language pupils as tabula rasa is very difficult to resist and this lends itself to the assumption that exploratory talk has to be taught. Once this happens exploratory talk as a means of learning no longer exists, being replaced by language as a goal for teaching/ learning. The language forms introduced by the teacher tend to reflect the language values, and sometimes linguistic naivety, of the course designer or teacher. They bear little or no resemblance to the "ill-formed", "impolite" and brief but constantly repeated or re-formulated utterances which characterise exploratory talk. The one word utterance "What?" for example may become taboo because it is not "good" English when, in fact, it is an extremely flexible utterance which allows a variety of interpretations and responses, is frequently used by child and adult native speakers and has the added advantage that it represents a minimal vocabulary-learning load for the foreign language learner.

#### Second and foreign language classrooms

The difference between the foreign language classroom and the second language classroom is another important factor which is often overlooked, not only in the process of applying research findings to classroom practice but also in the design and content of teaching materials. This may be because the differences are sometimes dismissed

as insignificant by those who are concerned with the assimilation into society of large numbers of immigrants e.g. in the U.S.A. and the U.K.. There is nevertheless an important distinction between the two, that of the differences in their goals. Second language learning goals tend to be more immediate and more diverse than those of foreign language learning.

The second language may be needed as a tool for day-to-day living; for social interaction, for formal schooling, for the conduct of personal business, for functioning as an employee, in some cases for assimilation into society and, in others, as a lingua franca. Many second language learners are exposed to users of the second language outside the language classroom and even though their motivation may be integrative initially they often develop instrumental motivation which helps them to formulate their own learning/acquisition goals. They are also often in a position to evaluate their progress in achieving these goals through conscious or unconscious processes. This applies to children just as much as to adults as, for example, in the case of the young child who wants to learn how to say 'I like Pepsi best' or 'Can your little boy come out to play?'. Such goals reflect both integrative and instrumental motivation and it is clearly within the child's power to evaluate progress in achieving these goals<sup>3</sup> without analysing the underlying causes of failure or success.

By contrast the foreign language is seldom required for immediate use and seldom studied with such clear purposes, apart perhaps from those of passing examinations. Foreign language learning often takes place in a vacuum in the sense that the learner receives little or no feedback of the variety which helps in the acquisition of the mother tongue. Teacher feedback is very different from the feedback received by users of a second or foreign language during interaction outside the classroom and the majority of foreign language learners have no access to the latter. This restricts the foreign language learners' opportunities to formulate their own immediate instrumental goals and leaves them with virtually no means of evaluating their own progress. Neither does the long-term goal of passing examinations provide foreign language learners with a framework which will help them to formulate their own short-term goals since feedback, even in the classroom, is usually delayed and learners are seldom equipped to identify the sub-skills being tested. It seems, therefore, that foreign language learners may be deprived of the type of experiential learning which occurs through exposure and to which those involved in mother tongue acquisition and second language learning have access.<sup>4</sup>

Thus although in the case of second language learning the goals may be more diverse, the 'social contexts' (Halliday 1978) in which the second language learning will be utilised are often easier to identify, as is the nature or type of language needed in those social contexts. It is tempting to conclude that the only target language environment which is common to both foreign and second language learners is the language classroom since both categories of learner usually need to use the target language in the classroom. This can be an unwise assumption, however.

Let us first consider the classroom as a target language-using environment for the second language learner. Child immigrants who need the second language in order to function in formal schooling clearly need the ability to respond appropriately to the language of social control, a type of language to which they are unlikely to be exposed outside classrooms.



Since language reflects culture, a re-socialisation may also be required if the cultural norms of formal schooling in the country of immigration differ from those in the child's own country. The second language classroom therefore offers an environment in which re-socialisation and the acquisition of appropriate language can be experienced with the help of a teacher who is aware of these needs. Variations in teacher-pupil relationships, together with the types of language which are used to maintain or facilitate the desired role-relationships, provide one example of the adaptations which may be required of the child immigrant. Conflicting experiences of the teaching/learning process and the expectations which these experiences create in both teachers and pupils offer another. For the teacher of a second language who attempts to help the child immigrant in this re-socialisation process the language of social control will become both a goal of teaching/learning and a means of learning.

A further variation in the role of language as a goal for learning in the second language classroom may occur as the result of an effort to accelerate development of the pupils' linguistic data-banks in the second language so that they can co-operate in the learning style required for other subjects, when language is a secondary goal for learning. In this case the second language classroom may replicate many features of other subject classrooms, e.g. by focussing on content specific to other subjects and apparently treating language as a secondary goal for learning.

In foreign language classrooms, however, approaches described above have proved ill-advised. While it is clearly desirable to expose the foreign language learner to the social and cultural differences in language use outside the classroom, there is little point in exposing foreign language students to the protocols of formal schooling in another culture unless they have immediate plans to enter that type of school system. Unless this is the case, attempts to do this can provoke hostility between teachers and pupils and in some cases seriously undermine the confidence of the inexperienced teacher. While primary school children may respond positively to the idea of adopting the classroom protocols of the country of the foreign language, secondary school and adult learners may interpret it as a form of cultural imperialism, particularly with a teacher who is a native speaker of the foreign language.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, although second language learners who are immigrants may welcome revision or pre-view of subject matter related to other subjects as a result of difficulties experienced in studying other subjects, foreign language learners are, understandably, highly resistant to the revision of subject matter they understood easily through instruction in the medium of the mother tongue two or three years earlier. Attempts to use such approaches in foreign language teaching demonstrate failure to distinguish between language as a goal of learning and language as a means of learning and also failure to recognise the nature and role of language in society and in the learning process.

When considering the relevance of classroom interaction studies for foreign language teaching it is necessary to bear in mind not only the varying roles of language in the classroom in general but also the differences which may exist in the goals of second and foreign language learning. The relevance of both factors to the interpretation and utilisation of classroom interaction research in foreign language classrooms can be demonstrated by reference to the two studies discussed below.

## Interaction in second and foreign language classrooms

Long et al. (1984) have researched teacher questioning-techniques in ESL classrooms, making a distinction between 'display' questions and 'referential' questions, i.e. questions to which the teacher already knows the answer versus questions to which the teacher does not know the answer. Referential questions were divided into two types, closed and open, the latter characterised by a wider variety of possible responses although not, as predicted, producing increased syntactic complexity in pupil responses.<sup>6</sup>

The work of Long et al. is of interest to foreign language teachers because their data shows that the length and complexity of pupil responses were extended by teacher use of referential questions with slight bias in favour of open referential questions. Open referential questions also tended to elicit more student turns than closed referential questions. Contrary to expectations, however, display questions elicited significantly more student turns than did referential questions. Long et al. suggest that this may be because the teacher is not the only one who already knows the answers to display questions. Students are also more likely to know, or feel they know the answers, a state of mind which is likely to encourage risk-taking and willingness to respond. This explanation is endorsed by this writer on the grounds that experienced teachers use display questions to reassure themselves, and/or students that learning or understanding has occurred, to arouse or maintain student interest or attention, to break up teacher monologue, to provide students with advance reassurance that they are already familiar with certain aspects of a new topic or to give advance signalling of the nature of the content of the next stage in the discourse. The purpose of display questions is therefore defeated unless some students do know the answers. Long et al. also note that since the teachers observed tended to use general, rather than personal or individual, solicits regardless of the question type, student turns appeared to occur without bidding on the part of students and in the absence of nomination by the teacher. This may suggest that display questions should be used in foreign language classrooms to generate practice in the target language particularly if the teacher's purpose is to increase student participation and student talk in the form of 'natural' conversation which is characterised by non-solicited turn taking (in the classroom sense). There are a number of arguments against this conclusion, however.

Firstly, although video recordings were made the data analysed was based on transcriptions of the audio-recordings. Since bidding and nomination are frequently non-verbal, the apparent absence of those features in the data may be the result of concentration on verbal behaviour or the result of camera focus on students only during a series of rapid student responses. In addition, 'unsolicited' turn-taking in the classroom is very different from turn-taking in natural conversation since turn-taking involves 'taking the floor', while in classrooms this involves invasion of the teacher's right to hold the floor and pupils who invade the teacher's territory by assuming control over the discourse need very good reasons for doing so. Even with good reason, however, most pupils are reluctant to do this and will use alternatives to verbal behaviour, such as standing up, rather than using verbal interruption techniques, to warn the teacher of the arrival of an unexpected classroom visitor. This type of pupil behaviour serves to highlight the difference between the nature of discourse in classrooms and the nature of discourse in other environments.

Secondly, natural conversation involves a degree of redundancy which does not seem to feature in pupil talk in this data. This is not surprising since the stated objective of the recorded lessons was that students should master the content or information presented in the lessons, and the introduction to the tape-slide presentation states quite clearly that "we are going to see some pictures of x and learn a few things about them". This clearly signals that, in these lessons, the facts or content presented were of primary importance. This is reinforced by the 'tests' given at the end of lessons which exhibit no interest in students' previous knowledge or experience and concentrate on the facts included in the presentation. Under these conditions students 'know' that their responses to teachers' questions should be relevant to the lesson. This may account not only for the brevity of student responses to display questions, but also for the comparative lack of syntactic complexity and the lack of redundancy; when both teacher and student are aware that the teacher has a pre-determined, usually factual answer in mind, the student has no need to negotiate the teacher's meaning nor to add any information which will qualify or explain the nature or content of his response. The resulting brevity and lack of redundancy are entirely appropriate in this type of classroom discourse although they would lead to communication breakdown in exploratory talk and in natural conversation.

The ability to recognise and respond appropriately to display questions is unquestionably an important skill for the survival of the pupil engaged in formal schooling through the medium of a second language. The ability to respond to display questions can, however, thwart the foreign language teacher's attempts to engage pupils in 'spontaneous' conversation in the target language if the pupils treat all teacher initiations as though they are display questions. This may of course happen because the teacher is using display questions only. Alternatively it may be the result of pupil perception of the nature of the teacher's questions. Classroom interaction studies in other subject classrooms reveal the frequency with which teachers use re-elicit in order to re-direct pupil responses as a result of pupils' mistaken assumption that a display question has been asked (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). Studies of interaction in foreign language classrooms further demonstrate that pupils get plenty of practice in responding to display questions since these feature prominently in teacher talk. This suggests that in foreign language classrooms pupils have good reason to treat all teacher questions as display questions. It also suggests that pupils are unlikely to develop the ability to distinguish between display and referential questions and even less likely to learn how to respond appropriately to referential questions.

The data of Mitchell et al. (1981) shows that display questions in foreign language classrooms tend to be more restrictive and manipulative than in other subject classrooms, controlling both the content and range of responses and the linguistic forms to be used and demanding more frequent repetition than is the practice in other subject classrooms. The nature of the display questions and responses in foreign language classrooms indicate that they provide neither useful preparation for formal schooling in the target language nor opportunities for pupils to use the target language as a means of learning. They appear to provide only for the use of language as a (very restricted) goal of learning and for the 'learning' of language content by generating mechanical practice and opportunities for the teacher to check mastery of vocabulary and structural items.

Michell et al. comment on another feature which appears peculiar to display questions in the foreign language classroom. This is the absence, in many of the foreign language segments in their data, of a coherent topic of discourse, an absence which they describe as a 'content vacuum'. They suggest that this accounts for pupil failure to put the target language "to communicative use, (i.e. to transmit messages of concern to oneself and one's interlocutors)" (1981: 67). While Mitchell et al. consider the nature of teaching materials, especially course books, partly to blame for this, they also comment that the behaviour of teachers in their study appears to reflect behaviourist attitudes towards foreign language acquisition with the communicative use of the foreign language being perceived as a last stage in the learning process rather than as a central process in the development of foreign language competence. They note, however, that this behaviour "may reflect considerations of 'manageability' in teacher-led, whole class foreign language interaction as much as any considered behaviourist theory of learning" (1981: 69). Either way the issue of teachers' educational values is raised once again together with the extent to which these values influence the verbal behaviour of teachers and, in turn, pupils.

There is no reference to teachers' educational values in the work of Long et al., which is surprising because their conclusion refers to many features discussed by other-subject and foreign language researchers in this context. There are, however, a number of factors which may explain this omission. The teacher subjects in this study were virtually self-selecting and few in number and the primary objective of the research was to measure change in teacher verbal behaviour in response to specific training techniques. It appears also that the teachers were neither informed of, nor involved in, prior discussion of the underlying linguistic principles or learning theories. This approach is consistent with competency or performance-based approaches to teacher education which have been questioned by Lawton (1987) on the grounds that, in this form, they pre-empt the professional role of the teacher and neglect the development of the skills necessary for the exercise of that role, i.e. the ability to reflect on the education process and to analyse why certain learning experiences are worthwhile. Such training techniques, provided they are presented within, and with reference to, a framework of education theory and linguistic theory can play an invaluable role in teacher education since they afford reflective teachers the possibility of reviewing their own teaching and perhaps experiencing cognitive dissonance. In the absence of a theoretical underpinning, however, such techniques are unlikely to have long term influence on teacher behaviour and, if they do not involve the teacher in sharing the underlying theories and philosophy, appear unlikely to enhance successful curriculum innovation (Stenhouse 1976).

#### Applying research findings in the foreign language classroom

While research of the type conducted by Long et al. into competency-based techniques can give us insights into what we may call the mechanics of the classroom and can provide some evidence of the linguistic potential of pupils, they cannot necessarily be transplanted into all classrooms and be expected to take root until the many variables existing in the classroom environment have also been taken into account.

The findings of Mitchell et al., for example, suggest that the quality of interaction in foreign language classrooms falls far short of that which is desirable by any educational criteria. This situation will not, however, be susceptible to improvement merely by the application of competency-based techniques such as those researched by Long et al. since improved or varied questioning techniques will not deal with one of the underlying causes identified by Mitchell et al., i.e. the content vacuum. It does not make much difference, for example, whether a teacher asks display or referential questions, be they open or closed, if the 'discussion', or the entire lesson, lacks any coherent framework, topic, content, or learning focus. This problem does not occur in the Long data since all these elements were specified and/or provided by the researchers as part of the process of controlling variables, thus creating conditions which do not exist in everyday classrooms and are noticeably absent from the Mitchell data. The reasons for this absence may be the result of foreign language teachers' educational attitudes and values, their language attitudes and values or a combination of both but this cannot be established without further enquiry. Should this prove to be the case, however, it would indicate a need to foster change in teachers' attitudes and values, educational and linguistic, before any attempt to change teacher behaviour could be successful in the long term. Since the effects of the competency-based training techniques used by Long et al. appear to be dependent on such conditions it seems reasonable to assume that the behaviour of foreign language teachers who are typical of the teacher-subjects in the Mitchell data is unlikely to benefit from such techniques even though temporary change may occur under training conditions.<sup>7</sup>

Another classroom variable which is of particular relevance to foreign language teaching is the nature of the socio-linguistic relationship between pupils and teachers. Interaction studies indicate that this relationship operates in the same way in most classrooms and this is demonstrated in the data of both Long & Mitchell. Classroom interaction studies show that in most classrooms, pupils bear no responsibility for maintaining the discourse. In fact the socialisation process consists of learning how to conform to the discourse protocols of the classroom by refraining from making unsolicited contributions and according all control over the discourse to the teacher, including the right to break what may seem to be an unnatural silence. This type of pupil behaviour can facilitate the development of pupil talk as a goal of teaching/learning as demonstrated in the Long data. It does little, however, as discussed earlier, to foster pupil talk as a means of learning or to produce unplanned spontaneous talk typical of L1 spoken interaction. This type of pupil behaviour is not the outcome of pupil experience with one teacher in an isolated lesson. It is the result of years of conditioning and will therefore be resistant to sudden change. Change in such behaviour may, however, be a pre-requisite of the occurrence of language as a means of learning in the foreign language classroom and this change cannot be effected merely by changing teachers' attitudes and values.<sup>8</sup> Teachers need to be made aware of the significance of pupils' prior experience of classroom interaction and of the need for a transition period, involving a shift from the traditional teacher-whole class interaction and the establishment of teacher-individual pupil and teacher-small group interaction before language as a means of learning can be achieved in teacher-whole class interaction. Teachers also need to be equipped with interaction skills which will

facilitate gradual rather than sudden change in pupil behaviour. This need might well be met by the use of competency-based training techniques, always provided that they were preceded by consciousness-raising experiences. This approach differs from that used by Long et al.; firstly by the inclusion of consciousness-raising, to involve teachers in the underlying theory or philosophy, and secondly in the type of pupil talk which is the target for change.

The work of Mitchell et al. does not attempt to effect or measure change and instead seeks to provide "a systematic description of classroom practice" (1981: 1) and information about the size of the gap between classroom practice and current theoretical prescriptions for foreign language teaching and learning "in order to contribute to a range of innovative developments" (1981: 1) in this field. This suggests that their work is less likely to be viewed as suitable for replication in teacher education or in curriculum innovation. It does nevertheless raise a number of points which merit the attention of research consumers who are interested in changing foreign language classroom practice.

Firstly, it demonstrates the 'realities' of the classroom in two ways. Not only does the study offer a 'non-interventionist' description of foreign language classroom practice, it can also be described as submitting itself to many of the constraints which effect teacher-pupil behaviour in 'real' classrooms. Pupil achievement tests are included, for example, even though the researchers suggest that the testing objectives, based largely on a structuralist view of language and focussed on accuracy rather than fluency, are in conflict with the objectives of current theoretical prescriptions for foreign language learning. The tests themselves thus reflect a gap between practice and theory which may in turn account for, or at least contribute to, the gap between classroom practice and theory.

The study also provides information about the extent and nature of teacher divergence from coursebooks which allows insights into teacher evaluations of materials and the attitudes towards foreign language learning which inform these evaluations. Overall the study opens up a Pandora's box of conflict between theory and practice and offers numerous indications of possible causes for this conflict. No simple solutions or answers are offered, however. As a result this study, and others like it, may receive little or no attention from research consumers. Nevertheless this type of study represents an essential first step in the process of successful curriculum innovation and effective teacher education since unless we know precisely what type of behaviour we want to change, we are unlikely to succeed in effecting change.

Classroom interaction studies using a descriptive apparatus of the type first developed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and modified by Tsui (1987) can make a significant contribution in this area since they offer a rigorous approach to the description and analysis of classroom language in use which can be lacking in studies with broader educational goals. From the point of view of our research consumer, however, objective descriptions are not enough since they do not attempt to identify or analyse the influences which produce classroom behaviour.<sup>9</sup> Studies of this type also reflect the linguistic and educational values of the researchers and these should be taken into account by the research

consumer. Such studies must be complemented by an equally rigorous approach to the identification and analysis of not only those variables which directly influence classroom behaviour but also of variables such as the educational and language attitudes and values of teachers and the community they serve. These needs are unlikely to be met in the near future and will be inadequately researched if attempted too quickly or on too small a scale. In the interim, descriptive studies such as that of Mitchell et al. help to fill the gap and also offer an indication of the variety of variables which must be considered. Although studies of this type are criticised by research methodologists because of their lack of rigour, they have a contribution to make in the improvement of research methods. They can provide insights which will help to make researchers more aware of the extent, nature and influence of variables over which they may be exercising inadvertent control or choosing to ignore, e.g. the control of the content vacuum in Long et al., referred to earlier, and the nature and possible influence of pupil achievement tests in Mitchell et al.

The above remarks do not constitute a reference to the debate over the appropriacy of quantitative and qualitative approaches to this type of research (Chaudron, 1986). Chaudron comments on the lack of information about classroom variables, for example, but since he describes the study by Long et al. as being conducted in a natural classroom situation when contrasting it with a parallel study conducted by Brock (1986) in a simulated classroom situation, I think that my use of the term 'variable' may differ somewhat from his. Neither do these comments question the quality of the studies quoted. They seek only to explore their relevance for application or replication in foreign language classrooms.

### Conclusions

It seems clear that teacher behaviour determines the nature of pupil-talk and that pupil-talk in foreign language classrooms falls short of that deemed desirable in current theoretical prescriptions. Too much remains unclear, however, particularly the precise nature of the pupil talk which is deemed desirable.

Is it language as a means of learning or language as a goal of learning (Barnes, 1976)? Is it 'negotiating interaction' (Tsui, 1987) or using strategies for making sense of something and for negotiating meaning (Nattinger, 1984)? Is it listener-oriented or message-oriented (Brown, 1982) or unplanned spontaneous talk (Hatch, 1986)? Which of these types of talk are desirable because they match the type of language which foreign language learners need to be able to use and which of them are deemed desirable because of their interim role in the learning process? Is there any linguistic analysis of the type of language which a particular group of learners need to be able to use, even in examinations, and is there any educational evidence that certain types of pupil talk actually enhance the foreign language learning process? Or are both goals based on intuitions? If it is possible to identify the types of pupil-talk which are desirable, as performance goals and as part of the learning process, to what extent do these goals match the desires and expectations of society? How great is the gap between these types of language and the language presented in course books? What strategies are

used by a particular group of foreign language learners when they have a communicative purpose and no other option except use of the foreign language to achieve that purpose? How does this behaviour vary in different interactional contexts? In other words, how early in the learning process are pupils capable of generating the desired type of pupil-talk?

In the absence of data, the answers to these questions will have to be supplied by the research consumer and many of the answers will be based on intuition. Undesirable as this may be, it has the advantage of ensuring a more realistic evaluation of the appropriacy and relevance of research findings for application in a particular foreign language environment.



## NOTES

1. These terms have nothing in common with distinctions commonly made in second language and foreign language coursebooks, e.g. formal/informal, spoken/written, polite/impolite.
2. Although the character and function of the language of social control tend not to change, there do appear to be changes in form, particularly in foreign language as opposed to second language classrooms. This may be the result of attempts to reduce the language load or to 'simplify', e.g. the use of the imperative form rather than extended request forms for classroom management purposes.
3. Particularly the first example, since achievement of the second may be inhibited by non-linguistic factors.
4. This can be very frustrating for the mature foreign language learner, who although suspecting that some sort of cognitive dissonance exists, or could occur, is deprived of the opportunity to observe and analyse relevant data.
5. Although Hong Kong may appear to be an exception I suggest that the classroom protocols of Hong Kong are peculiar to Hong Kong and that the majority of teachers and learners identify with them and perceive them as being Hong Kong rather than U.K. protocols. These protocols bear little resemblance to those of the U.K., with the possible exception of those imposed by U.K. teachers who are establishing their authority at the beginning of a relationship with a new class (Wragg et al. 1982).
6. Long et al. also considered 'wait-time' consisting of the timed delay between teacher question and student response, time occupied by student response and time allowed post student response.
7. Although Long et al. comment that teacher behaviour in the fourth lesson, in which teachers used their own materials, suggest that behaviour modifications would last, other studies suggest that this would be very unusual. Since there is no discussion of the nature of the teachers' own materials used in the first and fourth lessons it is not possible to compare these with each other or with those provided by the researchers. Neither is the time-lag between Lessons 3 and 4 specified. It is only possible therefore to express reservations about this interpretation.
8. Previous experiences during teacher training can also influence teacher attitudes and behaviour in this context particularly if training in classroom management skills has focused exclusively on establishing control and omitted to discuss degree of control such as teacher oral dominance and the linguistic implications of the latter.
9. Tsui's objectives are quite clear; firstly to provide a descriptive tool which will identify the types of interaction occurring in a lesson and secondly to enable teachers to obtain "a general picture of how much of their language teaching is communicative" (1987: 337) so that they may consider how preferred forms of interaction might be generated.

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pp viii + 161 + 7 (references) + 6 (index)

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This work, produced by the most eminent British adherent of the Labovian paradigm of quantitative dialectology, is an important and exciting book. Its importance lies both in the research which is actually reported in its pages - much of this information was hitherto unpublished, or available only in manuscript form, in relatively obscure journal articles, or in languages other than English - and in the directions for future work which it suggests. The book reflects in its subject matter the increasing emphasis within the Labovian tradition upon variation patterns and associated socio-psychological phenomena arising from contact between dialects (intralinguistic contact, between varieties of 'the same language', largely mutually intelligible). This contrasts with the earlier preference, dating back at least to Labov himself (1966, etc) for studies dealing with inherent variation (variation which has, apparently, arisen in a spontaneous way, not in response to contact, within a variety).

The study of such phenomena, which may be referred to under the broad heading of 'interference', was, in fact, for long neglected by Labovian scholars, and, apparently, was deemed somewhat unrespectable - the very words interference and mixture were at one time largely eschewed as theoretically unsound. This was so despite the fact that one of the pioneers of studies dealing with this sort of phenomenon at inter-linguistic level was Labov's own mentor Weinreich (1953, etc) - to whose contribution Trudgill here pays due homage, notably in his opening remarks (p 1). Interestingly, although Trudgill is in general very willing to acknowledge his own earlier errors and, more generally, changes of direction in his thinking (note his comment on p 68 about the psychological interpretation of diasystems, and the fuller comment on this subject in Trudgill 1983:11f), he is here less than explicit about his own part in the development or maintenance of the former pattern of hostility or at best of indifference to studies of mixture and interference, and the more recent abandonment or modification of this policy. A striking instance of Trudgill's earlier position is provided by the the negative comments in Chambers & Trudgill 1980:146, which seem at very least overstated - this passage seems to suggest that we should simply disregard what we may know or hypothesise about the origin of newly reported usage, or the usage of individuals who have been exposed to more than one variety, where this information apparently indicates that interference, etc has been at work. I have discussed and criticised this passage at length elsewhere (Newbrook 1986:21ff), and do not propose to repeat here lengthy comments about a point of view which, as it seems, Trudgill himself has now abandoned.

Some exceptions to the earlier policy of neglect may of course be found; it is not as if no scholars at all have examined contact situations quantitatively. Most notable among the relevant studies is the work of Payne (1976, 1980, etc); Trudgill duly includes some discussion of this material and compares more recent findings (pp 34, 36f). Another piece of Labovian work which dealt with a contact situation was the present writer's PhD dissertation (Newbrook 1982a, subsequently published as Newbrook 1986; Trudgill himself was the supervisor of the thesis). The somewhat untidy results of this investigation rendered it less interesting than expected from a theoretical angle, and Trudgill makes only occasional references to it (in no case dealing with the highly complex patterns of phonological variation and change which formed the core of the findings). This being so, the suggestion of Feagin (fc), who has reviewed both the Trudgill book now in question and Newbrook 1986, that the latter was in part responsible for Trudgill's apparent change of viewpoint on the issue of contact phenomena, is perhaps itself something of an over-statement. Incidentally, one of the few proof-reading errors in the Trudgill book involves these brief references to my own material; the bibliography includes only Newbrook 1982b ('Newbrook 1982'), and not Newbrook 1982a as cited above, but the use of youse with singular reference discussed on p 71 is mentioned only in the latter work. In addition, Trudgill fails here to mention the pertinent fact that this usage is long established and nowadays, indeed, recessive in the relevant areas of urban Merseyside, and that any process such as he hypothesises by way of accounting for it must have occurred many decades ago, not in more recent times as he suggests.

Whatever the major influences on Trudgill's thinking, he himself has now turned to the study of contact phenomena as being an area of obvious interest. Although, as he says (p vii), only a minority of variation patterns and changes involve mixture of or interference between dialects, there are, as he acknowledges, very many cases where these notions clearly are relevant, and much interest can be derived from studying them. In addition, a large number of earlier studies, some of them not themselves overtly concerned much with theoretical matters, can be drawn on for exemplification and additional evidence in this enterprise. Trudgill has, in fact, adapted Weinreich's approach to the study of intralinguistic variation (and ensuing linguistic change), and in doing so has drawn together the results of much outstanding research, his own and that of others. The phenomena discussed range from phonology (this is the best represented linguistic level) to lexis; and the varieties which are exemplified include a number of mixed varieties of English (one of these is Trudgill's own usage after a year in the United States), and in addition dialects of Norwegian and Swedish, continua associated with English-based Caribbean creoles, varieties of some North Indian languages, etc. As noted, Trudgill has made readily available some excellent but hitherto much less well-known material emanating from scholars such as Jahr, Nordenstam, and various other Scandinavian researchers; also Shockey, Rogers, Cooper, etc on English and English-based creoles, Rona and others on Portuguese/Spanish contact in South America, and Moag, Domingue, Holm, etc on North Indian languages in Fiji, Mauritius and the Caribbean. In fact, Trudgill's role over the last few years in the popularising of the detailed work of Scandinavian sociolinguists is an important facet of his overall influence on the contemporary Labovian scene.

Methodologically, the most striking feature of the work is Trudgill's blending of Giles' accommodation theory (Giles 1973; Giles et al. 1973, etc) with the rigorous quantification characteristic of the Labovian tradition. This method of analysis seems obviously valid and of great interest after the fact, but has seldom been attempted before, even on a variable-specific level. One near-exception is Trudgill's own treatment of the phonology characteristic of British pop and rock music, as reported in Trudgill 1983:141ff, but this, as Trudgill says, is to be explained in terms of imitation rather than accommodation, and thus involves theories such as those of Le Page (1968, 1978, etc) rather than those of Giles. Imitation does play a role in Trudgill's present book, though a minor one (see the fresh discussion of the 'pop music' case on pp 12ff). As it turns out, the actual microlinguistic consequences of accommodation, other things being equal, are, as it seems, broadly similar to the consequences of attempted imitation - though, naturally, more complex, given the availability of feedback in face-to-face interaction (where accommodation arises) and other complicating factors.

More specifically, Trudgill deals with cases of a number of kinds, illustrating particular ways in which one variety can influence another in a contact situation. The sections of the book devoted to discussion of these situations provide the basis for a typology of such changes, covering both the socio-economic profiles and the associated histories/biographies of the communities, groups, and individuals involved, and the detailed linguistic patterns which arise as a result. Because of Trudgill's method of procedure (see pp vii-viii for an explicit statement), such a typology is not overtly set out in his book - he worked, as he did in his original study of Norwich English (Trudgill 1974), by developing explanations of an ad hoc nature for each interesting phenomenon noted, and then seeing how far these explanations could be generalised to account for other patterns where they could plausibly be invoked. It is reasonable, however, to suppose that typologies of this nature will in due course emerge from the tradition.

A number of these more specific patterns of interaction bear mention. They include: effects on the usage of individuals who spend some time living in countries where dialects are spoken which differ in some key respects from their own; cases where the speech of non-locally-born parents inhibits speakers' acquisition of local constraints and the more detailed aspects of local phonology; cases which illustrate the relevance of different degrees and kinds of prestige which varieties in contact may display; the spreading of standard forms and the development of regional standards; cases where external varieties exercise their influence through young speakers who re-migrate into their original home areas after periods spent living elsewhere; phenomena associated with faulty perception or analysis of target varieties, notably 'hyper-dialectisms' (analogous to hyper-correct forms, but in this case the innovative form is the result of an attempt to produce a form less standard than is usual for the speaker, an attempt vitiated by inadequate knowledge or faulty analysis of the dialect); and processes of simplification and levelling such as the mixture of North Indian varieties in places like Fiji, or the 'koineization' of English in 'colonial' territories (notably Australia). Wherever such material is available the work is informed by Trudgill's usual attention to quantitative and statistical detail, and by a close concern with the history and dialectology of the varieties concerned.

Trudgill's theoretical base is also quite wide, but he fails to use (or refer to) a number of theoretical notions developed recently. These include Mühlhäusler's typology of contact situations (see Mühlhäusler 1985, etc) and Bailey's and Anderson's typologies of patterns of change (Bailey 1982, Anderson 1973). Feagin (op. cit.) takes Trudgill to task over both of these omissions. However, it is not easy to subsume all recent viewpoints into one's discussion, at least if one wishes not to overburden the narrative with theory - it must be remembered that there have, after all, been very many proposals along such lines, that some of these differ more in respect of terminology and other relatively non-empirical matters than in terms of actual predictions, and that Trudgill's book is, like his earlier works, intended for a broad readership rather than for the exclusive use of fellow specialists. Furthermore, the Mühlhäusler work was very recent indeed when Trudgill's book was being completed, and some of Bailey's proposals are rather controversial (though it must be admitted that some of Trudgill's data looks amenable to analysis in Baileyan terms).

This work should be of immense value to anyone interested in the study of variation, in contact phenomena, or in the dialectology of the particular languages dealt with. In keeping with Trudgill's previous output it is also highly readable, and for the most part the points made are clearly expressed and soundly argued.

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CONTENTS OF WORKING PAPERS IN LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING, Nos. 1-10.

No. 1 May 1979

Bilingual Education in Hong Kong: a Historical Perspective ... ..	Gail Schaeffer Fu	1
A Report on an Assessment of the Standard of English of Pupils in Hong Kong ... ..	Yu Fong Ying	20
A Survey of Student On-Course Language Requirements for Diploma and Ordinary Certificate Courses Conducted by the Hong Kong Polytechnic and the Technical Institutes ... ..	David Foulds	38
Review of Nucleus ( <u>English for Science and Technology</u> ) Engineering. Tony Dudley-Evans, Tim Smart and John Wall. Longman, 1978 ... ..	Graham Low	65
Review of <u>Acoustical Studies of Mandarin Vowels and Tones</u> . John Marshall Howie. Cambridge University Press, 1976 ... ..	Angela Fok	77

No. 2 December 1979

Babbling and Early Language in Cantonese ... ..	Laurent Sagart	1
Some preliminaries to a Proposal to Assist (Underdeveloped) L <sub>2</sub> Readers across Morphographic/Alphabetic Systems ... ..	Grace Wiersma	7
Designing an English Proficiency Test for Engineering Students - the Direct Test Approach ... ..	Lee Yick pang	14
Some Notes Concerning the Likerts' Model of 'The Human Organization' as Applied to the Management of Classroom Language Learning ... ..	Donald Morrison	27

No. 3 July 1980

Participle Preposing in English and the Problem of Hierarchical Constraints on Linguistic Structure ... .. Benjamin K. T'sou	1
Skyscraper. Skyscraper. Skyscraper: Some New Perspectives on Monitoring and the Language Learner ... .. Graham Low and Donald Morrison	30
Professional Activities by the Language Centre and Centre Staff ... ..	54
Publications by Members of Staff ... ..	57
Visitors to the Language Centre ... ..	60

No. 4 June 1981

Communicative Testing as an Optimistic Activity ... .. Graham Low	1
Some Notes on Internal Consistency Reliability Estimation for Tests of Language Use ... .. Lee Yick Pang	19
The Use of Cloze Procedure in the Form III English Language Secondary School Scaling Test ... .. R. Keith Johnson	28
The Effects of the Shifting of Instructional Medium of Students' Performance in Selected Anglo-Chinese Secondary Schools in Hong Kong ... .. Peter T.K. Tam	48
E.L.T.S.: The English Language Testing Service of the British Council and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate ... .. Peter Falvey	78
Language Centre On-going Activities in Language Testing ... ..	96

No. 5 February 1982

Measuring Reading Achievement in a Bilingual Situation ... ..	Angela Fok	1
Validating a Course in Reading for Academic Purposes ... ..	Lee Yick Pang	22
The Project on English Language Proficiency Testing: An Outline ... ..	Graham Low and Lee Yick Pang	28
Review of <u>Communicate in Writing</u> , K. Johnson, Longman, 1981 ... ..	Evelyn Cheung	1
Report on the Use of Student Self-Assessment in the Testing Programmes of the Language Centre, University of Hong Kong ... ..	Lee Yick Pang	50
Report on the Use of Student Feedback in a Testing Programme ... ..	Graham Low	52

No. 6 October 1982

Hong Kong Cantonese: A Sociolinguistic Perspective ... ..	Peter G. Pan	1
Some Aspects of the Teaching of Writing Skills ... ..	Yang Wong Yuen Chun	17
On Devising a Putonghua Course for Cantonese Speakers ... ..	Liang Ya Ling	22
Storying: A Methodological Approach to Bilingual Education ... ..	Nancy Lee	25

No. 7 December 1983

ESL Curriculum Innovation and Teacher Attitudes ... ..	Richard Young and Sue Lee	1
Some Thoughts on the Relationship between Teacher Attitudes and Teacher Styles ... ..	Margaret Falvey	18
Co-operating with the Learner: A Preliminary Report on Researching Learners' Problems with Processing Text ... ..	John Hunt	44
Varying Interpretation: A Pilot Study Using a Triangulated procedure ... ..	Cheng Ngai-lung	56
Intensive Learning of Vocabulary in the Teaching of Chinese ... ..	Lee Hok-ming	74
Relationship between Word Attributes and Word Learning of Chinese ... ..	Siu Ping-kee	85

No. 8 February 1985

Levels and Labels in Language Teaching ... ..	Graham Low	1
Prototype Theory, Cognitive Linguistics and pedagogical Grammar ... ..	Keith Johnson	12
Designing 'Communicative' 'Self-Study' Materials for Language Learning ... ..	Susan Fearn	25
Discourse and the Teaching of Intonation ... ..	Elizabeth Samson	45
Connectives; On the Other Hand, Who Needs Them, Though? ... ..	William Crewe, Christian Wright and Matthew Leung Wing Kwong	61
Linguistic Attitudes of Chinese Adolescents in Hong Kong ... ..	Gail Fu, Vincent Cheung, Paul Lee Lai Min, Lee Sik Yum and Herbert Pierson	76
Review of <u>Language For Literature (A Guide to Language Use, Style and Criticism)</u> , by Richard Walker. Collins, ELT. Announcements. 1983 ...	Martin Anderson	93

No. 9 April 1986

Towards an Algorithm for the Analysis of Written English Text ... ..	Lee Yick Pang	1
Subject and Topic in Four Narratives ... ..	W.J. Crewe	14
Structure in Written Text ... ..	Evelyn Gaik-Hoon Cheung	33
The Reading Teacher's Dilemma ... ..	Margaret Falvey	44
Teaching Information Sequence in Scientific Writing to Primary ESL Pupils in Singapore ... ..	Robert Heath	58
Strategies in Understanding Written Discourse with Special Reference to Translator-as-Reader ... ..	Helen Oi-wah Chau	69
Review of <u>Linguistic Prediction in Economics Text</u> , Angela Tadros, ELR, University of Birmingham, 1985 ... ..	Elizabeth Samson	81

No. 10 April 1988

Bilingual Secondary Education in Hong Kong: What Are the Options? ... ..	Ora Kwo	1
Bilingual Education in the United States: A Historical Perspective of the Myths, Misconceptions and Attitudes Affecting Educational Policies and Practices ... ..	Gloria Zarabozo	11
Teaching Chinese Students to Read and Write about Western Literature: A Study of Two Sophomore Writing Classes in National Taiwan University ... ..	Max L. Hui-Bon-Hoa	41
Applying Language Acquisition Theories to the Teaching of Mandarin-Chinese as a Foreign Language: A Case Study ... ..	Liu Xiabing	48

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十一

